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Branding diversity in Rotterdam and Amsterdam:

How political discourses and marketing logic pushes migration-

related diversity to the background in place brands

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Agenda

- Brief introduction

- City Branding and Diversity

- Comparing Rotterdam and Amsterdam

- Challenges and questions

- Closure

Branding Diversity

Migration impacts on the local level; cities as the first place of settlement.

Cities respond differently to their changing place identity.

Place brands have become an important instrument in constructing city identities.

How and why does migration related diversity plays a role in city branding?

What are Place Brands?

- Place brands

  ✓ *Brand communication: logos, slogans, festivals or iconic buildings.*
  ✓ *Brand values: 'love', 'diversity', 'innovation'*

- It's in **essence** about <u>selecting</u> certain benefits and values of the city to tell a story

- However: many stakeholders, interests, expectations and purposes…

  - *Economic:* attracting investors, visitors and residents
  - *Social:* create a 'shared' sense of belonging

How did I conduct my research?

- Compared **2 cities** in the Netherlands: Rotterdam and Amsterdam similar in context, different in political discourse on diversity.

  - 12 in-depth interviews key actors in city branding and diversity policies.
  - Policy documents on city branding 2005-2015.

Rotterdam	Total Population	641,326
	Number of nationalities	148
	% of the city population with a migrant background	52%
Amsterdam	Total Population	859,732
	Number of nationalities	162
	% of the city population with a migrant background	52%

What I found in Rotterdam

- Rotterdam started it campaigning in 2003-2004: **Rotterdam Dares** Campaign.

- In 2007 it launched a new brand tag: **Rotterdam World Port City**, focusing on the economic and international assets of the city.

    - Criticized for being to business orientated

- In 2014 the city again launched a new brand: **Rotterdam Make it Happen,** with a refreshment of its brand values: 'international, worldly, groundbreaking, entrepreneurial, no-nonsense and raw'.

What I found in Rotterdam

- Rotterdam *acknowledges* diversity as being part of its identity. However, diversity is very **limited incorporated in** brand communication.

  - Diversity as an 'economic asset'

  - Term 'multicultural' replaced by 'international' (framing)

  - Diversity as a given fact

  - Diversity in festivals and image-bank

  - *Political discourse* influences brand communication

"of course we take into account political reality… political parties do not influence our DNA, it's just a given fact and they know that as well. But when presenting our strategy, we made sure that multiple political parties could be enthusiastic".

What I found in Amsterdam

- A long tradition of culture, innovation, creativity and a strong entrepreneurial spirit.

- As in Rotterdam, in 2003 branding was re-organized, however the KEY brand values have kept the same: creativity, innovation and spirit of commerce.

- Terms as **cosmopolitan, world orientated openness and diversity** are frequently used, although they are not explicitly incorporated as brand values.

What I found in Amsterdam….

- Diversity is acknowledged, but again: not prominent in brand communication as well .

- Diversity is approached as a result of the entrepreneurial spirit and is not considered a unique selling point.

- Even though: Also: the I Amsterdam campaign, that started as a way of stimulating a sense of collective identity. But under economic pressure became a commercialized activity.

- Tendency again to stay away from politics, even though the local political climate is pro-diversity.

✓ However….

Recent Developments in Amsterdam

- 180 nationalities campaign

- A strong call within different departments for more social positioning of the city brand: involving and not ignoring superdiversity.

- Administrative pressure influences brand communication.

Recent Developments in Rotterdam

New City Branding team, strong awareness of diversity.

Led by Annemieke Wegen Dalhaas. Her agenda: inclusive communication of the municipality.

In collaboration with a private company called Rotterdams Imagebank, the municipality is working on **'showing the real Rotterdam'.**

Some conclusions

- Strategies of local governments to deal with contested elements in place identity

  - *Acknowledge the contested element in the brand identity*
  - *Limit brand communication on it*
  - *Frame it strategically (economically)*

- The strategies are influenced by

  - *Dominant political discourse on migrant integration*
  - *Institutional embedding of city marketing organization*
  - *Logic within city marketing profession*

Branding policies show the struggle of local governments in responding to diversity.

Challenges and Questions for the Future: developing effective narratives

- How to combine economic goals of city branding with a social agenda that aims at creating a shared sense of belonging or a collective identity?

- Multi-level actors: How to get marketers, planners, city administrators working at different departments (Communications/Economic Affairs/Integration & Diversity) on the same page?

- Do these narratives of cities really impact on second generation migrant youth? And if yes: how can we use this in a way that improve both identification of natives as migrants?

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Thank you for your attention