

Contents

Workshop Theme 3: Branding the Distinctive City	37
Urban Festivities and Culture’s Events as Instruments of Urban Revitalization and Development.....	39
Eva Čermáková.....	39
What Makes a City Distinctive?	41
Dr Nathaniel Coleman	41
Panacea or Urban Problem?: Understanding the Impact of Flagship Regeneration	42
Brian Doucet	42
Branding as Coproduction in Public Management	43
Dr Jasper Eshuis.....	43
On Streets and Screens – Challenging the European Creative City.....	44
Hanna Harris	44
Branding City by Night in the World Heritage Cities: the Case of Lyon, France.....	45
Edna Hernandez Gonzales	45
From Identity Building to Branding: the Case of the City of Helsinki	46
Mervi Ilmonen.....	46
Re-Branding ‘Cultural Quarters’: Evidence-Based Policy?.....	47
John McCarthy.....	47
The Social and Culture Life in the City Centre of Nairobi	48
John Onyango (iii)	48
The Contribution of Industrial Heritage Revitalisation to Urban Regeneration: the Experience of the Warsaw Region.....	49
Anna Pawlikowska-Piechotka.....	49
Branding the Breeze – Delivering a Strap-Line.....	50
Deborah Peel.....	50
“The Inhabitant of the Entrepreneurial City must be Entrepreneurial” – Branding the Shrinking City as a Creative One Through Local Population Participation	51
Max Rousseau.....	51
Cultural Heritage and Urban Transformation	52
Ragnhild Skogheim.....	52
The Hyper-Real Urban Landscape: Rrepresentations of Turin in the Eyes of Foreign Investors.....	53
Dr Alberto Vanolo	53
Global Museums and Local Development Strategies	54
Dr Elsa Vivant.....	54

Workshop Theme 3: Branding the Distinctive City

Urban Festivities and Culture's Events as Instruments of Urban Revitalization and Development

Instrumentation of urban animations and events by the urban policy makers and their domestication for projects of urban revitalization of city public spaces

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ABSTRACT

The paper summarizes research performed as a part of a postgraduate international research programme at the Institute of Theory of Town Planning Brno, University of Technology – Faculty of Architecture, Czech Republic, and Laboratory for Theories on Urban Mutations, French Planning Institute; Paris VIII University, France.

For some time, urban policy makers, planners and architects have realized the importance of urban festivities and events. They pay attention to their direct or indirect impact on the revitalization and development of urban spaces. They have also started incorporating them in large-scale architectural and urban projects and employ them as political tools. Urban festivities and events are investments contributing to community integration and representation of the entire region. They give places a new meaning and symbolical value.

Our research is investigating potential effects of urban festivities and events on the transformations and the new perceptions of spaces. It focuses on organized open-air activities in the public domain of cities, including their centers, neighborhoods and peripheries.

Possible physical impact areas of the above may include:

- incorporation of promotional areas in new urban regeneration,
- new transportation connections – new accessibility;
- mobile or fixed urban decorations;
- new or newly equipped buildings for accommodations or services; and infrastructure.

Indirect impacts for urban spaces may include:

- revalorization of city or site image;
- foundation or recuperation of cultural, patrimonial or social identity;
- improved perception;
- treatment of social problems (e.g., social segregation or ethnical exclusion);

- development of urban tourism; and
- global promotion of the city image.

The Study Cases

Our research investigates new types of urban media promotion both in the Czech and French environs focusing on region centers and their satellites, such as, City of Nantes in France, and city of Hradec Králové in the Czech Republic.

Key Words: urban festivities;urban development, cultures events

What Makes a City Distinctive?

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ABSTRACT

Financial pressures apparently require that revitalization of cities and towns must occur according to a kind of logic at cross-purposes with sustaining a strong degree of place identification in the built environment. The mechanisms of real estate investment, development and speculation, which are seen as positive agents of urban regeneration, filter out memory and attachment to places out of supposed economic necessity. In contrast, over the long duration, legibility, deriving from a continuing elaboration of place identity, stands a far better chance of assuring continuing economic survival (and social thriving) of cities and towns than re-branding ever could. Even if marketing, in the form of city (re) branding, promises a quick fix to problems of economic viability for cities and towns, solving the problem of how to give a dying city or town a renewed sense of purpose lies elsewhere—it is rather identification and comprehensibility that nurtures attachment.

In view of the above, this paper argues that commercial and tourist viability cannot be the key criteria for making improvement decisions in the built environment. No matter that the default position for regeneration schemes nearly always encompasses entertainment, whether in the form of passive consumption of spectacles or active consumption of themed experiences (including shopping, sports, gambling or culture), spectacle alone is incapable of establishing enduring legibility or place identification. Entertainment turns on stimulation and satisfaction; identification with a place entails a level of emotional attachment far subtler than technology, consumption or media can offer alone.

As an alternative to the standard operating procedures of regeneration, this paper advances the proposition that individuals and groups will develop durable attachments to places only when their emotions are touched. Moreover, affection for a setting is a good indicator of its long-term survival. Developing on this, elaboration on how place legibility could be established will be outlined. Key to this argument is to show why an alternative perspective on regeneration and re-branding will require government officials (including local authorities and planners), developers, architects and urban designers to learn to deal with problems of how individuals and groups respond to the world of artefacts and how communities appropriate space.

Key Words: distinctiveness, place, regeneration

Panacea or Urban Problem?: Understanding the Impact of Flagship Regeneration

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ABSTRACT

Large scale Flagship urban regeneration projects have been a favoured tool for economic growth by civic leaders, city boosters and investors for more than two decades. Such projects aim at becoming a catalyst for further urban regeneration. Flagships entail the creation of high-profile and high-end retail, residential, entertainment and tourist spaces in what were once derelict or underused urban spaces. They are often tied into aggressive city re-branding or marketing campaigns which seek to launch a new urban vision (away from an industrial city to a creative, dynamic, profitable environment to visit and invest in). They become the new symbols of a resurgent, modern city, and are used to sell the city to tourists, investors, and elites. They are often seen by planners, developers and local politicians as a panacea for the problems of deindustrialisation and regional economic stagnation. However, this support for flagships from civic leaders and developers is in stark contrast to much of the scholarly literature, which states that rather than contributing to overall economic growth, this form of regeneration diverts scarce resources from areas such as housing and education. In addition, rather than mitigating socioeconomic polarisation, it is argued by many that flagship regeneration actually contributes to it. Flagships tend to be built in the locales with the highest potential for profit, rather than the neighbourhoods with the greatest needs. Yet, despite these vocal criticisms from the academic community, this type of development, born out of the property-led regeneration in the 1980s, continues into the Twenty-first Century.

This paper will outline and critically analyse these contrasting viewpoints which exist between many academics and city boosters. It will also outline a major dilemma with flagships: if they exist to attract more outside investment and tourists, what is their implication and impact on local residents?

Key Words: city rebranding, flagship projects, urban regeneration

Branding as Coproduction in Public Management

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ABSTRACT

In city management location branding has become an important subject, especially with regard to urban renewal. Renewed city zones need to attract new investors and inhabitants. Location branding plays a role in creating not only a positive image of the location but also of the process of urban renewal.

The role of public managers is no longer limited to regulating development, but widened to also stimulating and promoting it. Public managers have taken up an entrepreneurial role as ‘urban sales agents’ using business methods such as branding. However, location branding in networks like urban renewal networks differs from branding traditional products, due to the public character of these processes, the strong influence of government institutions and permeable boundaries between the public and the private sphere. Branding in urban renewal processes is a matter of co-production between stakeholders, and the role of process managers seems an important one.

Marketing sciences have seen important theoretical developments regarding brands. Where brands used to be seen as a public image perceived by consumers, scholars have recently conceptualised brands as relationships. Brands have a personality and form relationships with consumers. Value is created through relationships with multiple stakeholders such as employees and government agencies. Theoretically the idea of branding can also be connected to the wide range of literature on frames and framing in public administration. In this paper we connect these two streams of literature to improve our understanding of branding as a phenomenon.

We apply our theoretical framework in a qualitative case-study to analyze concrete branding processes and refine our theoretical ideas. We have studied two cases of city renewal in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. The study is mainly based on in-depth interviews, but also on observations and documents. The cases show how branding is a matter of co-production unfolding in networks of public and private managers, as well as citizens. Branding in practice differs from theoretical models of brand-management. Firstly, branding theory tends to present branding as a consciously arranged process, while branding in practice happens largely unconsciously. Secondly, storytelling (about micro-scale events) plays an important role in the mix of branding-practices. This finding adds to branding theory which tends to stress the importance of architecture and large festivals.

Key Words: location branding, coproduction, governance

On Streets and Screens – Challenging the European Creative City

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ABSTRACT

Urban culture has changed insidiously. The change applies to urban planning and policy, urban infrastructures, talk about culture and finally urban cultural content itself. This paper examines this change and the socially produced urban cultural space it entails. The main concerns are: 1) How are culture and the city intertwined in the contemporary “urban” and where can gaps in that “cultural urban” be identified?; 2) What role does the interaction between growing event cultures, the use of public space and the emergence of new technologies play in this cultural urban?; and finally 3) What challenging typologies of European “cultural cities” do these developments imply and what kind of spatial scales do they operate on?

To this end, the paper examines the production of urban cultural space from the viewpoint of media. From artistic practices of “locative media” to site-specific penetration into public space, media in its various forms is seen as developing new ways of re-imagining and creating urban space. Here the focus is on street television as a locative process of such re-imagining. Italian “micro-televisions” will be analysed as a case. Since 2002, numerous Italian neighbourhood channels have been grouped under the spontaneous Telestreet movement.

The created locally rooted, globally networked, mobile and always contested channels formulate an audio-visual array of urban neighbourhood questions. In some cases, what has been produced manifests in changes in the built environment; in some cases what is under negotiation is the very idea of public space.

The paper argues that the urban media interventionists of street television engage in important forms of urban change, comparable to those of the so-called urban avant-garde. Their actions provide for tactical moves against or “interruptions” to the prevailing creativity city rhetoric that is shaping Italian and other cities. They may even be calling, as some researchers have argued, for the “real creative city to stand up” next to the “creative city” they are performing their tactics on.

Thus, the practice of street TV engages with the production of challenging typologies of European cultural and creative cities.

Key Words: creative city, public space, urban media

Branding City by Night in the World Heritage Cities: the Case of Lyon, France

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ABSTRACT

The benefits that a city can obtain thanks to the label of World Heritage City, they are numerous. Nevertheless, the success of a good management gets to combine the policy of heritage cultural conservation and their promotion. It is intimately related to the innovation and the implantation of new consensus mechanisms for the branding city.

Until last few years the heritage cities was seen like attractive tourist over all in day (diurnal), at this time we attend to the promotion opening of the heritage cities in nocturnal schedules. This is translated in an increase of the cultural offering, v., gr.: the prolongation of the museums schedules towards the nocturnal ones, historical monument's illumination, tourist routes, and cultural activities during the night, among others. All of this, with the objective to seduce the user (tourist, inhabitant) to practice and to appreciate the heritage city from another perspective. These activities are indicators of the new dynamics of branding city that it is developed in a great number of cities, at different speeds and with different impacts.

This paper aims to analyze the state of the art in the promotion of the heritage city in a nocturnal schedule, according to branding the distinctive city such as Lyon in France.

Key Words: design light, heritage city, branding city

From Identity Building to Branding: the Case of the City of Helsinki

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ABSTRACT

Selling, and branding, a place is not a new phenomenon either for cities (Rome, the eternal city; Paris, the City of Lights) or for tourist destinations. However, during the end of the 19th century the promotion of cities has increased. Special offices have been established to attract the potential tourist by enticing on what is laying ahead of them, just waiting to be explored. Today this promotion of the city is entering a new phase. No longer is it just the tourist who has to be informed and no longer is it just about telling a wider world what is on offer. City-marketing and city branding are the new catch words. Branding has become a powerful tool of place-marketing.

A much wider circle of potential targets is involved; from the potential tourists to residents, new companies and even the inhabitants of cities themselves. Involved are also difficult and complex questions about what a city wants to be. Cities are no longer “natural or authentic”; they have become an object of a conscious cultural positioning strategy, aimed at selected markets.

The aim of this paper is to discuss the image and brand construction of the City of Helsinki and of the larger region including cities of Espoo and Vantaa. How is Helsinki marketed for different, especially international audiences? How has Helsinki been imagined by marketing strategists and how does it relate to the local residents understanding?

What kind of a city does Helsinki want to be? Can forms of city-branding not only sell the city but, in addition, deliver a positive contribution to the social and cultural fabric of cities? The project is part of a Nordic study “The Image of the City: Urban Branding as Constructed Capabilities in Nordic City Regions”, funded by Nordic innovation Centre.

Key Words: city competition, branding, cultural positioning

Re-Branding ‘Cultural Quarters’: Evidence-Based Policy?

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ABSTRACT

So-called ‘cultural quarters’ have been created in many cities as a means of bringing about economic diversification, job creation and income generation, as well as image enhancement. In Scotland, for instance, this approach has been followed to some extent by all cities. Spatial planning is often used as a policy mechanism in this context by means of the formal designation of ‘cultural quarters’ in statutory land use plans, with supporting policies aimed at encouraging further clustering of culture-related uses. Cultural quarters are therefore areas that contain a relatively high concentration of cultural uses and that are considered appropriate for further concentration of such uses. They may be aligned to cultural production (for instance in terms of art and design, digital media, music or film production), or cultural consumption (for instance in terms of arts and entertainment facilities) or both – indeed, it may be suggested that successful cultural quarters will of necessity contain a cross-fertilisation between production and consumption uses. In all cases, concentration is commonly accepted to lead to synergy, agglomeration economies, complementarity of uses and minimisation of amenity loss. However, it may be argued that such approaches primarily represent a ‘re-branding’ of areas in order to align them to city marketing and tourism strategies. Evidence of this may be provided by cities where ‘quartering’ (often involving cultural quarters) has been more comprehensive, with evident links to tourism and city marketing. Moreover, there is frequently resistance to such ‘re-branding’ activities on the part of residents and workers actively involved in cultural production in such areas, since such branding activity is seen to lead to cultural commodification and gentrification rather than regeneration, with the potential erosion of the very distinctiveness that prompted designation in the first case. Furthermore, the evidence of broadly-based regeneration outcomes arising from designation of such quarters is sparse, with much evidence and argument suggesting that such designation may be counter-productive.

This paper discusses such issues with reference to case studies in the UK, and presents conclusions of relevance for cities in other contexts.

Key Words: branding, cultural, quarters

The Social and Culture Life in the City Centre of Nairobi

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ABSTRACT

We live in a world of advanced technology, stiff global competition, rapid transformation of all facets of life and architecture has not been spared. The transformations are witnessed in facets of life that affect the social relations, cultural consumption and political economy that have affected the manner in which people perform in and out of space in the city centres. Cities are marketing themselves ecstatically beyond the baroque with a more visible presence of the contending parties through trade marks, public relations invasively advertised in streets, monuments (signature buildings or projects), and language.

Baudrillard (2003; vi) contends that architecture is today represented in huge screens of atoms and particles, with the public stage set of the baroque usurped by gigantic circulations, ventilations and ephemeral connection spaces. How are these notions reflected in the city centre life of a city such as Nairobi? What is its hope in the competition to market itself as the city in the sun and the gateway to Africa yet has limited resources? What are the impacts on the quality of life of the city centre users? Is there a transformation on who the audience and actors of the new public sphere? These are some of the questions that this paper explores with reference to city centre of Nairobi.

Key Words: seduction, culture, transformation

The Contribution of Industrial Heritage Revitalisation to Urban Regeneration: the Experience of the Warsaw Region

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ABSTRACT

In Poland since the 1989, the process of deindustrialization has been commenced. [Misztal, 1998; Niezabitowska, 2005]. The first urban regeneration projects, implementing new values to the post-industrial compounds, have been already completed in many cities of strong, dominating industrial function in the past (Silesia Region, Łódź). Interestingly, these projects were mostly aimed to meet the growing needs of local community such as culture, education, leisure and rarely became an arena of purely commercial investments activities [Nappi-Choulet, 2006].

Using the example of Warsaw's industrial heritage revitalization projects, we examined already modernized historic buildings, which were aimed to respond the tourist and leisure needs (museums, art galleries, cultural centers). We were interested in their new functions and meanings for urban space quality. We wanted to consider how much revitalized architecture help to change (socially, culturally, economically) declining areas and their painful image of "inner city". [Thorns, 2001]. Our research (carried in 2005-2006) covered nine historic industrial compounds, already converted and having new functions.

Results of our inquiry polls (taken in 2005-2006) confirmed the thesis, that revitalized historic industrial architecture might enrich urban space with values visible in many dimensions: social, historical, aesthetical and economic. [Evans, 2005]. Although selected and studied cases in Warsaw were not completed equally successfully, due to the objective barriers or carelessness at the planning process, all show good results in space quality and cultural services improvement, appreciated by the local community members and visitors relevantly.

Once neglected run-down Warsaw's districts (Wola, Praga) now take benefits of new identity meanings, attracting tourists and enhancing local community sense of belonging and well-being. Similar cases were described by scholars after studies in other European cities [Jones, 2006].

Unfortunately recent debates over Warsaw Master Spatial Plan (2006) revealed that the further governance of the subsequent projects might be difficult. Although formally are recommended mainly cultural/education functions for the revitalized historic industrial compounds, due to the rapid rise of real estate prices in Warsaw and developers strong pressure, many investors are interested in the purely commercial projects, neglecting the social-cultural functions these historic buildings might have. Significant is the case of the 19th century industrial compound in Warsaw ("Koneser Factory"), which is an example of purely commercial approach to the urban regeneration performance. There are doubts, if so mono-functional and only free-market determined urban development might have been a good contribution to the sustainable, competitive city shaping. [Evans, 2006; Turok, 1992].

Key Words: industrial heritage, urban space quality, tourism

Branding the Breeze – Delivering a Strap-Line

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ABSTRACT

The city of Dundee in Scotland is engaged in a process of re-discovering its economic potential and identity. As part of this process, it has deployed the use of a strategic marketing campaign to re-brand the city as ‘the city of discovery’. This theme was further developed in its city-vision statement and extended to incorporate the city’s intention to assert its knowledge economy. In parallel, an international concern with climate change prompted a commitment from governments to encourage the greater use of renewable energies. This policy ambition is translated in different ways at the local level. In Dundee, for example, the greening of the city is an integral part of its overall economic development strategy and identity.

This paper considers the implementation of renewable energy policy on a specific brownfield site in Dundee. It presents empirical research evidence which suggests that the land use planning system offers a positive space for tapping the symbiotic energies of the different protagonists involved in the local economy and in asserting a green city culture. More importantly, the study illustrates how the land use planning system served to mediate the corporate, city and community interests involved. In physical terms, Dundee’s city image is evolving. The traditional economy is reflected in public art; the ‘new’ economy around tourism is captured by the ship ‘The Discovery’ which is moored on the River Tay. This iconography has recently been supplemented by two wind turbines which have been described as graceful and majestic structures with a modern and clean image.

The paper discusses the different ways in which a strap-line may be deployed for more strategic place branding purposes and how it leads to implementation in practice.

Key Words: renewable energy, greening, implementation

“The Inhabitant of the Entrepreneurial City must be Entrepreneurial” – Branding the Shrinking City as a Creative One Through Local Population Participation

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Place promotion has long been studied through the lens of the “entrepreneurial turn” of the European cities. Research has now established that place promotion is linked to the rise of neoliberalism and interurban competition; different strategies of place marketing have been highlighted; and the efficiency of these strategies – and the social mobilisations against them – have already been deeply discussed.

However, some questions remain to be asked. In some former heavy industrialized cities that now face economic difficulties, new strategies of urban marketing have recently been promoted. They consist of making the inhabitants of these cities participate themselves in the promotional events. For example, the municipality of Saint-Etienne – a declining industrial city in South-East France – organised an event named the “Yellow day”. In the French collective imagination, Saint-Etienne’s inhabitants are linked to the colour green since the European successes of its famous football team in the late 1970’s. By publicly asking the inhabitants of the city to go in the streets wearing yellow clothes during a strongly media covered festival organized in 2005, the mayor wanted to show that “green is the colour of the past, yellow the one of the future since Saint-Etienne wants to be a creative city”. Two other examples of urban marketing events requiring the participation of the local population, in two other French declining cities, will also be examined.

Our objective will be to study the causes, the degree of acceptance among local population, and then the purposes of such events. Concerning the former, the diffusion of a new conception of urban economic growth based upon the notion of creativity among urban elites seems to be a key explanation of the adoption of these new urban marketing strategies; the point will therefore be to understand how this concept of a “creative city” has emerged on the urban agenda of the cities we observe, and what impact it then has had on the urban policies.

Concerning the latter, three possible goals of these new strategies adopted by the urban elites will be debated. One of them is to try to bring an entrepreneurial spirit into the city: urban marketing would therefore play a performative role, because the inhabitants would become creative... just because the communication service says it is so. The second potential goal can be both to reinforce the urban inclusion and the loyalty to the local elites by making the inhabitants be part of the new image of the city. The last possible goal of these events is linked to a wish of the elites to convince the upper-middle-class outside the city to come and live inside it – and thus, to gentrify it.

Key Words: shrinking cities, creative cities, urban marketing

Cultural Heritage and Urban Transformation

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ABSTRACT

Transformation from traditional manufacturing industry to other activities has from the 1980s taken place in several European cities, including Norwegian cities, and will probably continue in the years to come.

The paper discusses why culture, and in particular cultural heritage, are applied as strategies in urban transformation processes/place making processes. The paper also discusses local involvement, participation and forms of partnerships which are, or may, be applied in such processes.

It also discusses pitfalls and benefits of cultural strategies, and if such strategies may strengthen local identity and place attachment. The paper is based on Norwegian examples but will also relate to similar processes in other European countries as well as to literature on cultural planning and place making processes.

Key Words: culture, urban transformation

The Hyper-Real Urban Landscape: Rrepresentations of Turin in the Eyes of Foreign Investors

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ABSTRACT

According to Jean Baudrillard, hyper-reality is the situation where reality has lost its referent, and representations become “more real than the real”. The aim of this paper is to investigate on the process of investment by enterprises who had decided in recent years to move to Turin, Italy, discussing which kind of “reality” has led to such a decision. This investigation is directed not only to detect and classify sensible external economies and location factors of the city, but also to analyze to what degree economic decisions are bound to necessarily simplified, or even stereotyped, mental geographies.

The study is realized on the basis of in-deep interviews with managers of transnational enterprises, and it proposes an attempt of reconstruction of their perception of the city (questioning for example the relevance of hallmarks events and landmark buildings), the importance of these landscapes in the decision process, and the links between such images and “hard facts” concerning Turin. The focus of this analytical exercise will be posed on the investment process, taking a closer look on the building up of an investment idea, from its first glimpse to its tangible realization. Finally, some reflections of political nature link the issue of urban images to urban strategies, particularly in the field of city marketing and urban branding.

Key Words: urban image, Turin, investments

Global Museums and Local Development Strategies

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ABSTRACT

Several changes are occurring throughout the museum world, such as the increasing involvement of the private sector in the fundraising and the management of museums and the dramatic physical extension of leader museums. These are driving museums toward a more entrepreneurial management approach. For instance, museums promote themselves as brand in order to catch audience and to attract public in an international tourist competition. Nowadays, the globalisation of museum is leading to the creation of branches or franchises of the main international museums throughout the world. But who is really driving this trend? Do museums spread branches worldwide as a development strategy? Are museums the only responsible of these schemes? Or do they respond to local request?

Based on a comparison of several branched museums (such as Louvre, Tate, Guggenheim), this paper aims to reveal the role of local authorities in museums branches' development. Indeed, to create cultural flagship is a very common tool in urban regeneration project. As a result, the race toward distinctiveness is becoming hardly competitive. Some cities are requesting to host leader museums' branch or franchise. Museum's brand is considered as a more meaningful than local cultural institution. Is the creation of a famous museum's branch a winning strategy for cities? To what extend branching museums is a tool for branding cities?

Key Words: museum, franchise, brand