Chapter 11
Superdiversity and City Branding: Rotterdam in Perspective

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11.1 Introduction

As many other cities around the world, Rotterdam has been investing in improving its image to stimulate urban development and to attract visitors, residents and investors. In particular, during the last 15 years the municipality of Rotterdam has intensified its attempts to develop a 'brand' that fits the 'new Rotterdam', which was gradually rebuilt after destructive bombardments during the Second World War (Riezebos 2014). In 2014 Rotterdam was ranked 8th by 'Rough Guide' in the list of 'Top 10 Cities to See', whereas the 'New York Times' listed Rotterdam in the top 10 of 52 Places to Go. These rankings demonstrate Rotterdam's success in repositioning itself, using the physical interior of the city as a key element in its branding strategy.

The international attention that Rotterdam receives contributes to policy aims that often underlie city branding activities, such as the increase of the city's visibility and its economic development. While branding efforts of local governments should be understood in the context of an interurban competition in which cities try hard to "sell" themselves (Kearns and Paddison 2000: 845), city brands are not only used to create images for external audiences such as potential investors and tourists. Brands can also be used internally by municipalities as guidelines that direct urban development, in which case the brand comes to play a role in developing and constructing a certain *place identity* (Eshuis and Klijn 2017; Greenberg 2010; Kavaratzis 2008). As Mommaas (2002: p.34) puts it brands are an important source for "identification, continuity and collectivity". Such identity building is especially relevant

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in the context of ongoing global migration, which has completely transformed urban life and created highly diverse cities where at least parts of the population experience challenges in terms of defining a common identity or shared sense of belonging. Some scholars speak of 'superdiverse' or 'hyperdiverse' cities, as a way of expressing this diversification of city populations (Vertovec 2007; Tasan-Kok et al. 2014).

City branding has been hypothesized to be a key strategy for defining a new shared sense of belonging that can bond citizens to the city (Zapata-Barrero 2015; Wood and Landry 2010; Cantle 2012). Brands have the potential to create a social inclusive vision or a common sense of belonging that members of both majority and minority communities can relate to. Well-known branding campaigns such as 'I love New York', 'I Amsterdam' and 'London City of the World' all demonstrate policy attempts to create such an inclusive image of the city. If we take the example of London, we see how the city has attempted to portray diversity as one of its great historical social, economic and cultural strengths (The London Plan 2004). The 'We are Londoners, we are one'-campaign, which was initiated shortly after the terrorist bombings in 2007, illustrates the city's efforts to create an inclusive image of the city that transcends national, religious and ethnic boundaries. In the case of London, one could thus argue that branding has been used as a governance tool to create an *alternative* "to more exclusionary senses of community and citizenship that are based on national, ethnic or religious identity" (Muller 2011: p. 2). Other cities on the other hand, seem to struggle even more with the reality of superdiversity – let alone that they use it actively in their brand strategy. This relates to the struggles and problems that superdiverse cities encounter, for example highly polarized debates on race, ethnicity and migration, which makes the incorporation of diversity as a core element of the city brand more difficult as we will show in the remainder of this chapter.

This chapter focuses on the question if and how the city of Rotterdam refers to (super) diversity in its branding strategy. Rotterdam is a city that is known for its 'sleeves-rolled up' and 'no-nonsense' mentality, but also for the populist anti-immigrant voices that have actually managed to reach local governing in recent years. While taking in account Rotterdam's branding history and its political context – we aim to unravel if and how the 'Rotterdam Brand' reflects the many cultures, ethnicities, nationalities and religions that the city houses. Reconstructing the branding policies and the role that diversity plays in it hence enables us to reflect on the potential of brands in creating a shared urban belonging, which – in the face of the reality of super diversity – deems more necessary than ever. Studying this subject is not only relevant to Rotterdam, but also to many other cities in the world with dramatically changed ethnic and cultural landscapes. To enrich this study, we also compare the case of Rotterdam with the city of London.

This chapter thus results from a qualitative case study on the branding of Rotterdam, complemented with a brief exploration of the branding of London. The case of Rotterdam was studied through six semi-structured interviews with public officials involved in branding or diversity policies, analysis of branding materials, and a document analysis including relevant policy documents, websites, and expert

reports on the branding of Rotterdam. The branding of London was explored less extensively, by studying documents (official websites, articles from news media regarding the London brand) and – limited – academic publications on London's branding and marketing strategy.

11.2 Theoretical Background

11.2.1 Defining Place Branding

Place branding is about the use of brands to influence perceptions about places, by highlighting specific functional, symbolic and experiential aspects (cf. Kavaratzis 2008; Kotler and Gertner 2002). Place brands can be defined as symbolic constructs that consist of a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of these, intended to identify the city and differentiate it from other places by adding particular meaning to the place (Eshuis and Klijn 2017). Place brands are used to create a specific image of a place, by evoking particular associations with the place. For example, the brand of the city of New York may evoke associations such as 'financial centre' or 'vibrant'.

Place brands are communicated through so called brand communication (e.g. Braun et al. 2014), with the aid of a variety of so called brand *elements* and brand *carriers*. Place brand elements are for example names, wordmarks, logos, slogans, and brand images, but also brand sounds such as jingles. Place brands carriers may be celebrities, leaders, buildings or organizations. Particularly important place brand carriers are events, because they not only provide opportunities to communicate the brand but also to experience the place brand.

11.2.2 Selectiveness of Brands

As the definition above stresses, an important function of place brands is to position a place in a specific way, such that it distinguishes itself from competitors. Put differently, branding is an attempt to differentiate a place from competitors by coupling *specific* symbolic or experiential features to the place. This implies the creation of a specific image, instead of a general and nondescript image that does not make the place stand out. A place brand is built on a specific brand concept, which is the brand meaning selected by the brand manager derived from basic needs of the target groups, forming the substantial basis of the branding strategy (Park et al. 1986). The brand concept frames and determines the selection of values and topics for place branding (see Eshuis and Klijn 2017). Thus, brands are selective, involving emphasis of particular topics and values over others. The selection of particular topics and values becomes manifest in the discursive brand elements (slogans), visual elements (brand images), as well as in brand carriers such as events.

In essence, this means that cities *choose* which unique combination of attributes, values and symbols they will use in constructing and communicating (parts of) their identity. Making such a selection for places is much more difficult compared to products, because places – in particular cities – exist of a multitude of identities. In selecting topics and values, cities need to take in account a variety of stakeholders, purposes and expectations. As Pasquinelli (2014) stresses: "if understood as an 'umbrella' identity, the place brand involves mediation to reduce potential conflicts and negotiation that lead to brand value selection" (p. 729). The topics and values that eventually gain a permanent position in the city brand can be understood in the competitive context in which cities nowadays function; those elements and attributes of the city identity that stimulate economic development are put on display. On the other hand, place brands may play a role in creating a certain social identity. Brands thus form a tool in pursuing economic ambitions, while at the same time they could provide a means to address social problems such as social exclusion and cultural diversity (Kavaratzis 2004).

11.3 Superdiversity and the Branding of Rotterdam

11.3.1 *The Making of the Rotterdam Brand*

Since 2003, the municipality of Rotterdam has undertaken structural efforts to develop an attractive city brand. This was in particular the result of the municipality's awareness that the images of the city did not correspond with the developments that Rotterdam had undergone since the rebuild after the Second World War. In the perception of various target groups – such as residents, visitors, companies and (potential) students – Rotterdam was primarily considered a 'main port', which evoked negative associations of a 'cold and unsociable *work* city'. This image was not in accordance with the substantial investments and developments in and around the city, especially in terms of the innovative modern architecture, the many cultural facilities and the arsenal of meeting places in the city (Riezebos 2014; Interviews municipality Rotterdam 2015).

In rebuilding and reimagining the 'Rotterdam Brand', the municipality initiated the first official branding campaign 'Rotterdam Dares', in which 'the no-nonsense' and 'sleeves-rolled up' mentality was emphasized and was considered to be distinguishing for Rotterdam. Rotterdam always has been known for its hard-working culture and its daring approaches (Noordegraaf and Vermeulen 2010). The reconstruction of the city centre after the Second World War as well as the restructuring of diverse other communities at the time of the "social renewal"-operation are often used to illustrate this hard-working mentality. In addition politicians and administrators in Rotterdam did – and still do – not hesitate to use direct and straightforward language that concurs with this imagery, especially when it comes to combatting issues of social liveability (ibid). Rotterdam has always stressed this

part of its identity, which to this day has been reflected in the city slogan *'Rotterdam, a young international city on the water, with a straight-forward and decisive mentality'*. The 'Rotterdam Dares' campaign aimed to stimulate and create more exposure for projects, festivals, initiatives that expressed this long tradition of hands-on and daring actions.

However, in 2006 the municipality decided to pursue the ambition of putting Rotterdam more on the map internationally. Because the 'Rotterdam Dares' campaign seemed incompatible for such an international venture, a new brand tag 'Rotterdam World Port, World City' was launched. Led by the new Chief Marketing Officer (CMO), local authorities in Rotterdam at this point underlined in particular Rotterdam's reputation as an international world port in order to further "strengthen Rotterdam's international competitiveness" (Rotterdam World City 2008b). Brand attributes such as the typical 'no-nonsense' mentality– which previously was emphasized in the brand identity – had to make way for a narrative in which Rotterdam was portrayed as a worldwide city network, which due to its favourable geographical location, connects "sea, people, rail, air and road" (ibid.). The goal underlying this branding campaign was primarily economic, namely to attract more companies and investors to the city (Interviews municipality Rotterdam 2015). The economic and 'business-orientated' image of Rotterdam that was evoked during this period was– not surprisingly – little appreciated by city residents who experienced the brand mainly as an economic proposition, with which they could not identify (ibid.). This demonstrates the difficulty of creating a brand that suits the needs, interests and values of all important stakeholders, in particular residents – who according to some authors are "often neglected in the process of building city brands" (Insch, A. In Dinnie 2011: 8).

The lack of identification of residents with an essential part of the Rotterdam brand, led the municipality to rethink it brandings policies. The many architectural achievements of Rotterdam, for which the city received more and more international attention – also fed the idea that the current branding strategy needed a rethink (Interviews municipality Rotterdam 2015). In 2013, under the name 'Rotterdam, make it happen!' a new brand alliance was formed between the municipality of Rotterdam, the Port of Rotterdam Authority, the Erasmus University and Rotterdam Partners. While the city slogan and the RWPWC-brand tag are still being used, Rotterdam's DNA has been redefined in consultation with city residents and urban partners. The former brand values 'ambition', 'change' and 'engagement' were rephrased – without entirely changing them – to 'international, worldly, groundbreaking, entrepreneurial, no-nonsense and raw' (Municipality of Rotterdam 2014). Central to the new campaigning was the idea of the city as a place where people are offered opportunities to invest, grow and succeed. Moreover, the distinctive element of Rotterdam's identity was again placed on the typical *mentality* of Rotterdam, for example expressed in the brand value "raw", which refers to the directness, straightforwardness and unpolished character of the city and its residents.

More than in the past, Rotterdam hence attempted to develop a branding strategy that is carried by all relevant stakeholder parties. In addition, the municipality is more committed to actually use the selected brand attributes more consistently and

explicitly in its communication, for example in subsidy procedures that underlie event policies, in the linguistic expression of city policies, and in the behaviour of politicians and public administrators (Interviews municipality 2015). These efforts to create a more integral and consistent city brand, are also evident in the municipality's ambition to give residents, students, business owners and visitors a platform to share their stories about Rotterdam. Against the background of the history of Rotterdam's branding policies, the question arises: which role does the diverse composition of the city's population play in the narrative that is being told?

11.4 Diversity and Rotterdam's DNA: Part of the Narrative?

11.4.1 Brand Identity and Diversity

Given the reality of the many cultures, ethnicities, nationalities and religions that Rotterdam accommodates, it is relevant to study which choices the local authorities have made regarding the incorporation of this part of Rotterdam's identity. Does the city's branding strategy reflect the diverse composition of Rotterdam? In this respect, Rotterdam is one of the first Dutch cities that can be classified as 'super diverse', which refers to the fact that native-Dutch residents are losing their numeric majority position in the city (Crul 2015). While large-scale immigration has occurred since the Second World War and in particular during the 1970s, Rotterdam now is home to *more* and *new* immigrant groups, making the multi ethnic composition of the city one of its core characteristics.

The emerging attempt to build up a branding strategy that suits the 'new Rotterdam', has from the beginning defined the multicultural characteristics of the city as a key element of Rotterdam's DNA. *Naming* or *highlighting* cultural diversity as a characteristic of the city and its people – and emphasizing in particular the economic benefits – has structurally been the case in Rotterdam, even though there is some variation in the used terms and words in course of the years. During the 'Rotterdam Dares' period, for example, the multicultural capital of the city has been broadly recognized by the municipality as a distinctive *strength* of Rotterdam. City branding documents in which the identity of the city was outlined, proudly explained that *"Rotterdam has turned into a safe haven for the creative class"* and that the *"169 present nationalities make Rotterdam the biggest multicultural city of the Netherlands"* (Municipality Rotterdam 2008a). In addition, the city stressed the importance of cities to be diverse, because *"diversity stimulates creativity, which means that Rotterdam – as a multicultural giant – features a great creative potential."* (Municipality Rotterdam 2005). Similarly, the 'Rotterdam World Port City, Rotterdam World City' brand tag – builds on this narrative that emphasizes the potential assets and advantages of diverse city societies. Studying this more

precisely it appears that the advantage of the presence of many ethnic, cultural, and religious minorities in Rotterdam – was especially viewed from an economic perspective: *"the wealth of cultures and ethnicities from all over the world"* fitted the clear international focus that Rotterdam was pursuing and was presented as a great *economic* asset for the city. The following quote demonstrates this perspective clearly:

> *About 50% of the population has their roots in the rest of the world. The language skills, and knowledge of these international citizens, give access to overseas contact and links to foreign markets [.] Although Dutch is the official language, most of the people also speak English and often another foreign language as well* (Rotterdam World City 2008b: 9)

As this statement shows, Rotterdam's branding strategy is not isolated from other policy aims, but – as often is the case – is rather part of broader economic and social city planning. More importantly, it demonstrates the view of local authorities regarding the significance of diversity in positioning Rotterdam as an international junction. The choice to recognize, embrace and include diversity in the brand identity, is thus mainly built on the idea that diversity benefits city's economic development and innovative potential by attracting members of the 'creative class' who would be drawn to open, inclusive and diverse places" (Florida 2003, as paraphrased in Hoekstra 2015: 1800). This corresponds to the London approach (Box 11.1), in which we also illustrate how promotion of diversity was inseparably connected to ambitions regarding London's economy and increasing one's appeal to different target groups. In the case of Rotterdam, one of our respondents explained: *"Treating the (inter)cultural identity of Rotterdam – with its 174 nationalities – as an asset of the city, strengthens the appeal of the city to the export-community"* (Interview Rotterdam Partners 2015). This again illustrates how branding choices are strongly connected to the international positioning of Rotterdam – and how economic considerations underlie many of the discussions on brand choices.

More recently, with the 'Rotterdam, make it happen!' campaign, the city has continued the tradition of recognizing the heterogeneous, diverse city population as being part of Rotterdam's DNA. In line with previous years, diversity is included as one of the brand values and unique selling points. Thereby the term 'multicultural' has been replaced by terms as 'cosmopolitan' and 'international'. Here, our respondents explained that 'international' refers to the many nationalities, cultures and religions that the city houses as well as the world port function of Rotterdam and its interconnectedness with many other places around the world (Interview municipality Rotterdam 2015). Similarly, 'cosmopolitan' denotes the "somewhat 'undutch" and international outlook of the city *as well* as the level of liveliness, activity and extraordinary architecture in the city" (Riezebos 2014: 13). Somewhat different from the past, the brand values 'international' and 'cosmopolitan' comprise more characteristics of the city and are not exclusively related to cultural diversity. As we will show later on, this has to do with the political context in which brand Rotterdam is (re)developed.

11.4.2 Brand Communication and Diversity

Having noted that diversity is a key brand value which is particularly framed as an economic asset in Rotterdam's place brand, our case study also reveals that diversity is hardly translated in actual brand communication. The municipality treats diversity as a given fact without constantly naming and emphasizing it. As a result, besides the acknowledgement of diversity as a part of Rotterdam's history, identity and DNA, it has hardly been translated in actual branding *activities*. Rotterdam has not incorporated diversity structurally in tangible, concrete projects or initiatives to mark the city's local branding policies. With the exception of two attempts that deliberately aim to communicate and embrace diversity, throughout the years, diversity has not played a major role in the active brand communication of the city. The first exception concerns Rotterdam's events policies, in particular the Dunya Festival and Summer Carnival, which celebrate the cultural diversity of the city by "providing stage to music, art and cuisines from countries and cultures all over the world" (Rotterdam Unlimited 2013). However, our respondents emphasized that the idea to celebrate the city's diversity in this way was *initiated* by city residents themselves, and has gained a structural place in Rotterdam's event program. 'Diversity' in itself is not branded actively by local authorities, but has been supported as a response to local initiatives by residents for example by supporting these two festivals financially. A less explicit way in which local authorities attempt to impact the city's image, is the selective use of photos that are used in communication by the municipality and its partners. The 'Rotterdam image-database' – which is managed by Rotterdam Partners – consists of photos that individuals and companies can use for promotional purposes. The selection of photos that are entered in the database are representative in terms of the diverse backgrounds of Rotterdam's residents. As one of our respondents put it: *"It would not be logical to include photos with only "white" people, because that is not Rotterdam"* (Interview municipality Rotterdam 2015). This shows how diversity obviously plays a role in considerations and the eventual decisions regarding communication about Rotterdam. Similarly, to its policy regarding festivals, through this database the city facilitates communication of diversity, but without actually including it prominently in its own brand-communication.

11.4.3 Brand Choices: Underlying Reasoning

When addressing the question of how Rotterdam has used its superdiverse composition in its city branding, one could hence conclude that it has been a constant brand value that the municipality has acknowledged in all its campaigns throughout the years. Yet, where the municipality in the past spoke about 'the multicultural' city, more recently broader terms such as 'international' and 'cosmopolitan' have been adopted. Despite the small change in discourse, the municipality has been

consistent in terms of limited brand communication related to cultural diversity. Thus diversity has been integrated in the city's branding strategy at a very limited level. The municipality's choice *not to* actively use the diverse composition of its population in its branding activities is based on the idea that the international appeal of the city speaks for itself. The rationale here is as follows: superdiversity is part of who we are; it is so inherent to our identity, that we treat it as a "normal" element of our social reality, which does not need to be emphasized by local authorities (Interviews municipality Rotterdam 2015). In line with this, one of our respondent argued that by emphasizing this part of Rotterdam's identity, one would possibly even problematize the presence of the many cultures, ethnicities and religions in the city. Instead, the municipality reasons that the international sphere – from the countless cultural facilities to the many languages that you hear people speak in the streets – is evident in itself and needs no emphasizing by local authorities (Interviews municipality Rotterdam 2015). The assumption here is thus that approaching cultural diversity as a given fact, demonstrates the acceptance of one's identity. The following quotes illustrate this point strongly:

> The city's diverse composition is so typical for Rotterdam, that it is almost too logical to name it [...]. From a branding perspective, we want to emphasize our international orientation, with the main port connecting us to the world. Our trade partners find in Rotterdam a city of many cultures and that is without a doubt a strength. But if you emphasize it too much, it is almost as if you are making an issue out of it. (Interview municipality Rotterdam 2015)

One guiding principle in the position that Rotterdam holds is that celebrating diversity should be initiated and organized by residents or local storeowners themselves. Here, the municipality assumes that the self-organizing capacity within the city is well enough developed to allow locals "to express cultural features that for them already form part of the place identity" (Kavaratzis and Hatch 2013: 70). The previously mentioned Dunya Festival and Summer Carnival illustrate this point well: it were local residents who initiated these bottom-up events and it was only in a later stage that the municipality decided to facilitate these initiatives. In addition, the city approach to diversity fits well with Rotterdam's broader branding strategy, in which there is a strong belief in the power of stories and narratives, as told by *others* than the municipality, instead of forcing certain brand labels on people, in particular residents – who are important in shaping the place identity. As one of our respondents explains:

> The same goes for the West-Kruiskade, a famous street in Rotterdam, which is known for its multi-cultural character. Nevertheless, here in Rotterdam storeowners do not feel the need to label themselves as 'China-town' for example. It would be perhaps be great for branding purposes if they did. However, it does not work like that in the Rotterdam context, so we don't pressure them – even though we tried in the past – to brand themselves in this particular way. You can shout as loud as you want that you're a multicultural city, but in the end it's about how your locals organize themselves. (Interview municipality Rotterdam 2015)

As the quotes in the above show, the way Rotterdam should approach cultural diversity in its branding policies has been subject to many discussions. One could expect that this has to do with the political landscape of the city, which since 2002 has definitely changed as a consequence of the electoral victory of the local populist

party 'Liveable Rotterdam' (in Dutch: Leefbaar Rotterdam). The assimilationist tone regarding immigrant integration has not only changed the diversity discourse – in terms of the harsher rhetoric regarding old and new immigrants in Rotterdam – but also many policies that are connected to diversity, such as social cohesion, housing, spatial planning, and urban safety. But, does it also actually affect the choices that are being made regarding city branding? Interviews with our respondents reveal that choices regarding branding policies are implemented somewhat at a distance from the political reality of the city, because as one respondent puts it "branding is about a long term vision for the city, whereas politics are responsive to short-termed issues and events" (Interview municipality of Rotterdam 2015). The respondent stresses that in constructing identities, it is highly important to create a certain amount of credibility, in particular by consistent and long-term use of the brand. As a result, Rotterdam's city marketing office – actually strives to develop its branding policies relatively independent from the city council. However, in constructing a brand, which fits the city's personality, history, values, residential composition and urban assets – our respondents also emphasized that they do – oftentimes implicitly – take in account the *composition* of the city council. The following quote illustrates this point well:

> *Our DNA as a city does not change, regardless of what political parties think of that. But there is a certain amount of discretionary space when it comes to words: you can say multicultural, cosmopolitan, or international. In addition… while constructing our brand we do think about the governing coalition and how we should frame our plans. [..] Rotterdam Make it Happen for example, we developed it in the middle of election times – so we did not knew which political parties would govern the city. And you take that in account when working on your plans that it has to be something that the VVD and D66 both can embrace.* (Municipality of Rotterdam 2015)

This quote and other similar statements show that the political discourses and -disagreement about governing the complexities of cultural diversity are influencing city branding, in the sense that for *those* constructing the brand – the power struggles between political parties *do* determine the conditions, which within branding decisions are framed and presented.

Finally, it is worth mentioning here – that although Rotterdam deliberately does not emphasize its cultural diverse city composition in branding activities, our respondents all mentioned that this part of Rotterdam's DNA offers many opportunities for the Rotterdam Brand. As the quotes in the below demonstrate, the city is reflecting on the question of how to use cultural diversity more in *future* branding activities:

> *What I aim to do in the upcoming period is more strongly connect 'Erasmus' – who represents the 'at home in the world' ambiance – as an icon to the city. […] After all, he was the man who was known for dialogue and connecting people, a cosmopolite, so we could use that more. In addition, we are also planning to organize a 'flag parade' – in which each flag combines the flag of Rotterdam and one of the 174 nationalities in Rotterdam.* (*Interview Rotterdam Partners 2015*)

> *I really am searching for how we can use it [cultural composition of the city] more. There are so many connections between our local economy and trade flows from and to Rotterdam,*

and the many people who live in our city but who are also still connected to their country of origin and their culture. But the question is: how can we use that? [Interview municipality Rotterdam 2015)

The above shows that while Rotterdam does not want to actively emphasize its culturally diverse characteristics in its branding, the city marketing team is searching for ways to incorporate it in a way that suits the context of Rotterdam. This quest shows the ongoing difficulty that Rotterdam faces in determining what to do with the cultural diverse characteristics of its identity.

Finding a balance between actively celebrating and communicating diversity on the one hand, and treating it as a "normal" part of Rotterdam which does not need emphasis on the other hand – is a reality which more local authorities are confronted with. Box 11.1 shows how the city of London chose a rather different balance compared to Rotterdam.

> **Box 11.1 Superdiversity and the Branding of London**
> London is classified as one of the most cosmopolitan and ethnically diverse cities in the world. The global centre of economic development of the city has always attracted many migrants from all over the world. Cultural diversity is hence inherent to the city's identity: London houses more than 192 nationalities and more than 300 languages. One-third of Londoners has a migrant background, in some parts of the city this percentage is even 50%. Vertovec (2007) therefore concludes that while "a relatively new and high proportion of immigrants characterizes many places in the UK", this is especially the case in London.

While the reality of superdiversity suggests both economic benefits as social concerns regarding immigrant integration and exclusion – London seem to have explicitly chosen to focus on diversity as one of its greatest assets. This is reflected in the 'broader' policy discourse on a London-wide level, which overall can be typified as one that "promotes a multicultural agenda" (Syrett and Sepulveda 2012). All mayors have consistently recognized London's diversity as one of "its great historical, social, economic and cultural strengths" and have committed themselves to create an inclusive city vision that emphasizes shared values and the benefits that different groups and communities bring to London (The London Plan 2004; Climent-Ferrando 2015). This does not simply mean that problems related to the city's composition do not exist in London, rather: despite of the increased societal tensions and highly politicized debates regarding community cohesion in the past years, the governance of diversity in London seems still to be geared towards the establishment of an inclusive society.

The 'inclusive discourse' in London has also translated into concrete tangible city activities, which all aim to make diversity visible and actually embracing it. The promotion of different events such as the Chinese New Year, the Eid Festival, the

Diwali Festival of Lights, but also the Notting Hill Carnival, the Arab Culture Festival and the Carnival del Pueblo exemplify the way London celebrates its diverse city composition. Specific areas in London – for example Brick Lane or 'Banglatown', Chinatown and Brixton Market – which are known for their ethnic diversity, are used by the city as to attract 'external audience' (Syrett and Sepulveda 2012). Moreover, the 'World in One City' title – which the Greater London Authority launched for its Census in 2001 – demonstrate how the many cultures, nationalities, religions and languages are celebrated as being part of London's heritage, neighbourhoods and identity. This approach draws on the economic ambition of the city, to attract different target groups such as highly-skilled workers, investors, students and visitors as well as major international events. It is not unusual that branding efforts are strongly connected to the pursuit of economic benefits for the city and that diversity is used as a means to achieve these objectives. In the case of London, London & Partners – responsible for the promotion of London– has named 'cultural diversity' as a main ingredient in promoting the city "as the best location for global and European headquarters" (London & Partners Strategy 2013–2014). In line with this, it has been argued that London has – strategically- incorporated its Chinatown as key element in the image of London as a multicultural city, as a way of expanding "political and economic ties with China" (Sales et al. 2009). In addition, some authors point to the fact that diversity and cultural experience were – again strategically – used as a key element in London's bid for the 2012 Olympics (Winter 2013). Incorporating diversity was not merely an expression of commitment to diversity, social inclusion and equity – but rather a strategic proposition (Harvie 2013: 489; and e.g. Winter 2013; Falcous and Silk 2010).

Despite these critiques, the London case does illustrate governmental efforts to use branding as a means to achieve social inclusion. An example of such an explicit manner in which London has attempted to communicate its belief in "one harmonious community of cosmopolitan citizens" (Muller 2011: p. 2), is the '7 Million Londoners, 1 London" campaign, which the municipality initiated shortly after the July 2005 bombings. Originally, the campaign was launched 4 years before the attacks under the name "7 million Londoners, 300 languages and 14 faiths". However, in the context of the terrorist attack it was re-used to "counter the negative feelings amongst the London population, holding on to the social inclusive vision that underlies and celebrate the diversity and unity of London" (ibid, p. 8). The underlying aim – namely to create a shared sense of belonging under Londoners – was further emphasized by Mayor Ken Livingstone's reaction in which he stated that the terrorists seek to divide Londoners and to turn them against each other (Financial Times 2005).

In sum, one could conclude that London exemplifies a city, which has thoroughly incorporated cultural diversity in its branding strategy. This applies both to the use of the World in One city slogan, the many festivals that celebrate the presence of many cultures, nationalities and religions as well as the wider-discourse of the city which acknowledges the economic and social benefits of a pluralistic society. As McGlory (2015) rightly argues: the London brand is built upon "the capital's internationalism, openness and diversity" (McGlory 2015). The case of London thus illustrates the

awareness of local authorities of the potential that branding offers in creating a shared sense of belonging, especially in the context of the global terror and the highly polarized discussions on identify, social belonging and integration in a multicultural society. The question remains however how socially excluded groups or minorities within the city are perceiving the brand, and if it actually does encourage social and economic inclusion. Especially given the wider political and media discourse in Britain, which seems to be at odds with the image of harmonious multiculturalism that is central to the London brand.

11.5 Conclusion

This chapter has explored how diversity is used in place brands, which is relevant since place brands represent and (re)construct the identity of a city. The chapter analyses the case of Rotterdam, and draws on London as a contrast to Rotterdam. Drawing on the example of London, the chapter showed how diversity may be not only accepted, but embraced and celebrated, making it a core value of the place brand and a major distinguishing element. Within the London brand, diversity is thus not merely framed as an economic asset, but as a core strength of the city.

The case of Rotterdam was studied to investigate if and how a city – which is one of the cities struggling to come to terms with its identity as a city of migration – uses its superdiverse characteristics in its brand communication. The study shows that even though diversity is seen as an integral part of the identity of Rotterdam, it is only used in a limited and specific way in the branding strategy. The brand managers accept diversity as a part of the city, something which cannot be avoided and should not be denied. However, this does not mean that diversity is fully embraced and celebrated in the brand; diversity is hardly used in active brand communication. Rather, diversity is framed in a specific way, namely as an economic asset which is a valuable element of Rotterdam as an international harbour. Rotterdam is thus well aware of the opportunities that diversity may offer in terms of economic prosperity. At the same time, the study shows how the municipality struggles with diversity in its branding and positioning of the city, which reflects the broader struggle of the city in dealing with diversity. Branding is hence inherently connected to issues regarding social in/exclusion, belonging and identity. Policy choices regarding the brand identity therefore reflect how local authorities are encountering social, economic, and cultural consequences of superdiversity, and the struggle that comes with it.

Given the explorative nature of this study, it is not possible to give definite answers to the question how the difference between Rotterdam and London can be explained. However, our data do suggest that the political composition of the city council does play a role in the sense that the council influences what can be communicated and what cannot be communicated regarding diversity. There is an influential stream within the city council in Rotterdam which sees ethnic diversity as a problem, rather than something which should be celebrated. However, there are also

strong voices emphasizing that the superdiverse character of the city is simply a fact and also an important asset. Altogether, Rotterdam is characterized by great and manifest ambiguity regarding ethnic diversity within the local authorities. In contrast London, where celebrating and promoting diversity has been a key commitment of all mayors, Rotterdam seems more restricted by the polarized political context in which the added value of diversity is being challenged by political actors on a more structural basis, and in more manifest ways.

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