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Place branding in strategic spatial planning

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Chapter 3: Place branding in strategic spatial planning: a content analysis of development plans, strategic initiatives and policy documents for Portugal and its northern region (NUTS II) for the period between 2014 and 2020

Chapter overview

This chapter aims to firstly depict the theoretical links between place branding and strategic spatial planning to provide further theoretical and conceptual foundations. Secondly, it aims to explore the roots of place branding theory and practice in Portugal, as well as how place branding has been approached (or not) in spatial development plans, strategic initiatives and policy documents by stating the territorial, spatial-economic and sectoral development trajectories for the country and its northern region. A content analysis of 20 spatial development plans, strategies and policy documents (of 30 identified), published by Portuguese authorities, the European Union (EU) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, mainly for the period between 2014 and 2020, has been used. Empirical evidence shows that tourism-oriented promotion initiatives, investment-oriented marketing campaigns and communication strategies uniquely supported by visual elements and aesthetic values (for example logos and slogans) deserve more attention from authorities in charge of spatial planning and policy-making. Place branding is an absent term. Moreover, there is inconsistency between current research and practice on place branding and how it has been incorporated in strategic spatial planning at EU, national and regional levels. Whilst some of the research findings are place-specific (Portugal and its northern region), this exploratory study aims to present a better understanding of the way in which places and branding can be conceptually addressed, primarily by assigning a spatial dimension to the idea of branding places and its alignment with strategic spatial planning and spatial plan-making.

3.1. Introduction

Place-branding literature has been locked into a marketing-led approach as it concerns places and has not been successful in conveying a more strategic approach and spatial consciousness to the process of branding places (Oliveira, 2015a, 2015b following Ashworth, 2011a, 2011b and Van Assche and Low, 2011). Research on strategic spatial planning and strategic spatial plan-making seems to avoid the use of the term “place branding”. However, concepts such as place promotion, image building and the definition of competitive strategies can be found in both spatial planning literature and practice. For example, the seminal work of Lynch (1960) serves as an example of image and vision building in the spatial planning literature. Graham and Healey (1999) underline the application of “marketing language” when discussing vision in the spatial plan-making of the *Hampshire County Structure Plan 1996-2011* (HCC, 1996). Later, Healey *et al.* (1999) find more European examples in Lyon (*European Metropolis*), Copenhagen (*European Capital*), Madrid (*Region Metropolitana*), and the Portuguese capital of Lisbon (*Atlantic Capital of Europe*), all of whom have mobilized efforts to construct a vision or image of the future of the territory and to attract foreign investment by integrating these aims in master plans at the city level. According to Healey *et al.* (1999), the purpose of these images was to promote internal coherence among stakeholders, as much as to position the city-territory outwardly (the marketing purpose). Neuman devoted particular attention to the Spanish

capital of Madrid to argue that (spatial) “planners used the evoking image to craft the strategy, implement it, and build the institutions of regional planning and government” (1996, p. 293). Thus, city-images played the role of institution builders and are “key to understanding how planning processes worked” (Neuman, 1996, p. 293). This role of images in Madrid’s planning and governance can also be seen in other cities and regions plan and policy-making (for example Barcelona; New Jersey; the Dutch case of Randstad; Copenhagen) (see Neuman, 1996). Arguably, some of these cities have recently developed place marketing and place branding exercises that one could argue have their roots in spatial plans and spatial policy-making.

Despite the definition in the early 1990s of a strategic vision for positioning Lisbon, like other European capital-cities (see Healey *et al.*, 1999; Neuman, 1996), internally, as well as externally, the spatial development plans created after 1994 kept the characteristics of traditional urbanization plans, emphasizing land-use regulation and lacking any strategic guidance in terms of policy-making (Rosa Pires, 2005). Furthermore, spatial planning, at the country (Portugal) and regional levels has been dominated by the blueprint approach and is largely focused on urban planning (Rosa Pires, 2005), as well as land use planning (Ferrão and Mourato, 2011). In addition, there is little theoretical debate on the ideas and the mission of spatial planning in Portugal (Ferrão and Mourato, 2011), and strategic spatial planning is still at an “infancy stage” (Rosa Pires, 2005, p. 237). With a traditional approach to spatial planning, one might expect that place branding will remain far from being integrated in strategic spatial planning or strategic spatial plan-making in Portugal. Moreover, the literature on place branding undertaken in Portugal, using its regions and cities as case studies, remains weak.

In order to accomplish the aims of contributing to the robustness and maturation of place branding theory, methodology and practice, not exclusively in Portugal, as well as to respond to the call Kavaratzis *et al.* (2015) have made to sharpening the associated debates on place branding, this exploratory study, first investigates the theoretical links between place branding and strategic spatial planning. Here, strategic spatial planning is understood as a means of overcoming the temporal and often spatial limitations and rigidities of traditional/statutory planning, by confronting the contemporary social, spatial and economic needs of a place and envisioning better futures (see Albrechts and Balducci, 2013, Balducci *et al.*, 2011). Strategic spatial planning focuses on a limited number of strategic key issues, on place-specific qualities and involves relevant place actors and concrete activities of citizens, politicians and spatial planners. Secondly, the chapter builds empirical evidence regarding how place branding has been approached in spatial development plans, spatial strategy-making and spatial policies for Portugal, with a special focus on its northern region (NUTS II) and for the period coincident with the EU multiannual financial framework 2014 to 2020. Primary data has been gathered exclusively in Portugal, specifically, a content analysis of 20 documents stating the territorial, spatial-economic and sectoral development trajectories for the country and its northern region has been employed.

To contribute to fulfil the main research objective and research questions of this thesis, this chapter will contribute to a better understanding of the way in which places and branding can be conceptually addressed, primarily by bringing a spatial planning dimension to the idea of branding places and its alignment with strategic spatial planning and spatial plan-making. From my

perspective, place branding and strategic spatial planning are interwoven, and spatial planners can play a core role in the design of branding strategies by integrating them into strategic spatial planning.

By guiding the attention of academics, policy makers and practitioners in the direction of a spatially-oriented approach to place branding, the chapter reinforces the primary strand of reasoning of this thesis and also provides an alternative approach to the scholarly and professional debate on place branding beyond Portugal and its northern region.

3.2. Place branding in strategic spatial planning: some theoretical considerations

Despite its limitations when applied to place management - corporate branding has paved the way for more sophisticated understandings of place branding (see, for example, Ashworth, 2005; Hankinson, 2010; Kavaratzis and Hatch, 2013; Skinner, 2008), it follows that research on strategic spatial planning can also contribute to the robustness of the place branding literature (see, for example, Metaxas, 2009; Rizzi and Dioli, 2010).

According to Ashworth and Voogd (1990), the idea of marketing and more recently, branding places, involves not only promotional measures, but also spatial-functional, organizational and financial measures that are meant to improve places and facilitate place management interventions. Taking the same line of reasoning, Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2005) examine the self-conscious application of branding to places as an instrument of urban planning and management. In a recent study, Oliveira (2015a) debates place branding as an instrument of strategic spatial planning, while Giovanardi (2015) draws on the work of Healey (2006b) to discuss convincingly that the conceptualization of place branding is supported by the relational complexity approach to strategic spatial planning. In research focused on the Italian cities of Turin, Genoa, Venice and Piacenza, Rizzi and Dioli (2010) argue that place marketing and place (city) branding are likely to be more successful when developed within the framework of strategic (urban) planning. Moreover, Sartorio (2005) states that strategic spatial plans directly support urban marketing.

Strategic spatial planning is selective and oriented to spatial challenges - challenges that really matter in day-to-day life. Strategic spatial planning is, thus, perceived as a way to overcome the limitations of traditional spatial planning instruments and envision, in an innovative and creative way, better futures for places. Spatial strategy making implies the combination of long-term decisions with short-term actions. In addition, much of the process lies in making the tough decisions about what is most important for the goal of producing fair, equitable structural responses to problems, challenges, aspirations and diversity (Albrechts and Balducci, 2013). As Albrechts (2013) clarifies, strategic spatial planning is “a transformative and integrative public sector, co-productive, socio-spatial process through which visions or frames of reference, the justification for coherent actions and the means for implementation are produced. These shape, frame and reframe what a place is and what it might become” (Albrechts, 2013, p. 52).

Arguably, strategic spatial planning refers to combining increased governmental coordination with democratic participation in spatial planning (Kalliomäki, 2015). Drawing on Kavaratzis (2012), there is an urgent need to rethink place branding towards a more participation-oriented practice, which can be achieved if integrated within wider strategic spatial planning interventions. Furthermore, alongside the idea of strategic spatial planning comes the concept of multilevel

governance (Albrechts *et al.*, 2003), which encompasses cooperation, the elaboration of a mutually beneficial dialectic between top-down structural developments and bottom-up local uniqueness (Albrechts, 2004). According to Eshuis and Edwards (2013), Klijn *et al.* (2012), Peel and Lloyd (2008), place branding has become part of place-specific governance strategies aimed at enhancing place images and managing perceptions regarding places. Neuman (1996) argues that place images have been used as tools for institution building. For example, New York City has integrated place marketing in urban governance (Greenberg, 2008). Drawing on Healey *et al.* (1999, p. 339), strategic spatial plan-making can be seen as playing a role in developing institutional territorial integration and re-invigorating territorial identities, which arguably should be supported by local governance.

Researchers of place branding agree that it is undoubtedly a multi- and cross-disciplinary field of studies (see, for example, Hankinson, 2010; Lucarelli and Berg, 2011). Furthermore, Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2008) highlights that the process of branding places also requires more than advertising or communication strategies; it involves spatial planning and spatial design to influence the physical appearance of the place. Despite some theoretical developments that link place branding and the spatial planning discipline, only a few place-branding initiatives have moved beyond the use of new logos and slogans which are not then reflected in new patterns of economic activity, spatial transformation, governmental structures or local identification. Braun *et al.* (2014), in line with Kavaratzis (2004, 2008), argue that place branding encompasses much more than logos, catchphrases and propaganda. In addition, place branding is not about brand-making, place promotion or marketing tasks only, but rather a combination of disciplines such as spatial planning, urban sociology and economic geography (Eshuis *et al.*, 2014).

Drawing on the work of Hanna and Rowley (2008) in the analysis of the terminology used in place branding research, “spatial planning” and “strategic spatial planning” are not mentioned in 59 articles analysed, nor is the integration of place branding in strategic planning or strategic spatial plan-making.

In line with Eshuis *et al.* (2014), Ashworth (2011a) and Van Assche and Lo (2011) note that place branding is more effective when integrated within a wider intervention for the place and when synergistically combined with planning and spatial design interventions. In addition, Van Assche and Lo (2011) state that place branding includes a wide range of issues and reaches close to research concerning governance and spatial planning, and requires civic and stakeholder engagement. According to Van Dijk and Holstein, “branding turns the traditional planning world upside down, by taking the perspectives and experiences of residents as a starting point” (2007, p.14). An example of civic participation in place branding might be useful here. In a recent study, Eshuis *et al.* (2014) analysed the case of Katendrecht, a Dutch community in the southern part of Rotterdam, as part of their research on citizen involvement in place branding. The authors concluded that in the branding process of Katendrecht, citizen participation was possible and that place branding can influence wider urban policies, such as spatial planning and urban restructuring. Furthermore, place branding can influence spatial planning and urban restructuring. In addition, Oliveira (2015a) underlines that place branding via strategic spatial planning enhances the necessary connectedness among multiple place actors, organizations and communities. Pasquinelli (2014) debates a theoretical platform

representing branding as the process of collective strategy-making in an urban context, which implies a high level of civic engagement with the process.

Several aspects have characterized these changes in policy discourse, which places emphasis on positioning for economic competitiveness, collaborative processes (to construct territorial logic) and the stronger promotion of territorial identities, in which strategic spatial planning plays a crucial role (Faludi, 1996; Forester, 1989; Healey *et al.*, 1999). The definition of visions, images and dealing with positioning are viable strategies for branding places (Gertner and Kotler, 2004; Hankinson, 2010; Pasquinelli 2010). In addition, stakeholder/community participation in both strategic spatial planning and place branding are paramount. Bearing in mind that place branding is a non-linear process (Pasquinelli, 2010), a participative-oriented place branding process is a key driver for successful place branding (Van Assche and Lo, 2011; Zenker, 2014). An example might illustrate this assumption more clearly. In March 2008, Mayor Wowereit of Berlin, publicly launched a city campaign using the slogan “*be Berlin*” (*sei Berlin*). The campaign was analysed by Colomb and Kalandides (2010) as being somewhere between a potential innovative participative oriented place branding process and a simple reframing of old interventions. Berliners actively participated in the construction of the city brand. In addition, the campaign sought to encourage the construction of strategic alliances among the city’s institutional players and other key stakeholders (Colomb and Kalandides, 2010).

Turning the focus of this chapter to Portugal, and the lack of conceptual research concerning place branding at the country and regional levels, I draw on work developed by Pike, who in 2002 conducted a detailed review of 142 destination image papers published in international journals between 1973 and 2000 (Pike, 2002). This review was conducted to provide destination image researchers with a reference guide of previous studies in the field, none of whom had taken Portugal or its regions as case studies. Six years later, Hanna and Rowley (2008) analysed the content of 67 case-study papers published in 12 academic journals in the field of place branding. In their analysis, too, Portugal is absent as a case. In an article published in 2011, Lucarelli and Berg identified 217 qualified research studies on city branding. These studies were examined, analysed and classified according to six categories: bibliographical data; methodologies used; empirical foundation; conceptual frameworks; branding elements; reported outcomes of branding efforts.

The city of Faro in the southern part of the country (Algarve region) was the only Portuguese region to feature in a study devoting attention to place (city level) branding. This fact could be justified for two reasons: first, Faro is the capital of Algarve, a tourism region; secondly, because place branding was seen as especially relevant for increasing tourism revenues, investment and tourists. Recently, Chan and Marafa (2013), in an analysis of 55 studies dedicated to place branding, identified an article by Freire (2009) which devoted attention to the Algarve region. The same publication has previously been identified in a meticulous analysis by Lucarelli and Berg (2011).

Though there are a few mentions of Portuguese regions and cities, there remains a shortage of academic research in the field of place branding which focus upon Portugal and especially its northern part, as an empirical case. The following section provides an overview of the roots of place branding in Portugal.

3.3. From place promotion to place branding with special reference to Portugal and its northern region

The genesis of place promotion in Portugal can be traced back to 1906 and the foundation of the Portuguese Society of Propaganda (PSP) – an initiative of a group of people and the business sector, such as hotel owners (Pina, 1988). The journalist Leonildo de Mendonça e Costa decided to take the initiative of the creation of the PSP. Together with a group of 73 persons the SPP was funded with the purpose of using tourism to help Portugal to overcome a deep social and economic crisis (Cunha, 2010). The goals of this now defunct society were to promote, by its own actions or in cooperation with public authorities and local governments, all the tangible and intangible elements of Portugal and its regions to both the domestic and international markets. In addition, the society was in charge of establishing ties with international entities in order to attract visitors (Costa and Vieira, 2014). According to Pina (1988), the Portuguese Society of Propaganda can be seen as the first action of Portugal's marketing abroad and which extensively advertised the country as “the shortest way between America and Europe. It may be of interest to note that one of the preoccupations of the PSP had been spatial planning at the country level. For example, the PSP developed efforts to improve the port of Lisbon and the modification of boarding fees, as well as the facilitation of border controls. I acknowledge the limitation of this descriptive piece on the role of the PSP, as I was not able to find and analyse whether these spatial transformation practices had been planned and/or integrated within wider spatial planning or within a strategic spatial plan, as the literature does not state this clearly. Additionally, the PSP sought to promote the establishment of a daily *Sud-Express* train connection (the *Sud-Express* is a night train that originally connected Paris and Lisbon, but which now traverses only the southern part of the original route) and the organization of a practical guide to the State Railways network (Matos and Santos, 2010).

In 1911, the Portuguese Government decided to create its first national tourism organization, the Tourism Bureau. According to Pina (1988) Portugal was among the first nations in the world to embark, since 1911, on the governmental institutionalization of tourism, along with Austria and France, pioneers in the field. The Portuguese tourism bureau can be considered the genesis of tourism planning and management in the country, as well as a continuous country promotional effort. Two comparative cases from southern Europe may be useful to note here. For example, the roots of tourism-oriented promotion in Spain dates back to the travellers of the enlightenment period during the 19th century, marginally earlier than the Portuguese case, whose journeys were motivated by an interest in exploring wild places (Baidal, 2014). Hydrotherapy treatments, or seaside holidays, were also promoted. Mass tourism in Spain experienced a boom during the 1960s and the first half of the 1970s. Nowadays, with a decentralized approach to tourism policy and planning, including place marketing and branding, Spanish national, regional and local tourism planning is integrated within economic planning (national), environmental and territorial instruments (regional) and in spatial (urban) planning (local) (for more detail, see Baidal, 2014). Other European examples of historical roots regarding place promotion, marketing and branding can be found in Costa *et al.* (2014).

Another comparative case - Italy, where the first attempts to promote the country for tourism purposes has its precedents in the classic Roman era, when Romans travelled to enjoy mud baths and

thermal waters. Nevertheless, the tourism phenomenon gained momentum after the 17th century, when Italy became a destination for the British aristocracy. The first Tourism Law in Italy was enacted in 1910. In 1919, the Italian National Body for the Development of the Tourism Industry was established, slightly later than in Portugal.

In 1911, Lisbon hosted the fourth international tourism congress (Tourism of Portugal, 2014). In 1916, while World War I was taking place in central Europe, the first issue of the *Tourism Magazine*, a biweekly publication, written in Portuguese, on tourism, promotion, travel, navigation, art and literature was released, which emphasized the role of the port of Lisbon for the tourism sector in the country – the first issue was released on July 5, 1916 (see Hemeroteca digital/Lisbon Municipality, n/year). By the mid-1930s, Portugal's tourism planning and promotion at the municipal level comprised 83 tourism entities, coordinated by the *Tourism Bureau*. Between 1930 and 1974, several tourism campaigns were launched, aimed at promoting Portuguese cities (for example Viana do Castelo, Figueira da Foz, Évora, Aveiro), as well as the country and its geographical position. In 1930, urban planning in Portugal began and centred on the production and regulation of urban land (Ferrão and Mourato, 2011). This historical piece on the tourism development in Portugal must be linked to the political environment that characterised Portugal between 1926 and 1974 as well as the “war-scenario” installed in Spain between 1936 and 1939 and the two world wars in Central Europe. Between 1926 and 1974 Portugal was governed by a corporatist authoritarian regime. However, this regime gave a considerable good support to the tourism sector and national propaganda. The fact that Spain faced a civil war between 1936 and 1939 also benefited the tourism sector in Portugal (see Pina, 1988).

In 1986, the Portuguese *Tourism Bureau* launched a place promotional campaign (published in *Conde Nast Traveller* magazine) to advertise that it had much more to offer to potential visitors than just a “sea, sun and sand” holiday (Avraham and Ketter, 2008). The campaign advertised the typical image of Portugal as a tourist destination of golden, bright and sunny beaches under the headline: “One view of Portugal”, together with “Another view of Portugal”, which highlighted the diverse landscapes found across the country, the nightlife and a variety of arts and thermal attractions, all in order to boost the country's image and attract more visitors. The campaign, twelve years after the Carnation Revolution, a military coup on 25 of April 1974 that ended nearly 50 years of dictatorship, was aimed at changing perceptions of Portugal as backward and underdeveloped.

In 1989, Lisbon, the Portuguese capital, had been a pioneer in the strengthening of its image through the definition of a particular vision and a positioning strategy for placing itself as one of the cities in the world offering its citizens the best quality of life available. This image-building and city-positioning process was integrated in the Lisbon master plan for the period 1989 to 1994. The image of Lisbon as an *Atlantic Capital of Europe* has been successful as an urban marketing tool aimed at attracting more inhabitants, more business and jobs, in stimulating urban rehabilitation and improving public spaces. In addition, Healey *et al.* (1999) highlight Lisbon as a prominent example of multiple levels of governance being brought together to create institutional opportunities and infuse strategic and coordinated municipal action. This change in urban planning practice seen in the Portuguese case reflects a change in policy agendas throughout Europe.

In order to provide a more solid view of place branding roots in Portugal and its northern region, I was able to isolate a handful of cases. Figure 3.1. presents these in chronological order. For example, Kotler *et al.* (1999) associated Portugal with five images, although is not clear to me the basis for this selection of images:

- (1) Port Wine;
- (2) The legend of the Rooster of the northern Portuguese city of Barcelos;
- (3) The Portuguese capital of Lisbon;
- (4) Portuguese navigators and their discoveries across the oceans;
- (5) The southern region of Algarve.

Source: Kotler *et al.* (1999).

Kastenholz (2002) investigated the marketing implications of a destination image on tourist behaviour by taking northern Portugal as a case study. Azevedo (2004) devoted attention to the knowledge transfer from product branding to place (city) branding as it applied to the Portuguese city of Marinha Grande. Later, Azevedo *et al.* (2010) employed a holistic and customer-oriented approach to the concept of city marketing. One year later, João Freire dedicated particular attention to the challenges and difficulties of branding Lisbon, the Portuguese capital (Freire, 2011). Recently, Azevedo *et al.* (2013) focused on the measurement of place attachment, self-esteem, self-efficacy and perceived happiness in order to provide policy makers with performance indicators for place marketing strategies. Concisely, the abovementioned literature mainly focuses on place marketing, particularly at the city level, as well as on destination image.

A specific focus on place branding emerges in work developed by García *et al.* (2013). In this study, a branding process for the River Minho estuary, on the borderland of northern Portugal and the Spanish autonomous community of Galicia, investigates the tensions between creating a place brand, enhancing market development and securing endogenous progress. In addition, their article contributes to a deeper understanding on how place branding – as a means for creating place distinctiveness and attractiveness – can be combined with a sustainable endogenous development approach in vulnerable peripheral areas. In addition, the authors have explored how such an approach to place branding can be fitted to the objectives of sustainability, inclusiveness and smart growth noted in the Europe 2020 Strategy - the EU's strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth (European Union, 2010). Recently, Bloom Consulting, a consultant company based in Madrid, released the Bloom Consulting Portugal City Brand Ranking (Bloom Consulting, 2014), which contributes to the cacophony of place brand rankings but does not add much intellectual substance to the theory or practice thereof (see, for example Sevin, 2014 for a detailed analysis of current place branding measurement scales and indices).

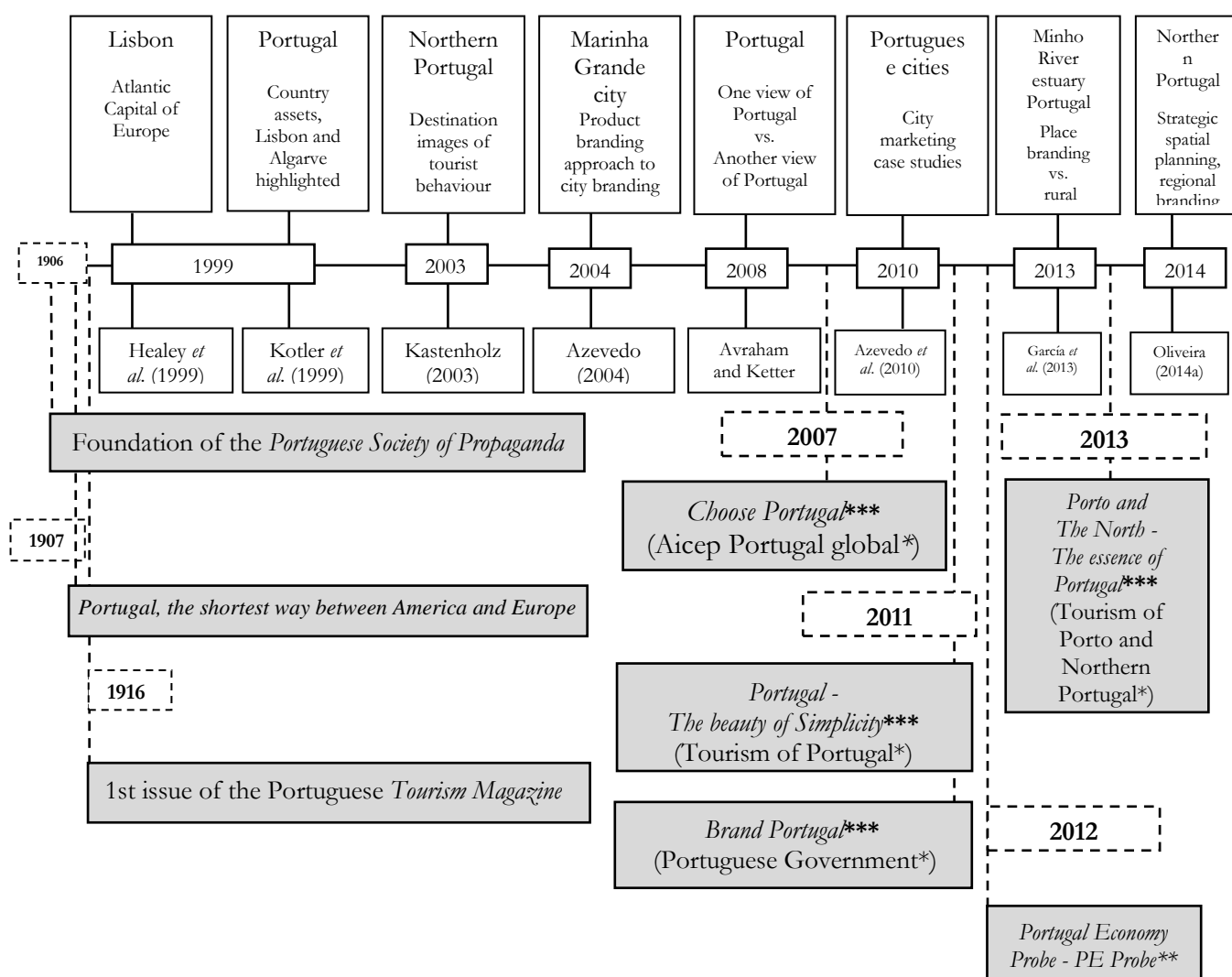


Figure 3.1. From place promotion to place branding in Portugal between 1906 and 2014.

Source: own elaboration.

— Academic developments.

- - - Public institution* / network of companies and organizations** / *** ongoing initiative.

From a practitioner and public policy-making point of view, there have been other attempts at enhancing the position of the country as an investment destination (for example *Choose Portugal*) and as a tourist destination (for example *Destination Portugal – The Beauty of Simplicity*). These place promotion initiatives have been developed by a partnership of private entities (for example *Portugal Economy Probe, PEProbe*), governmental agencies (for example *Agency for Investment and Foreign Trade of Portugal*) and ministries (for example *Secretary of State of Tourism of the Portuguese Ministry of Economy*). Figure 3.1. provides a summary of the branding attempts in Portugal at national, regional and city levels, as well as the academic studies that were traced during the preparation stage of the present Chapter. All of the aforementioned works adopted a marketing - and corporate branding-oriented

approach to the process of marketing Portugal and its regions, and to a lesser extent also employed design branding strategies.

The relevance of a few other studies can be added here. For example, Oliveira (2014a) explores regional branding by taking northern Portugal as an empirical case. The Euro-region Galicia-northern Portugal also deserves special attention from scholars and practitioners. Gutierrez (2013) explores the competencies and capabilities of the Euro-region Galicia-northern Portugal and its integration in a potential joint inter-regional marketing plan, while Oliveira (2014b, 2015e) adopts a strategic spatial planning approach to a potential cross-border branding strategy for the same Euro-region Galicia-northern of Portugal, and the role of the European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) to implement and operationalize it.

The detailed review presented here primarily emphasizes academic sources and the ongoing place promotion initiatives and place marketing campaigns undertaken by Portuguese institutions. However, the aim of the current research cannot be completed without an exhaustive analysis of how place branding has been approached within spatial plans and strategic frameworks. These will be discussed in the empirical analysis below.

3.4. Research methodology

As stated earlier, and in line with previous studies on branding and with reference to Portugal (see Oliveira, 2014a; Oliveira and Panyik, 2015) a qualitative method is employed. The principal purpose of this research is to obtain in-depth understanding of how place branding has been approached (or not) in spatial development plans, strategic initiatives and policy documents prepared to give spatial and sectoral guidance to Portuguese authorities. Specifically, a content analysis was conducted on 20 spatial development plans, strategies and policy documents (out of 30 identified), published by Portuguese authorities, the EU and the OECD, mainly for the period between 2014 and 2020. Whereas a mixed method would be fruitful for generalising the findings to other geographical contexts, its application was beyond of the scope of this study.

3.4.1. Content analysis of spatial development plans, strategic initiatives and policy documents

The content analysis methodology is a form of scientific inquiry that has commonly been regarded as a useful method for social science research, especially in the area of consumer brand relationships (Fetscherin and Heinrich, 2015). This method, often grouped under the term “discourse analysis”, has been applied to analyse qualitative or textual forms of data such as written documents (for example development plans) or visual materials (for example photographs, videos; see Hannam and Knox, 2005; Singh, *et al.*, 2007). In addition, content analysis has been used in several studies to analyse research articles in tourism management and destination image research (see, for example, Govers *et al.*, 2007).

Hanna and Rowley (2008) employ content analysis within numerous articles published in a variety of academic journals with the aim of depicting place brand terms and their geographical dimensions. A few years later, Chan and Marafa (2013) identified in their review paper 17 papers (20.7 per cent of the total) employing document content analysis on place identity (Hudson and

Hawkins, 2006), place image (Nobili, 2005) and place creation/altering (Syssner, 2010). However, these analyses do not explore branding attempts in strategic spatial planning, spatial plans or strategic or policy documents.

To shed light on how place brands and place branding have been integrated, described and narrated (or not) in 20 spatial development plans, strategic initiatives and policy documents stating the territorial, spatial-economic and sectoral development trajectories for Portugal and its northern region were analysed (Table 3.1.). The period for this analysis is coincident with the EU financial framework 2014 to 2020. These documents have been suggested by key national and regional actors during in-depth interviews conducted by the author between December 2013 and September 2014.

Table 3.1. List of documents' content analysed.

ID*	Title
National level: Portugal	
1	The Programme of the XIX Constitutional Government 2011-2015
2	The Road to Growth: A Medium Term-Reform Strategy for Portugal 2014-2020
3	Portugal 2020
4	National Strategy for Research, Innovation and Smart Specialization 2014-2020
5	National Strategic Framework: Operational Competitiveness Programme 2014-2020
6	National Strategic Framework: Clusters and Competitiveness and Technology Poles 2014-2020
7	Smart Cities Portugal – A Sustainable and Competitive Network
8	Portugal Economy Probe Portugal
9	Portugal Global – Choose Portugal (Portugal Basic Data)
10	Portugal, business by the sea – Portugal, Europe's West Coast
11	Territorial Planning and Urbanism Act (LBPOTU)
12	National Spatial Planning Policy Programme (PNPOT) Action Programme and Report
13	The National Strategic Plan for Tourism (Revised version) 2013-2015
Regional level: Northern Portugal	
14	Northern Portugal Strategic Guidelines/Operational Programme 2014-2020
15	Northern Portugal Smart Specialization Strategy 2014-2020
Inter-regional level: European region Galicia-northern Portugal	
16	Euro-region 2020 Project 2014-2020
17	Two Countries – One Destination
18	Joint Investment Programme Galicia-northern Portugal 2014-2020
Supra-national level: EU and the OECD	
19	Portugal: Reforming the state to promote growth
20	Europe 2020 Strategy: Portugal-specific recommendations 2014-2020

Source: own elaboration based on the sources provided in appendix E, page 242. * ID assigned by the author to facilitate the analysis.

3.4.2. Method

To guarantee that the present research is timely and up to date, the content analysis was conducted in December 2014 and reviewed in January 2015 using a process as follows:

- (1) Downloading the latest versions of the documents as PDF files from their original sources (see appendix E, page 242 for the full list of documents and their sources);
- (2) By using the command “find”, the 20 documents were scanned page after page to extract:
 - a. the section;
 - b. the paragraph;
 - c. the sentence in which the words and terms listed in Table 3.2. are noted (based on Hanna and Rowley, 2011).
- (3) Table 3.3. was elaborated to enable a concise and direct analysis by touching on not only the words identified, but also the context from which they emerged. This was based on Syssner’s notions of *spatial anchorage* and *spatial positioning* (see Syssner, 2010), as well as the latest place branding literature (for example Daspit and Zavattaro, 2014; Eshuis, *et al.*, 2014; Eugenio-Vela and Barniol-Carcasona, 2015; Kavaratzis, *et al.*, 2015; Zenker and Erfgen, 2014). A summary of findings are presented below.

Table 3.2. Words and terms searched.

Applied when the document was written in Portuguese	Applied when the document was written in English
Marca	Brand
Marca + Marca territorial (*)	Place (**) Branding
Marketing + Marketing territorial	Place (**) Marketing
Promoção + Promoção territorial (*)	Place (**) Promotion
Promoção + Promoção sectoral (***)	Sectoral Place Promotion (****)

Source: own elaboration.

*Portugal, regiões, cidades, transfronteiriço, destino. **Country, regions, cities, cross-border, destination. ***Industria, Turismo, Saúde, Serviços. ****Industry, Tourism, Healthy, Culture, Services.

3.5. Research findings

As an alternative to an exhaustive description of the content of the analysed documents, I instead engaged with the documents that mentioned branding, marketing and promotional intent within the country (Portugal) and at regional levels (northern region). Whenever possible, links to the aforementioned literature are provided.

The Programme of the XIX Constitutional Government (ID 1) mirrors the territorial and sectoral disintegration and disorganization in Portugal. Prepared for the timeframe 2011 to 2015 (following the country’s political cycle), this political document clearly states the dire need to “promote in a coordinated manner the brand Portugal” to both the domestic and foreign markets (ID 1, p. 36, 52, 105, 106). However, this call to “promote” the “brand Portugal” has been neglected

in follow up documents, that is, *The Road to Growth: A Medium Term-Reform Strategy for Portugal* (2) and *Portugal 2020* (ID 3). Further evidence of this disregard is that ID 1 does not mention the national flagship destination brand – Destination Portugal – the beauty of simplicity. Meanwhile, the ID 2 requests a structural revision of the destination marketing initiatives at the country level, but *The National Strategic Plan for Tourism* (ID 13) takes at the heart of its promotional vectors the initiative Destination Portugal. Tourism-oriented place promotions are included in the strategic plan for tourism (ID 13), yet it still lacks integration in terms of the core attempt to do serious branding around Destination Portugal, thereby denoting a clear absence of strategy; in line with the conclusions of Oliveira (2014a).

Throughout the analysis, the miscellanea of branding intentions emerged. The same ID 13 proposes the creation of another “brand” for the product, that is, military tourism (p. 60) – without any clarification about the “content” of military tourism. From my perspective, this suggestion of designing another “brand” gives rise to misunderstandings. According to Hankinson (2010), creating additional brands for each segment can lead to market confusion and the dilution of the brand’s impact. These documents underline the key national “strategic” sectors, albeit in an incongruent mode. Furthermore, there is an absence of mechanisms for operationalizing the place promotion measures identified. A lack of institutional coordination and organization to implement processes is an obstacle blocking spatial transformation. At this level, Van den Berg and Braun (1999) argue that organizing capacity has become indispensable in any place marketing strategy. In fact, Portuguese regions, administrated by regional coordination and development commissions, do not hold decision-making powers to determine their own strategic path in which to follow their own knowledge about the region they administrate. This has impacts on spatial planning and branding intentions, as this analysis clearly highlights. For example, the ID 13 does not refer to the flagship brand for northern Portugal, that is, “Porto and the North – The essence of Portugal”.

The documents produced at the supra-national level (that is, OECD-ID19; EU-ID 20) are spatial-economic plans that are essentially focused on boosting the Portuguese economy, making it more competitive and creating new employment opportunities in areas such as tourism and industry (ID 19, p.25; ID 20, recommendation number 2).

The branding attempts developed by European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) and the Eixo Atlântico (ID 16, 17, 18) presents more “brand substance” and are articulated with the wider strategy. The documents ID 16, 17, 18 appear to propose the common point of constructing a regional advantage at the Euro-region Galicia-northern Portugal level; for example, the Euro-region smart specialization agenda (ID 16), joint tourism-oriented promotional strategies have been identified (ID 17), as well and a Joint Investment Programme Galicia-northern Portugal 2014-2020 (ID 18). This represents an alternative mode of governance to the one followed in Portugal. Several cooperation mechanisms have been activated and links for cross-border knowledge exchange established (for example synergies between universities and enterprises). These documents widen the gap between those produced at the national level (ID 1-13) and those produced at the supra-national level (ID 19, 20), as they stand beyond the assumption of spatial competition and economic growth by illuminating cooperation among the public and private sectors across administrative borders (Portugal and Spain). Of paramount importance to note is that, cooperation and cooptation are

viable strategies for branding places (Pasquinelli, 2013). Among the 20 documents analysed, the Joint Investment Programme Galicia-northern Portugal 2014-2020 (ID 18) is a pioneering example, as it presents a programme for supporting investment attraction based on place marketing and financial mechanisms (p. 66). Even though place branding is not mentioned in the document, place marketing has been integrated with the investment plan. Table 3.3. summarizes the content analysis of the document.

Table 3.3. Place branding and related terms INTERNAL (brand attempt/place marketing and place promotion) or EXTERNAL (no significant finding*) to the analysed documents.

ID	Brand	Place Branding	Place Marketing Destination Marketing	Place Promotion Sectorial Promotion
National level: Portugal				
1	Brand Portugal	No*	No*	No*
2	No*	No*	Implement a structural revision of the destination marketing initiatives at the country level.	Promote investment in the agricultural, agro-industry and forestry sectors.
3	No*	No*	No*	Promote the attraction of foreign investment (sector not specified), talent and a skilful labour force. Reinforce the competitive position of the Portuguese market.
4	No*	No*	No*	No*
5	No*	No*	No*	No*
6	No*	No*	No*	No*
7	No*	No*	No*	No*
8	PE Probe Portugal	No*	No*	Provide information, about (1) study; (2) research and development; (3) investment; (4) tourism in Portugal.
9	Choose Portugal	No*	No*	Encourage foreign companies to invest in Portugal and to contribute to the success of Portuguese companies abroad.

10	Portugal, business by the sea - Portugal, Europe's West Coast	No*	No*	Support the attraction of visitors, investors, talent and a skilful labour force.
11	No*	No*	No*	Promote the diversity of the national territory, as well as its quality of life. Ensure conditions to the development of economic, social and cultural activities.
12	No*	No*	No*	Promote the Portuguese economy, making it more competitive with a handful of interventions regarding transportation and mobility.
13	Destination Portugal and Taste Portugal	No*	Enhance the image of Portugal as a tourist destination.	Design tourism-oriented promotional campaigns. Design a brand for military tourism.
Regional level: Northern Portugal				
14	No*	No*	Design international marketing strategies to promote and give visibility to northern Portugal	Promote regional economy. Support exports and the internationalization of small and medium enterprises.
15	No*	No*	No*	No*
Inter-regional level: Euro-region Galicia-northern Portugal				
16	No*	No*	No*	Promote competitiveness of the Euro-region Galicia-northern Portugal. Reinforce tourism as a strategic sector for both sides of the border.
17	Two countries one destination	No*	No*	Design joint tourism-oriented promotional strategies.
18	No*	Design a unique brand to enhance the image	Create and operationalize place-marketing strategies for investment attraction (p. 66).	Develop joint tourism-oriented promotional strategies. Instigate cooperation in the tourism sector and in the areas of

		of the Euro-region.		smart specialization defined in each ID15 (for example sea economy; Port wine; pilgrimage).
Supra-national level: EU and OECD				
19	No*	No*	No*	Promote and maintain the investment on eco-innovations in textiles, ceramics, aeronautics, waste management and electricity distribution.
20	No*	No*	No*	Promote employment and competitiveness (recommendation number 2).

Source: own elaboration.

3.6. Discussion and reflections

In summary, for the most part, the documents are economic-oriented, aimed at boosting the national economy and competitiveness (for example ID 3, 19 and 20), as well as economic growth (ID 2). Spatial planning is technically addressed in two documents (ID 11, 12). The smart specialization agenda is analysed in three other documents (ID 4, 7, 15). Tourism planning and development (for example ID 13, 17) and investment attraction (for example ID 8, 9, 10) also receive attention. I acknowledge that not all the analysed documents fit the definition of spatial development plans or strategic spatial plans, as stated in Albrechts (2006). For instance, several of the plans identified remain too much of “an administrative framework” (for example ID 5, 6) for development, instead of a truly “proactive plan” aimed at designing the future and implementing it. In addition, the documents seems to “religiously” follow the European Union guidelines that have been locked into the framework projected for 2020, which can be criticized as being strategically weak. There is in Portugal no single strategic planning document unambiguously expressing a clear consensual vision of the future and illustrating the means for rendering it manifest. This is reflected in how brands and place branding are approached. The references to place branding emerged out of the clutter without clear links to the built environment, spatial regeneration or spatial planning strategies.

In light of the recent theoretical developments in place branding, as previously noted (see chapter 1 and 2), the branding intentions identified are far from being place-branding initiatives. Six documents, out of the 20 analysed (30 per cent of the total) clearly refer to *marca*/brand. However, these “brands” have single and isolated branding intentions that are removed from the core aims of the documents and are excessively underpinned by the communication of aesthetic values, for example a brand logo and slogan. Several commentators have repeatedly claimed the relative insignificance of logos and slogans in place branding (see, for example, Govers, 2013). In addition, these branding attempts lack strategic orientation (there is no attempt to envision shared futures for Portugal as a whole, or just the northern part). Primarily, the documents target investment attraction

and visitors at the spatial scale of the country. It has been asserted that place branding entails more than a simple amendment of place promotional mechanisms and image building methods in order to suit the needs of places (Kavaratzis, 2010).

The intentions for branding Portugal and the northern region have been mostly focused on the communication of logos, slogans and place advertising campaigns, which have been proved in extensive place branding literature to be ineffective in fostering economic restructuring, social inclusion and cohesion, political engagement and participation, place identification, and the general well-being of citizens. In addition, there is an excessive reliance on the objectives of inward investment and visitor attraction to boost the economy and make it more competitive, despite the nature of these branding attempts being doubted repeatedly in the place branding literature.

It seems that policy-makers in Portugal have been adopting a communication promotion based approach to place branding with an emphasis on visual strategies and have done so because they have found themselves needing to rapidly and effectively implement tools for showcasing the country in one “single step”. This approach towards place branding has been highly criticised (Kavaratzis, 2012). Taking the same approach, Kavaratzis and Hatch (2013) argue that the process of branding places refers to a set of steps that need to be taken one after the other in order to reach the desired brand. In addition, place branding strategies are likely to be more effective if they engage with stakeholders (Kavaratzis, 2012) and with citizens (Eshuis *et al.*, 2014). Whether this has taken place in the Portuguese case is unclear, mainly because has never been researched. Furthermore, the period 2014 to 2020 lacks strategic ambition and will eventually limit envisioning futures for the country and its regions beyond 2020, thereby breaking ties with the EU framework. However, I acknowledge that scarce financial resources from the national budget, renders the EU a unique source for funding projects in order to support socio-spatial and spatial-economic transformation in Portugal and its regions.

Despite the fact that some documents identify brands and propose place promotion initiatives, there is no coordination with other spatial planning or strategic spatial planning programmes. Two illustrative examples are useful here and can serve to provide a benchmark for the Portuguese case. The Italian region of Tuscany has integrated place branding and spatial planning and can be regarded as a major success of place branding (Van Assche and Lo, 2011). Despite its strength, the Tuscany brand hardly represents those regional areas of which the “otherness” has been analysed (Bellini, Loffredo and Pasquinelli, 2010). Tuscany brand favoured some aspects of the region but ignored many others. “Experience Masterplanning”, developed in 2011 by the *East Renfrewshire Council*, a district unitary authority southwest of the city of Glasgow in the west of Scotland (see Allan, 2012), aligned spatial positioning aims with wider spatial planning intervention at the council level. Bringing a spatial dimension to the idea of branding places and its alignment in strategic spatial planning is further discussed below.

3.7. Conclusions

There are three key concluding remarks worth mentioned regarding the branding attempts in Portugal and its northern region and as the result of the content analysis of the 20 spatial plans, strategic initiatives and policy documents analysed:

- (1) place branding as a term is absent;
- (2) there is a predominance of tourism-oriented promotion initiatives and investment oriented marketing campaigns which are lacking vertically and horizontally institutional articulation, that is the institutional incapacity of exploring synergies or construct shared visions towards the future (envisioning);
- (3) inconsistent communication strategies exist, which are each supported by unique visual elements and aesthetic values;
- (4) only the documents produced at a cross-border level (Galicia-northern Portugal) seem to better articulate marketing initiatives with more strategic spatial interventions and a vision for the Euroregion in the 2020 horizon (the 2020 horizon follows in line with the EU Strategy 2020 and the Partnership Agreement EU-Portugal for the period 2014-2020).

Despite the fact that Portugal has been promoting its national and local assets since 1906 and one would expect more evolution towards place branding at the national, region and city levels. However, what we see is a cacophony of taglines (sometimes mutually exclusive) and place promotion approaches without coherent integration and alignment between the different tiers of government. I convincingly state that place branding in strategic spatial planning and spatial policy-making is clearly neglected in Portugal, as in many other countries. However, further research is needed to establish how place branding can be integrated into spatial planning.

I argue, that it is necessary to emphasise that the role of place branding in strategic spatial planning in a way that goes far beyond advertising campaigns, place promotion or communication strategies. This linkage would bring spatial consciousness to the branding process of places, and a focus on entrenched day-to-day social and economic issues. These cannot and should not be ignored, if place branding is going to bring about real improvements to a place and its citizens. Furthermore, more integration could also support a correct and efficient use of land and resources (for example current versus future use of industrial and tourism sites), and support more physical planning interventions, the ability to think strategically and envision better futures as well as bridge the gap between place identity and place images. In addition, place branding as an aspect of place marketing that stresses communication between governments and citizens, may be used in support of the visionary realignments often identified in strategic spatial planning initiatives (that is, shape and frame what a place is and what it aims to become). Moreover, place branding integrated with strategic spatial planning would foster economic restructuring, social inclusion and cohesion, political engagement and participation, the reinforcement of place identification and the general long-term well-being of citizens.

Aligning place-branding goals with wider spatial strategies will contribute to bridging the intellectual gap within the branding debate via a nuanced strategic spatial planning approach. Place branding is needed to infuse strategic spatial planning with creativity and dynamism, and can locate the stories of communities and the hopes of place-actors at the heart of the process. Replacing, thus, the stagnation and rigidity of the traditional approach to spatial planning and spatial plan-making. However, I acknowledge that spatial planners are less prepared to deal with market conditions and marketers with socio-spatial and spatial-economic conditions. In addition, the differences in ideology and philosophy between spatial planners and place marketers may be hard to overcome; spatial planners may see more marketing interventions as merely commodifying places – if they are unaware of the critical discussion and development of place branding within the place management literature. However, this chapter argues place branding, in strategic spatial planning, can foster more participation, as it engages people with a place. This does not mean that place branding should be imposed or embedded by force in strategic spatial planning or in spatial plan-making, but could, instead, be the result of coordinated efforts between all place actors and communities. This alignment can evolve place branding theory towards a more strategic spatially-oriented approach.

This chapter had certain limitations. The content analysis was built on documents produced by different authorities that adopted different planning discourses and followed dissimilar spatial development doctrines. In addition, the documents were different in terms of their aims, some being more spatial-oriented, while others embraced economic growth as the core of their objectives. Other documents are available that are also worth analysing (chapter 4 responds to this limitation by employing a content analysis on tourism-oriented online publications in which the tourism potential of Portugal has been discussed). Moreover, I acknowledge the need to extend this study by employing mixed methods (qualitative and quantitate). In addition, there is a need to undertake primary research such as in-depth interviews with national and regional actors to gain a better understanding of their visions regarding a strategic spatial planning approach to place branding and their opinion on a regional branding strategy for northern Portugal (chapter 5 aims to respond to this limitation).