A CO-CREATION APPROACH TO PLACE BRANDING:

How participatory marketing processes can leverage opportunities of value co-creation in place branding.

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Abstract

A Co-Creation Approach to Place Branding: *How participatory marketing processes can leverage opportunities for value co-creation.*

Purpose: This paper explores the co-creation approach to place branding, through an investigation of how elements of the value co-creation process can apply to place branding, taking into consideration the participatory and relational nature of stakeholder engagement.

Methodology: After an extensive literature review on value co-creation, a research synthesis is performed to translate key co-creation elements to place branding in a two-phase process. This leads to a preliminary conceptual framework, which is refined by an empirical questionnaire with seven place branding experts.

Findings: The value proposition is a catalyst for co-creation opportunities between stakeholders interacting in a place brand ecosystem of relationships. The inclusion and participation of stakeholders in the place branding process as co-creators is critical. A relational approach to value co-creation in place branding leads to more effective place brands and enhances overall brand value. Co-creation in place branding is defined, and five co-creation types are presented. A final conceptual framework for co-creation is proposed.

Research Limitations: The research is limited in its own scope by generalizing the findings based on a limited number of participants. Due to the contextual nature of both co-creation and place branding, conclusions in this field should be considered mindfully.

Practical Implication: Place branding managers can leverage co-creation opportunities to facilitate an improved place brand development process, which results in more effective and successful place brands, while retaining authenticity in their identity and image.

Originality: This study is original in combining literature of value co-creation, including relationship marketing and service systems theory, with place branding to propose a conceptual framework in a new area of research. The originality also comes from defining co-creation types for place branding.

Keywords: co-creation, place branding, value creation, relationship marketing, stakeholder engagement

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Chapter 1. Introduction

1.1 Background

As the marketplace of the 21st century has shifted towards collaboration and participation, co-creation has become one of the most critical topics of discussion, in both academia and practice (Pralahad & Ramaswamy, 2004). More specifically, the extensiveness of the Digital Age has removed geographic boundaries, allowing consumers unlimited access to information and resources, and a platform to engage in brand communities, provide real-time feedback and co-create value for their favorite brands (Fournier & Lee, 2009). Consequently, the role of consumers has evolved over time "from isolated to connected, from unaware to informed, from passive to active" (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004, p. 4). Leading brands – such as LEGO, Nike, Sony, and Unilever – have welcomed the concept of co-creation into their value-creating processes, encouraging user participation and involvement, and successfully tapping into the collective "wisdom of crowds" (Surowiecki, 2004). In today's consumer-centric reality, it has been recognized that co-creation plays a significant role in creative, learning and innovation processes of brands (Roser et al., 2009). Additionally, non-commercial entities – such as places – are also adopting marketing strategies to harness stakeholder engagement and implement a participatory place branding strategy (Zenker & Erfgen, 2014).

Co-creation involves joint value creation among multiple actors (Perks, Gruber & Edvardsson, 2012). Due to its prevalence, past research has associated co-creation to a number of concepts, such as customer involvement (Edvardsson et al., 2011), open innovation (Enkel, Gassmann & Chesbrough, 2009), mass customization (Pine, 1992), user-generated content (Zwass, 2010), customer integration (Vargo, 2008), co-production (Vargo & Lusch, 2006), and mass-collaboration (Tapscott & Williams, 2007). Although each of these concepts contains elements of co-creation, they fall short of capturing the entirety of essential qualities for co-creation to take place. Specifically, co-creation is distinguished as a value creation process in which multiple stakeholders come together to generate and develop meaning (Ind & Coates, 2013), indicating that value' is subjective and interpretive. The creation of shared meaning is an integral component of value co-creation, which produces social and symbolic value for individuals (Arnould & Thompson, 2005; Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004). This unique and dynamic nature of co-creation is particularly valuable for a study of place branding, where shared meaning can also be generated through the engagement between multiple place stakeholders, positively impacting the brand.

The concept of place branding has recently experienced considerable growth, becoming more and more recognized for both academia and practice (Hanna & Rowley, 2008; Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). On a basic

level, place branding is used to brand different spatial entities, including cities, regions, countries, and destinations (Hanna & Rowley, 2008; Hankinson, 2015). In today's globalized world, places must compete for visibility in order to differentiate themselves in a crowded marketplace (Anholt, 2007; Jansen, 2008). Furthermore, due to rapid advancements in information and telecommunication technology (ICT), places are no longer isolated entities; instead, they are part of greater physical and virtual networks (Govers & Go, 2009). As inter-place competition continues to intensify, places are attempting to distinguish themselves from their counterparts, by employing corporate techniques more commonly used with branding companies (Beckmann & Zenker, 2012; Kotler and Gertner, 2011; Warnaby, et al., 2015). Regrettably, their efforts are futile, as the majority of places today provide similar products and services, such as resources, infrastructure, mobility, hospitality and accessibility (Kotler et al. 1999; Kavaratzis, 2005; Ooi, 2013). Therefore, more and more places are adopting marketing strategies like place branding to differentiate themselves and offer a unique value proposition.

Unfortunately, place brand managers and policy-makers often limit their approach to purely promotion activities, focusing exclusively on brand logos and slogan, which has been proven to be both insignificant and irrelevant (Govers, 2013). As a result, place branding has developed more towards 'consulting' and 'advertising.' Regrettably, this approach disregards the complexity of places, and does not lead to brand equity (Ashworth & Kavaratzis, 2009). As a result, this has led to discontinuities and inconsistencies between place image and identity, creating an overall disconnection from the authentic nature of a place (Kavaratzis, 2012). Furthermore, a promotion focus has marginalized other groups of relevant stakeholders in the place branding process. As more attention has been geared towards attracting tourists, the local needs of residents and other groups have been neglected.

Therefore, a solution and a 'way forward' could be the inclusion of all relevant stakeholders in the place branding process (Beckmann & Zenker, 2013; Kavaratzis, 2012). A place is a complex and multi-dimensional phenomenon that can hold different meanings for different stakeholders; therefore, a more collective and integrated approach is required for place branding than traditional branding methods used for companies (Kavaratzis, 2012). This calls for a 'new way of thinking' that embraces the inclusion of all relevant stakeholders in place branding (see Aitken & Campelo, 2011; Hanna & Rowley, 2011; Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2012; Zenker & Erfgen, 2014; Warnaby, 2009). Arguably, the implementation of co-creation in place branding processes can help address the challenge of creating positive and influential place brands.

Taking into consideration the economic, social and market realities driven by rapid globalization, increased connectivity and the collaborative economy (Botsman, 2013), co-creation can be implemented as a place strategy to harness the creativity, innovation and wisdom of stakeholders. In other words, creative and

innovative brand building is not only applicable to companies and organizations, but also to places (Moilanen & Rainisto, 2009). Furthermore, as more power has shifted to the consumer (Bhalla, 2011), places must demonstrate sensitivity and responsiveness to the changing needs of diverse stakeholders. Therefore, this thesis advocates for a co-creation approach to place branding, and seeks to understand place branding in new ways. Building on this notion, it is particularly relevant to examine how co-creation can be implemented in place branding, and whether or not it can lead to a more effective place branding process. Place branding, like any brand process, requires a set of strategic and integrative elements in order to grow and succeed; therefore the overall aim is to explore how value co-creation elements can be implemented and operationalized for place branding. This study will examine how co-creation can be promoted and encouraged, and whether the existing structure of a place brand has negative consequences on these efforts, making it difficult to realize the potential of co-creation opportunities. It is expected that co-creation is an essential component to place brand development, and thus, positively impacts place branding processes. Accordingly, this thesis explores the question of how a place brand can leverage co-creation opportunities in order to develop an innovative and sustainable brand in today's global economy.

Adopting the definition by Zenker and Braun (2010), this thesis defines a place brand as: "*A network of associations in the consumers' mind based on the visual, verbal, and behavioural expression of a place, which is embodied through the aims, communication, values, and the general culture of the place's stakeholders and the overall place design*" (p.3). Based on this definition, this research assumes that the concept of place is a social construct (Dzenovska, 2005) and therefore, different people can hold different perceptions regarding the place brand. As such, place branding is seen as a dynamic process shaped by 'local and non-local' stakeholders who create shared and individual meanings, creating an overall 'collective identity' and a 'shared narrative of a place (Kaneva, 20110; Wheeler et al., 2011).

1.2 Problem Formulation

Based on the previous section, the following research question is proposed:

> **How can participatory marketing processes leverage opportunities of value co-creation in place branding?**

The aim of this thesis is to understand how co-creation can be implemented in the place branding process. Therefore, the objectives of this study are threefold: a) to create new insights, knowledge and discovery in place branding and co-creation; b) to produce a theoretical contribution to the field of place branding, as well as co-creation research; and c) to build an empirically-tested and expert-verified model of co-creation in place branding.

1.3 Relevance

Building on the points mentioned above, there are three major arguments for studying co-creation in place branding. Firstly, research is scarce concerning the nature of co-creation in place branding. Scholars have given little attention to developing theoretical frameworks and methodologies that focus on managing and designing place brand experiences as co-creative processes (Kavaratzis et al., 2015). And while the scholarship of co-creation continues to record notable advancements within management and marketing theory (e.g. Jaakkola & Hakanen, 2013; Frow et al., 2015), place branding currently largely disregards the opportunities for co-creation within the field (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). This results in two major drawbacks for research and practice First, the current structure of place branding has developed without the trial-and-test processes of different co-creation elements; consequently, opportunities for effective co-creation processes in place branding remain unknown and unexplored (Aitken & Campelo, 2011; Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). And second, although the benefits of participatory approaches are recognized in the literature, an in-depth analysis of stakeholder engagement is currently lacking, emphasizing the need for further research on the roles of actors and stakeholders in place brands (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013). For these reasons, it can be assumed that the potential of co-creation in place branding remains untapped, as strategic benefits of co-creation are not realized and continue to remain ambiguous in the field. This "establishes an urgent need to rethink place branding towards a more participation-oriented practice" (Kavaratzis, 2012, p. 7), particularly from the perspective of different stakeholders as co-creators of value.

The second motivating factor for this research is the overall lack of clarity in the place branding discipline (Kavaratzis et al., 2015). As Hanna and Rowley (2011) argue, current research does not provide a holistic understanding of the field, as places are too complex and multi-faceted to be simplified to a singular model (e.g. Jansen, 2008; Kotler et al., 1993; Morgan, et al., 2002). In general, research in the topic has stayed at a surface level and provides limited guidance for an in-depth exploration of opportunities for co-creation in place branding. Building on the first motive presented above, evidence shows that the successful implementation and use of co-creation strategies can provide significant benefits and results for a brand; therefore, applying co-creation to a study in place branding is a promising first step in bridging the gap between literature and practice, and adding clarity to the complex and multi-stakeholder nature of place branding.

Thirdly, evaluating the opportunities of value co-creation from the perspective of different place branding stakeholders is a valuable area of inquiry for finding solutions for the environmental, social and ecological challenges the world is facing today. Due to rapid growth in urbanization, 54% of the world's population is currently living in urban areas, a number that is expected to increase to 66% by 2050 (United Nations, 2016). Issues, such as increased levels of pollution and traffic, are a result of poor urban planning, and therefore can

be mitigated with improved policies and initiatives, both from the public and private sectors. This strongly indicates a need for sustainable planning and development, as the majority of the world's resources will be consumed in urban areas (United Nations, 2016). In other words, "the quality of life for millions [of people] will be determined by the quality of their cities" (ibid, p. 1), bringing the challenge of sustainable development to the forefront of the agenda for places. Since there cannot be a "one size fits all" solution to places, co-creation can be an alternative place strategy that provides places with grassroots-designed solutions for their specific environmental, social and ecological problems. Co-creation promotes coordination and collaboration amongst stakeholders by using an integrated approach that brings together a diverse set of skills and experts. Moreover, co-creation strategies in place branding are, by nature, more inclusive and participatory; they can help provide new insights through locally-based initiatives, while providing participants (e.g. residents, civil society, urban planners, policy-makers, investors, tourists, etc.) an opportunity to collectively voice their concerns. Therefore, co-creation in place branding is an interesting area of study for discovering creative and innovative approaches in addressing these challenges.

1.4 Thesis Structure

The starting point for this inquiry is an in-depth review of the existing literature on co-creation of value, with a special focus on value creation with relevant stakeholders. Attention is drawn to relationship-building processes that result in value creation through participation, interaction and dialogue, in order to gain an understanding of how actors participate in the place branding process, (i.e. how they integrate resources and interact to co-create value in place branding). This approach accounts for the shared social and emotional value consumers create through their experiences (Kotler & Gertner, 2002). The exploration of value co-creation is considered from a holistic standpoint, prevalent with the service-dominant logic of marketing (Vargo & Lusch, 2004). In order to meet the research objectives, key elements from co-creation literature are applied to the place branding perspective through a research synthesis, emphasizing the similarities between the two concepts. A preliminary conceptual model is developed, depicting the important elements and dynamics of a co-creation process that can be applied to place branding based on existing literature. These theoretical outcomes are empirically tested, by employing an expert questionnaire with seven place brand experts, in order to determine how co-creation in place branding manifests in reality. A revised conceptual model is proposed, revealing the elements of co-creation that can be applied to place branding. Based on this new conceptual model and understanding, an answer is provided to the research question. The findings are presented and discussed, together with managerial implications and avenues for further research. In conclusion, this thesis makes a novel contribution to the study of co-creation in place branding and provides valuable insights to an emerging body of place branding research. Figure 1 below provides a visual overview of the research structure.

Figure 1. Overview of Thesis Structure

Chapter 1 — **Introduction**

Define Place Branding

Chapter 2 — **Literature Review: Value Co-Creation**

Chapter 3 — **Methodology**

Chapter 4 — **Research Synthesis**

Chapter 5 — **Empirical Study**

What does CO-CREATION IN PLACE BRANDING look like?

According to Existing Literature

According to Place Branding Experts

Definitions — **Framework** — **TEST** → **Expert Questionnaire**

Synthesis Findings

Empirical Findings

Chapter 6 — **Discussion**

Results
1. Final Definitions
2. Final Conceptual Framework

Chapter 2. Value Co-Creation: A Theoretical Framework

This chapter examines the nature of value co-creation in order to develop a theoretical foundation for understanding co-creation. Different conceptualizations of value co-creation are explored within the value creation and relationship marketing literatures, in order to form a holistic understanding of how value is co-created in a network environment. While a broad range of theoretical concepts are reviewed in co-creation literature (Galvagno & Dalli, 2014; Ranjan & Read, 2014), this thesis addresses only those relevant for the study because a narrower scope has two advantages. First, a focused selection of theories will facilitate a clearer outlook in defining and understanding value co-creation. This in turn improves the framing of the theoretical development and the synthesis of literature in Chapter 4. And second, a clearer conceptual model of co-creation, in place branding, translates to a more targeted analysis and discussion, improving the overall quality of the research findings.

The following structure is used to simplify and conceptualize value co-creation in a holistic setting. To do so, co-creation is defined; next, service-dominant logic is introduced as a theoretical lens used in this study. Following that, the theoretical foundation of this study is divided into three parts.

In Part I the **value proposition concept** is introduced to establish an understanding of the underlying principles of value co-creation. This provides a detailed, *microlevel* view at the essential pieces of value creation, which is divided into three sub-chapters: value propositions, value dimensions, and value mechanisms.

Part II extends the relationship philosophy to a **multi-stakeholder perspective**. In Part II and III, a *macrolevel* viewpoint of value co-creation is utilized to fully understand the concept within a broader, network-based environment.

In Part III, the value proposition concept is further analyzed from a **relationship marketing** perspective. This perspective draws from different relationship marketing streams of literature to interpret the meaning of relationships in the context of value co-creation, further explained in three sub-chapters, representing the main constructs: Service Systems, Interactions, and Encounters.

2.1 Defining Co-Creation

Research analyses vary in terms of definition of co-creation, suggesting a wide variety of different ideas of what co-creation actually constitutes (Saarijärvi et al., 2013). These differences have resulted in a "conceptual complexity" that has led to a "multifaceted nature of the concept [of co-creation]" (Saarijärvi et al., 2013, p.7). A review of the literature also reveals that there is difficulty in finding a uniform definition of

co-creation. McColl-Kennedy et al. (2012) illustrate this difficulty by their depiction of as many as 27 different definitions of co-creation; the difficulty arises from the fact that co-creation can be many things in a multitude of contexts, and therefore, defining it in exclusive terms proves to be challenging. This was especially apparent when the researcher noticed varying co-creation activities that were being practiced unknowingly in organizations since the activities were not referred to as "co-creation."

The following definition of co-creation proposed by Frow et al. (2012) is used as a starting point for defining co-creation because of its adaptability with place branding:

> *A resource integration activity involving the active involvement of at least two 'actors' engaging in interactions, encounters and knowledge sharing, resulting in shared creation of value.*

2.2 A Service-Dominant Perspective

2.2.1 What is value?

To understand value creation, we first start with 'value' itself. The concept of value has been discussed for many decades, starting with Aristotle, who defined value as the ability to satisfy wants, proposing a distinction between 'use value' and 'exchange value' (Vargo, Maglio & Akaka, 2008). Later, Adam Smith's (1776) emphasis on manufacturing goods embedded with utilities resulted in a strong focus on exchange value, thus resulting in the development of modern economics founded on a goods-dominant logic (Vargo, Maglio & Akaka, 2008). In contrast, the emerging service-dominant view of marketing stands to challenge this governing logic. As we will see next, this view implies that value is generated by the interactive participation of a consumer through his or her relationship with a brand (Lindberg-Repo & Grönroos, 2004), strongly indicating that value is a co-created phenomenon (Grönroos, 2006).

Before proceeding to the next section, a preliminary understanding of value is needed. In the context of co-creation, the *perception* of value is especially important in determining whether or not a stakeholder will feel motivated to collaborate with other actors. Referencing Ravald and Grönroos (1996) **perceived value** is defined as the relation between perceived benefits and perceived sacrifice. Similarly, Zeithaml et al. (1988) determine value as a trade-off between total benefits received and total sacrifices made. The underlying assumption is that a consumer feels "better off" than before (Grönroos, 2008, p. 303), especially in relation to the sacrifice they had to make. Perceptions are highly subjective and person-specific, differing greatly between consumers (Zeithaml, 1988). Therefore, 'value' is determined by the perception of a consumer, based on what meaning a value offering has for that person. This means that 'value' can be understood as a 'preferential judgment' made by the consumer (Holbrook, 1994) and determined by what is valuable to the consumer at that point in their life (Ravald & Grönroos, 1996; Ballantyne & Varey, 2006). This fluctuating nature of value perception poses a number of challenges for a focal actor to provide the right value offering

to consumers. The obvious desired result is to provide the best value for consumers, but in truth, creating value may not always lead to a positive outcome. For example, building a park may be seen as positive value creation process for a local community, but some residents may feel that it can lead to negative outcomes, such as increased traffic and noise.

2.2.2 Service-Dominant Logic

A dominant logic, as defined by Prahalad and Bettis (1986), is a mind set or worldview used by management to accomplish goals and guide critical decision-making. Therefore, understanding the dominant logic in marketing helps to interpret the philosophical climate in which co-creation evolved, and thus, becomes a guide for this exploratory research on the conceptualization of value co-creation.

In their influential book, *The Future of Competition* (2004), Prahalad and Ramaswamy coined the term *co-creation,* in which they suggest engaging customers in the firm's value creation process. This prompted a reconsideration of the role of customers from 'passive audiences' to 'active players' (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2004), shifting the field of marketing to a new reality, where the consumer becomes a collaborator. This shift in perspective was adopted by the service-dominant logic proposed by Vargo and Lusch (2004a). In another article, Vargo and Lusch (2004b) propose a more service-dominant view than the original "goods-centered, manufacturing-based model of economic exchange" (p.324), countering the characteristics commonly adopted by theory and practice that distinguish between goods and services. Vargo and Lusch (2004b) argue that the four differentiations between goods and services (intangibility, inseparability, heterogeneity, and perishability) only hold true from a manufacturing perspective. These findings can be viewed as the catalyst for the shift from a goods-dominant (G-D) logic to a service-dominant (S-D) logic, necessitating a broader view on exchange.

In S-D logic, value is conceived in terms of *operant resources* – "dynamic resources that can act on other resources, both operand and operant, to create value through service provision" – as opposed to *operand resources* – "tangible, static resources that require other, more dynamic resources to act on them to be useful" – used in the G-D logic (Lusch et al., 2006, p. 267). Operant resources are usually intangible resources, such as knowledge and skills, whereas operand resources are tangible resources, such as goods and materials, requiring some action to create value (Lusch et al., 2006; Chandler & Vargo, 2011; Ng et al., 2012). As such, in G-D logic, goods and services are embedded or added with value determined through a transactional process known as *value-in-exchange*, where a firm creates value and delivers it to customers, who are seen as value receivers and destroyers (Lusch & Vargo, 2006). In contrast, S-D logic views value creation as a *collaborative process of co-creation* where the customer is a co-creator of value with the service provider. Therefore, S-D logic recognizes that there is more than just delivering a good or service to

an end-consumer; value is also co-created by the beneficiary through his or her experience and assessment, what is referred to as *value-in-use* and *value-in-context* (ibid).

Per the literature review, it can be assumed that the primary goal of a goods-dominant (G-D) approach is to manufacture and distribute goods that are sold for a profitable price. In contrast, a service-dominant (S-D) approach assumes that all exchange is based on service through the action of operant (and sometimes operand) resources. Therefore, value results from the application and integration of resources. Following this stream of logic, value is co-created with the collaboration of relevant actors. The value itself, however, is determined by the beneficiary (e.g. customer or buyer) through value-in-use or value-in-context (Vargo & Lusch, 2008). In other words, value is "derived and determined in *use"*, through the "integration and application of resources in a specific context" (Vargo, Maglio & Akaka, 2008, p. 145).

2.2.3 Foundational Premises of S-D Logic

S-D logic is captured by ten foundational premises (FPs; Vargo & Lusch, 2004a; 2008), presented in Table 1. An interpretation of each foundational premise resulted in identifying the most important principles of co-creation. These principles have inspired the choice of theories that have guided the development of a conceptual model presented later. As relevant theories are further reviewed, the FPs will also be refined or re-defined within the theoretical margins particular to this study.

Table 1. The ten foundational premises of S-D logic

Number	Foundational Premise
FP1	Service is the fundamental basis of exchange.
FP2	Indirect exchange masks the fundamental basis of exchange.
FP3	Goods are a distribution mechanism for service provision.
FP4	Operant resources are the fundamental source of competitive advantage.
FP5	All economies are service economies.
FP6	The customer is always a co-creator of value.
FP7	The enterprise can not deliver value, but only offer value propositions.
FP8	A service-centered view is inherently customer oriented and relational.
FP9	All social and economic actors are resource integrators.
FP10	Value is always uniquely and phenomenologically determined by the beneficiary.

(Source: Vargo & Lusch, 2004; 2008a, p. 7)

In summary, 'value,' in the S-D logic perspective, consists of value-in-exchange, value-in-use, and value-in-context. The roles of providers (or producers) are not distinct from beneficiaries (or consumers), because "value is always co-created, jointly and reciprocally, in interactions among providers and beneficiaries through the integration of resources and application of competences" (Vargo et al., 2008, p. 146). Therefore, value results from the integration of resources. As FP1 and FP3 demonstrate, entities exchange service for service. Everything else (i.e. goods) is considered a "distribution mechanism" in this process (ibid). Finally,

all economic and social actors are resource integrators (FP9). This implies that value creation takes place in networks of networks, where each actor is part of a network of service systems, and where the focal actor has a limited role (Vargo, 2008). This creates a "value configuration space in which each actor is *its own primary resource integrator*" (Vargo 2008, p. 213-4). A key point is that value is uniquely and phenomenologically determined by the beneficiary (FP10), signifying the meaning-based reality of value creation. Therefore, value is derived by the lived experience of an individual within a given context (Le Dantec et al., 2009), proving that value is contextually bound (Chandler & Vargo, 2011) and socially constructed. This coincides with the social constructivist outlook grounded in this stud.

2.3 Theoretical Foundation

Figure 2 below presents a visualization of the composition of value co-creation, as compartmentalized into three components (Saarijärvi et al., 2013). This diagram is a starting point of this analysis and presents a visual overview of the concept of value co-creation, as well as serving as a useful signpost of progress on the road to investigating value co-creation in place branding. Together, these three sections provide a holistic and integrated perspective towards a final conceptualization in Chapter 4.

Figure 2. The Building Blocks of Co-Creation

I. Value	II. Co-	III. Creation
What kind of value for whom?	*By what kind of resources?*	*Through what kind of mechanism?*
Value Proposition	Stakeholder Networks	Relationship Marketing
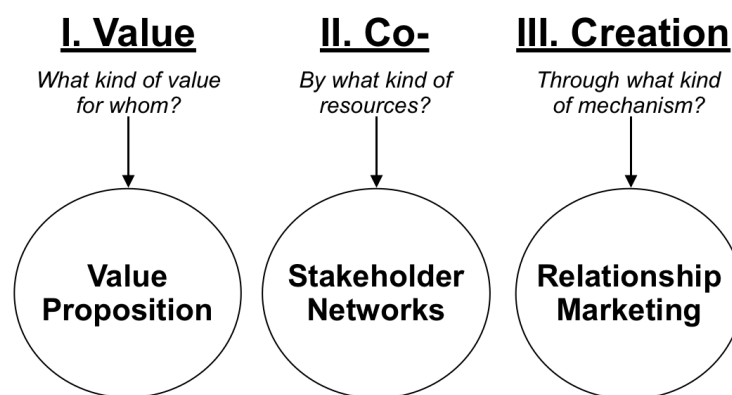
(Source: Own illustration based on Saarijärvi et al. (2013, p. 10)

2.4 Part I - The Value Proposition Concept

In conjunction with the theoretical lens established above, the discussion now turns to the 'value' component of value co-creation, in order to establish a microlevel understanding of the subject. First, the value proposition concept is discussed, followed by two of its main elements: value dimensions and value mechanisms.

2.4.1 Value Propositions

For value to be created, a value offering or a value proposition must be made. Value propositions (hereinafter VP) play a significant role in the value creation process (Frow & Payne, 2011), as demonstrated by FP7. Despite its significance for value creation, the concept of VP remains vague and, similar to the remaining literature on value creation, ingrained with traces of G-D logic.[1] This highlights the need for a clear and straightforward understanding of VPs from an S-D perspective. It could be argued that FP7 does not represent the multi-dimensional and dynamic nature of co-creation because it implies that VPs are unidirectional (Ballantyne et al., 2011). Therefore, a reciprocal value proposition has been adopted in this study. Ballantyne et al., (2011) propose that:

> *Hence, we propose the following refinement of FP7: an enterprise can initiate or participate in developing value propositions as reciprocal promises of value but beneficiaries will always determine what is of value in their own terms (p. 205).*

In other words, as is defined in the quote above, in a reciprocal setting, the participating actors determine their own understanding and acceptance of what constitutes 'value' and will act accordingly, choosing whether or not to accept the VP (Ballantyne & Varey, 2006). As such, 'value' becomes derived from the enactment of the VP during an interaction amongst actors. Two key concepts underpin the premise of a reciprocal value perspective:

1) Any actor in the network can introduce a VP. This establishes a need to evaluate co-creation opportunities from a network perspective, where different actors are co-creating value through multiple interactions, sometimes taking on different roles throughout the process. This broadened view of participants is complementary to the stakeholder network perspective adopted in our research (Section 2.5). It is further aligned with the concept of co-creation in that it recognizes the relational nature of interactions (Section 2.6; Grönroos, 2006; 2011). In a complex reality, such as place branding, this inclusivity in co-creation processes becomes a valuable asset, as will become evident in later chapters.

2) The acceptance of a VP is a reciprocal promise of value (Ballantyne et al., 2011), which is supported by current literature that value is "idiosyncratic, experiential, contextual, and meaning laden" (Vargo & Lusch, 2008, p. 7). As such, value is subjectively determined (Grönroos, 2008), making both experience and perception important considerations in a socially constructed reality of value (FP10). This notion is further grounded in the contextually driven nature of value (Ng & Smith, 2012) in which reciprocal and collaborative processes of value co-creation are taking place. Because of this, a reciprocal VP is compatible with this study's conceptualisation of relationships.

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[1] For a more in-depth look at research perspectives on value propositions, see "Value propositions as communication practice: Taking a wider view" by Ballantyne et al., (2011).

Together, these attributes of reciprocal VPs provide a good starting point for the subsequent discussion investigating the characteristics of VPs.

2.4.2 Value Dimensions

In a given system, multiple VPs are introduced, which can either be rejected, accepted or go unnoticed by the beneficiary (Spohrer et al., 2008). For a VP to be accepted, it must be perceived as a 'superior' value offering. This can result in co-creation opportunities, enhancing the overall system and increasing benefits for stakeholders (Payne et al., 2008). Superior VPs are closely related to the core strategy of an enterprise, as recognized by Payne and Frow (2014). Therefore, understanding what 'superior value' entails is a fruitful area of inquiry. Superiority is based on the beneficiary's judgment and overall assessment of the VP in terms of elements that make it preferable to the next best alternative (Zeithaml, 1988). Since value is a construct of individual perception (rather than a function of the tangible qualities of the offer), the aim of a VP is to differentiate itself in the mind of the beneficiary from competing VPs in order to increase its chances of acceptance. Therefore, the benefits that the VP can provide need to be clearly articulated to potential beneficiaries (Payne & Frow, 2014). This calls for identifying which **value dimensions** are important for the beneficiary, and designing the VP accordingly to ensure its superior quality in comparison to other VPs.

A competitive VP has four value dimensions: economic, functional, emotional and symbolic (Rintamäki et al., 2007), each characterizing different motivations of stakeholders. They are presented in Appendix 9.1. In most situations, VP dimensions can be combined, producing a unique and compelling offer to the beneficiary (e.g. staying in a hotel that is cost-saving, convenient, and with a friendly staff offers a unique experience that encompasses economic, functional and emotional value for a guest) (Rintamäki et al., 2007). Value dimensions can enable a focal actor to make customized VP offerings, designing them in a relatable and compelling manner that successfully target a beneficiary's needs. Additionally, a customized offer resonates with the new reality of marketing, in which the modern consumer has higher demands for product and service offerings. Brands, therefore, are evaluated based on their ability to provide value-adding benefits to the consumer, making it in the firm's best interest to explore what a "preferred" offer constitutes for the consumer.

2.4.3 Value Mechanisms

An understanding of VPs and their underlying value dimensions lays the groundwork for understanding *how* a VP is made and carried out. As noted, value results from the application and integration of resources. The value co-creation mechanism is the *way* this resource integration takes place in the stakeholder's process. A value mechanism can be viewed as a catalyst for contributing and providing additional resources for value-creating processes (e.g. integrating Actor A's resources with Actor B's value-creating process). Saarijärvi et

al. (2013) articulate this idea in the following: "[Value mechanisms] reconfigure the traditional roles of [stakeholders] in order to harness the resources of each in new and innovative ways" (p. 11).

A joint outlook at the concepts of VP and value mechanisms reveals that the mechanism facilitates the realization of a proposition. Therefore, once a VP is determined and designed using the different value dimensions, a mechanism is needed to carry it out. Therefore, different mechanisms can be considered to determine whether or not they are able to sustain the VP to succeed in its offering.

Co-creation mechanisms can also be known as co-creation forms or co-creation types; therefore, the terms will be used interchangeably here. Twelve co-creation types have been identified based on a typology proposed by Frow et al. (2011). The twelve types are: co-conception of ideas; co-design; co-production; co-promotion; co-pricing; co-distribution; co-consumption; co-maintenance; co-outsourcing; co-disposal; co-experience; and co-meaning creation.

In marketing literature, 'co-creation' is frequently used as an umbrella term to cover a multiplicity of co-creation activities. Terms such as co-production, joint production, collaboration, joint-value creation and customer participation are substituted for 'co-creation', adding to the overall lack of clarity and definitional challenges that exist in the field (Auh et al., 2007; Bendapudi & Leone, 2003; Grönroos, 2008; Ramirez, 1999; Vargo & Lusch, 2006;). For this reason, the twelve forms of co-creation have been selected as a starting point for attempting to distinguish between different co-creation activities.

Figure 3. The underlying principles of value co-creation
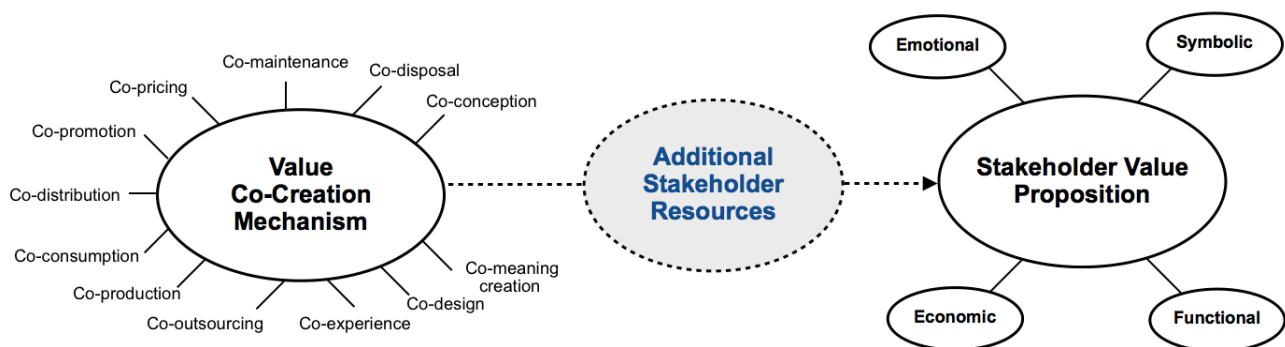
(Source: Adapted from model by Saarijärvi (2012).

Figure 3 represents a visualization of the main components of the VP concept discussed in this section. Three modifications have been made from the original model proposed by Saarijärvi (2012). First, the twelve types of co-creation are integrated into the model. Second, the original model reflects a more traditional dyadic relationship between a company and its customers. Therefore, the term 'customer' has been replaced with 'stakeholder' in line with the inclusion of multiple stakeholder domains relevant to this study. Lastly, the

model has been modified to signify the notion that value is a *creation* process, as opposed to a *delivery* process, which implies a goods-dominant view. A provider cannot create value, but only offer a VP (FP7), and then create value in collaboration with the beneficiary (FP6). As previously noted, value is only realized when a VP is accepted and additional resources are integrated into a reciprocal value-creating process between all relevant actors (FP9). Once a provider understands what is of value to a stakeholder, they improve their offers by better-designing future VPs, or modifying existing ones, to meet the needs and desires of a beneficiary.

2.5 Part II - A Multi-Stakeholder Perspective

A further discussion of co-creation necessitates a clarification of the 'stakeholder" to determine *who* is actually participating in the co-creation of value. Recalling the overview of value co-creation in Figure 2, the stakeholder concept refers to the 'co' in co-creation, which is a determination of the resources used in value creation. The 'co' in co-creation stems from the Latin prefix 'co' which means together, jointly or mutually, strongly referencing the relational approach discussed above. In essence, the stakeholder concept is about relationships. Therefore, approaching the concept of stakeholders is most appropriate from a relationship marketing perspective. By identifying *who* to connect with is a significant step in developing a framework for co-creation.

2.5.1 Identifying Stakeholders

Subsequently, unlike mainstream marketing, the relationship marketing approach takes into account a broader view of stakeholders (e.g. Grönroos, 1994; Gummesson, 1999). Modern stakeholder theory developed in the early 1980s, with Edward Freeman, who first defined the term "stakeholder" as "all of those groups and individuals that can affect, or are affected by, the accomplishment of organizational purpose**"** (Freeman, 1984, p. 46). This new outlook challenged the traditional view of stakeholders by proposing the inclusion of groups and individuals previously considered external to the firm.

A review of stakeholder literature reveals that stakeholders are typically categorized as primary and secondary stakeholders (Laczniak & Murphy, 1993). Primary stakeholders have a direct vested interest with the firm and may include investors, customers, suppliers and employees. Secondary stakeholders may not be as directly engaged with the firm, but remain in its sphere of influence. They may include governmental and nongovernmental organizations, regulation agencies, the media, activist groups, trade unions, and social groups (Post et al., 2002; Sloan, 2009). Despite the extensive literature available concerning stakeholder theory, there is no consensus about who should be considered a stakeholder (Freeman, 1984; Polonsky et al., 2003). Nonetheless, scholarly contributions have supported the inclusion of a wider network of stakeholders (e.g. Spohrer et al., 2008), which subsequently widens the scope of co-creation activities (Gummesson &

Mele, 2010), and promotes the sustainability of a service system. An accurate identification of the actors involved in a process of co-creation is a significant contribution to the study of co-creation in place branding, as it provides a deeper understanding of how value is created amongst multiple actors in many-to-many relationships.

This study adopts the six-markets stakeholder model by Christopher et al. (2002) (Figure 4). The model represents six market domains; each market domain can be viewed as a system further divided into sub-systems that include specific stakeholders (Frow & Payne, 2011).

Figure 4. The six-markets stakeholder model
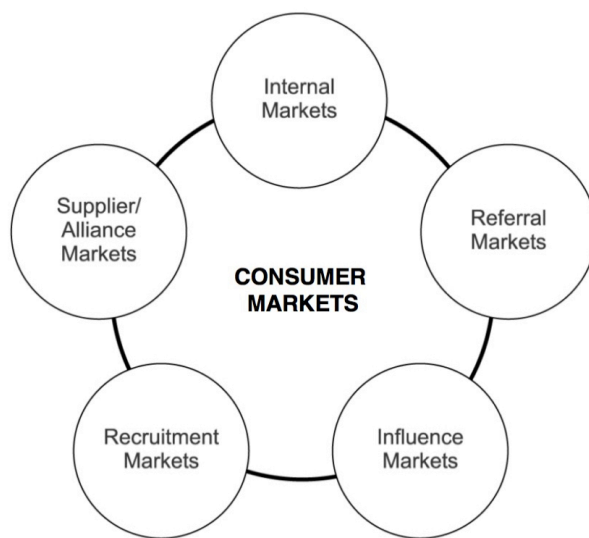
(Source: Christopher et al., 2002)

Table 2. Six-Stakeholder Model

The model incorporates the VP concept so that we are able to assess the VP of each stakeholder market (Frow & Payne, 2011). The market domains and their sub-systems are presented below with a brief description. Each stakeholder market is translated and discussed for place branding in Chapter 4 research synthesis.

Stakeholder Market	Elaboration
Consumer Market VPs	Revising the original model, 'customer' has been replaced with 'consumer' to better represent the aims of this research. Consumer markets include: the direct consumer, either existing or potential; intermediaries responsible for the distribution of the product or service; and final consumers (Christopher et al., 2002).
Internal Market VPs	This domain includes the internal staff (i.e. employees) of an organization. From a VP perspective, the goal is to design VPs that will motivate and retain the best personnel within an organization (Frow & Payne, 2011).

Referral Market VPs	This includes stakeholder and non-stakeholder recommendation sources (third-parties). A clear and attractive VP will urge external actors to make referrals (Frow & Payne, 2011). For example, stakeholders can become advocates and brand ambassadors, generating positive word-of-mouth marketing to reach new, untapped market domains not yet included in the stakeholder network (Christopher, et al. 2002; Peck et al., 1999).
Influence Market VPs	The influence market domain has the most diverse range of stakeholders (Payne, et al., 2005) because it includes any stakeholder with influence power, such as financial investors; unions; industry bodies; regulatory bodies; media; user groups; environmental groups; political and government bodies; and competitors (Frow & Payne, 2011; Peck et al., 1999). Anyone with Internet access can be considered an influencer.
Recruitment Market VPs	The focus here is on attracting and retaining the highest quality recruits and talent (Christopher et al., 2002). This requires creating and communicating VPs that appeal to the right constituents (Frow & Payne, 2011).
Supplier & Alliance Market VPs	Supplier and alliance markets can also be viewed as partnerships **(**Frow & Payne, 2011). According to Christopher et al. (2002), suppliers provide tangible resources or services, while alliances are more knowledge-based and created upon the need to outsource an activity within the value chain.

2.6 Part III - A Relationship Approach to Value Creation

The purpose of this section is to explore the above mentioned VP concept in a broader, more relational context in order to fully grasp the setting in which co-creation has the ability to take place and thrive (a macrolevel perspective). Part III is organized as follows. First, the relevance of a relationship approach to this study is explained. Next, a brief overview of relationship marketing theory is presented, followed by a detailed discussion of the three key relational constructs: service systems, interactions, and encounters. Finally, meaning creation and loyalty are introduced as two critical outcomes of a relationship approach which are pertinent to later discussions in this research.

2.6.1 Rationale for Applying Relationship Marketing

A service-centered view is inherently relationship-oriented (FP8), which mandates a look at co-creation from a relationship marketing view. This study considers a broader perspective into the contributions of relationship marketing as a *philosophy* that can guide the planning, management, facilitation and understanding of co-creation opportunities and processes for a brand (Grönroos, 1999). Although the compatibility of a relationship marketing view with S-D logic has been an area of concern (Gruen & Hofstetter, 2010), this study regards S-D logic to be compatible with relationship marketing (Ballantyne & Varey, 2006). As Figure 3 shows, the locus of the 'creation' factor in 'value co-creation' are relationships.

2.6.2 Overview of Relationship Marketing

Various streams of research have examined relationship marketing (hereinafter RM) over the last twenty-five years (Brito, 2008); see Appendix 9.2. The study of relationships in marketing research has moved from a

narrow view of one-to-one interactions (e.g. between a buyer and a seller) to a wider view of relationships with multiple actors (Gummesson & Mele, 2010; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). The importance of the changing nature of relationships in the S-D logic view is also recognized by Vargo & Lusch (2010), confirming that value is co-created with the collaboration of actors integrating resources within a network. For this reason, it can be said that the "relationship" is the point of departure for resource integration to take place. From this standpoint, value is co-created "through the combined resource integration efforts of both service providers and service beneficiaries; in other words, providers and beneficiaries are connected by their own reciprocal acts of service for one another" (FP7, FP9)(Chandler & Wieland, 2010, p. 202). These 'reciprocal acts' are synonymous with the reciprocal promises of value introduced earlier. To recall, the goals of value creating actors are complementary and therefore, it is in their best interest to act reciprocally and design competitive VPs that clearly articulate the benefits and costs to a beneficiary.

To be able to form reciprocal VPs, a diverse range of resources is needed, especially with the participation of multiple actors whose needs are continuously changing. Therefore, a broader network-based view is necessary for reciprocal value creation. As recognized by the literature, value creation is not limited to dyadic, one-on-one interactions; on the contrary, it takes place through interactions that occur in more complex networks (Gummesson, 2008; Vargo, 2009; Vargo & Akaka, 2012). These findings illustrate how the limited dyadic view of relationships does not adequately capture the essence of value co-creation, and therefore, there is a need to look beyond to a wider value network perspective. This is discussed next.

2.6.3 Key Constructs in Relationship Marketing

Service Systems

The many-to-many relationships (Gummesson, 2007) established in the co-creation of value results in the formation of a value network. Value networks can also be known in terms of the value constellations (Normann & Ramirez, 1993); knowledge networks (Ballantyne & Varey, 2006); stakeholder systems (Frow & Payne, 2011); and interaction within networks of relationships (Gummesson, 1995). Although the *value network* concept illustrates a more expanded view of value creation, it falls short in capturing co-creation's dynamic and adaptive qualities. Due to this, it is more appropriate to refer to a value network as a *service system*, which better captures the complexity of a broad-based view of value co-creation (Vargo, 2009; Lusch et al., 2010). To maintain simplicity, the terms network and system are used interchangeably throughout this study.

On a basic level, a **service system** is defined as: "A dynamic value co-creation configuration of resources, including people, organizations, shared information (language, laws, measures, methods), and technology, all connected internally and externally to other service systems by value propositions" (Spohrer et al., 2008, p.

5). Therefore, a system is a configuration of both operant and operand resources (ibid). As an open system, a service system is primarily based on two functions: it can improve *other* systems by sharing its own resources through interactive processes; and it can improve its *own* condition by acquiring external resources from other systems (ibid). In short, "each system must willingly interact, and both systems must be improved" (ibid., 7). Therefore, resources are integrated from the service system's immediate context (Chandler & Wieland, 2010), displaying the contextual nature of value co-creation.

This suggests that resource integration involves interaction that occurs between *multiple service systems*, forming a **service ecosystem**, which is defined as: "A spontaneously sensing and responding spatial and temporal structure of largely loosely coupled, value-proposing social and economic actors interacting through institutions, technology, and language to (1) co-produce service offerings, (2) engage in mutual service provision, and (3) co-create value" (Vargo & Lusch, 2011, p. 185). In other words, an ecosystem can also be thought of as *systems of service systems* (Vargo & Akaka, 2012, p. 207), where each network can be seen as a smaller "sub-system" within a larger network (Chandler & Wieland, 2010). The concept of a service ecosystem can be deconstructed into eight key elements by Vargo & Lusch (2011), which are presented in a compact visualization in Figure 5. These eight elements help in underlining the relational nature of value co-creation. Even though they are brief, each element generates a deeper insight about the characteristics of interactions in a complex system of value creation and resource configuration.

Figure 5. Key elements of a service ecosystem

1. Spontaneously sensing and responding
2. Spatial and temporal structure
3. Largely loosely coupled
4. Value proposing actors.
5. Co-produce service offerings
6. Use of language, symbols, institutions and technology
7. Engaging in mutual service provision
8. Co-creating value

Service Ecosystem

1. Actors interact with other actors and use their senses to determine how and when to respond or act. Due to information technology, the sensing and responding is becoming more spontaneous.
2. Actors and resources are assembled over geographic space and temporal dimensions. Space includes both geographic and virtual spaces.
3. Actors connect to others both within and outside organizations mostly via soft contracts versus hard contracts. This hints to more informal structures and processes, as well as a bottom-up approach.
4. Actors cannot create value for other actors but can make offers that have potential value and this occurs via value propositions. Value propositions connect actors to one another.
5. Actors invite other actors to assist in the production of service offerings. This is an open system.
6. To interact successfully, actors rely on a common language and other social institutions (e.g. monetary systems, laws, etc.) to regulate interaction and exchange. Finally, technology and especially innovation drives system evolution and performance.
7. Actors do not get a free ride but must help other actors, via service exchange, either directly or indirectly (e.g. monetarily or generalized reciprocity).Value propositions are reciprocal.
8. Actors, in the integration of service offerings with other resources (including other service offerings), create value which is unique to their situation and context.

(Source: Own visualization based on eight key components of service ecosystems listed by Vargo & Lusch in "It's all B2B...and beyond: Toward a systems perspective of the market" (2011, p. 185).

Per the scope of this research, this study is interested in exploring how service systems relate to value co-creation, and therefore, systems theory will not be elaborated here. Rather, the relevance of systems thinking and how it applies to value co-creation is discussed. A system-based approach is considered appropriate for the following reasons. Firstly, the importance of the VP as the nexus of relationships is made explicit in the definition of a system. Secondly, the definition also captures the reality that a diverse combination of resources is needed for value configurations (such as people, organizations, shared information, and technology), making the concept more applicable in practice. In order to supply these resource-needs, a wide range of actors is needed, which points toward a multiple-stakeholder approach. Thirdly, scholars agree that, "the proper unit of analysis for service-for-service exchange is the service system" (Vargo, Maglio & Akaka, 2008, p. 145), which is consistent with a service-dominant mindset. And finally, the idea of a system captures the dynamic fluidity of interactions involved amongst multiple stakeholders, making it well matched to a study of place branding.

In summary, a service ecosystem is a platform where value co-creation can take place and thrive. This relationship-building space is referred to as an **engagement platform** where "efficient and effective co-creation" is enabled (Frow et al., 2015, p. 472). It is in this 'space' that value propositions can be made, co-creation activities carried out, and co-creation opportunities realized. This is further supported by the literature (e.g. Degnegaard, 2014; Nilsson & Ballantyne, 2014; Ramaswamy & Gouillart, 2010; Sawhney et al., 2005). Relationship-building takes place in these spaces of value co-creation. Specifically, the overall relationship-building process can be considered in terms of interactions.

Interactions

As proposed by Prahalad & Ramaswamy, interactions are at the heart of relationships and therefore, can be regarded as the locus for value creation (2004, p.19). Interaction can be understood as "a mutual or reciprocal action where two or more parties have an effect upon one another" (Grönroos & Ravald, 2011, p. 11). An interaction between two or more parties means that a relationship is invariably present (Ballantyne & Varey, 2006), indicating the significant role interactions play in value-creating processes.

Over time, communication has transformed from a one-way focus towards a two-way exchange (Ballantyne & Varey, 2004). For this reason, *dialogical interaction* can be seen as the most adequate form of communication able to support value co-creation. Dialogue is defined as an "interactive process of learning together" (Ballantyne, 2004), further highlighting the importance of an approach that fosters connectivity, participation and engagement with a wide range of stakeholders (Grönroos & Ravald, 2011; Zhang & Chen, 2008). Through dialogue, knowledge is not only shared, but also created through mutual learning (Ballantyne & Varey, 2006). This means a provider can "reconfigure its role as a value facilitator" and "actively and directly influence the customers' experiences" (Grönroos & Ravald, 2011, p. 11). The majority of the

discussion, thus far, has focused on the beneficiary's role as co-creator. But, shifting to the provider's point of view, "well coordinated interactions create opportunities to enter and contribute to the customer's process of value creation" (Grönroos & Ravald, 2011, p. 11). In that event, a provider can also be a beneficiary of the system, while at other points, be a provider of the system. The challenge here is to balance the dynamic interests of both the provider and the beneficiary in a relational setting. This reveals that co-creation opportunities take place during interactions where joint and reciprocal value creation is possible (*ibid*), as is in dialogue. In other words, *co-creation becomes possible through dialogical interactions*.

Recalling the previous discussion on designing competitive value offerings, the process of dialogue and knowledge sharing also generates superior VPs for stakeholders (Frow & Payne, 2011). VPs can be designed and targeted to meet specific needs based on the knowledge gained from interactions, therefore increasing their chance of acceptance. Furthermore, in a participatory marketing setting such as a service system, stakeholders are continuously listening, connecting, engaging, delivering and re-assessing needs through processes of interaction (Ind & Bjerke, 2007), generating unique capabilities through their involvement (Zhang & Chen, 2008). This confirms that dialogical interaction is highly compatible to the flexible and spontaneously self-adjusting nature of service systems. Dialogue enables the operations of a service system by stimulating continuous interaction and knowledge renewal between stakeholders (Ballantyne & Varey, 2006). Earlier, it was mentioned that S-D logic regards knowledge as the fundamental source of competitive advantage (Vargo & Lusch, 2004, 2008). This research agrees with Ballantyne and Varey (2006) in that it is not just knowledge, but "*knowledge renewal* (the generation, sharing and application of knowledge) that is more aptly designated as a fundamental source of competitive advantage" (p. 340). Therefore, effective dialogue is considered an ecosystem capability with strategic implications. As stated by Ballantyne and Varey (2006), "we see dialogical interaction as an ideal form of communication within the S-D logic because it supports the potential for co-creation of value and sustainable competitive advantage" (p. 224).[2]

2.6.4 Outcomes of a Relationship Marketing Approach

An RM approach can lead to two key outcomes, described below.

Meaning Creation

Interaction and dialogue also make meaningful value co-creation a reality. By establishing deeper bonds, consumers are able to create more personal meanings through their experiences (Payne et al., 2008), or more accurately put, through their "lived experiences" (Brown et al., 2003, p. 30). In addition, according to Bhalla (2011), value is not something that is built into a product or service; rather, it becomes manifested in the unique and meaningful interactions that occur between stakeholders. Actors no longer operate within the boundaries of pre-established and fixed roles – instead, value creation is a collaborative and interactive

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[2] As cited in Vargo & Lusch in "The Service-dominant Logic of Marketing: Dialog, Debate, and Directions" (2006).

process that takes place in the context of personalized experiences (FP10; Vargo & Lusch, 2004; 2008). Because a consumer is more involved, they become more committed to the success of an outcome. Consequently, co-creation increases the probability that an outcome will be positive because there is a higher chance that consumer needs will be met more accurately. As a result, meaningful value co-creation leads to more loyalty, trust, and commitment, increasing the overall satisfaction of both the consumer and the provider.

Loyalty

One of the primary outcomes of a relationship approach is loyalty. A defining characteristic of loyalty is that in a relationship between an actor and another entity, "the actor displays behavioral or psychological allegiance to that entity in the presence of alternative entities" (Melnyk et al., 2009, p. 82). According to the RM ladder of customer loyalty (Christopher et al., 2002), a customer can gradually move towards becoming an advocate, and ultimately, a partner. As an advocate, an actor acts as a champion for the brand by means of positive word-of-mouth referrals. An advocate can become a partner by collaborating with the main actor in mutual value creation. The key to the ladder analogy is to strengthen relationships through RM strategies that develop loyalty. Satisfaction, trust and commitment are considered the most important factors that are linked to loyalty (Bricci, 2015; van Vuuren et al., 2012). Hence, the basic goal of a relationship approach is to "build trusted, committed, satisfied and informed long term [relationships] through continuous value creation. Thus increasing [stakeholder] loyalty and retention" (Datta et al., 2011, p. 307). Effective RM strategies reveal important antecedents and consequents of consumer loyalty in order to develop stronger bonds between actors, and in turn, create more value for both consumers and providers.

2.7 Chapter Summary

By building on our initial diagram of what value co-creation represents (p. 16), Figure 6 demonstrates the key findings from this chapter. As it is evident from a thorough literature review, two dominant streams of literature represent the "value co-creation" discourse: service-dominant logic and relationship marketing theory. The S-D logic perspective reveals the importance of the VP concept in the basic creation of value, and RM theory integrates the interactive and networked dimensions of co-creation within the discourse.

Figure 6. Conceptual Framework for Co-Creation
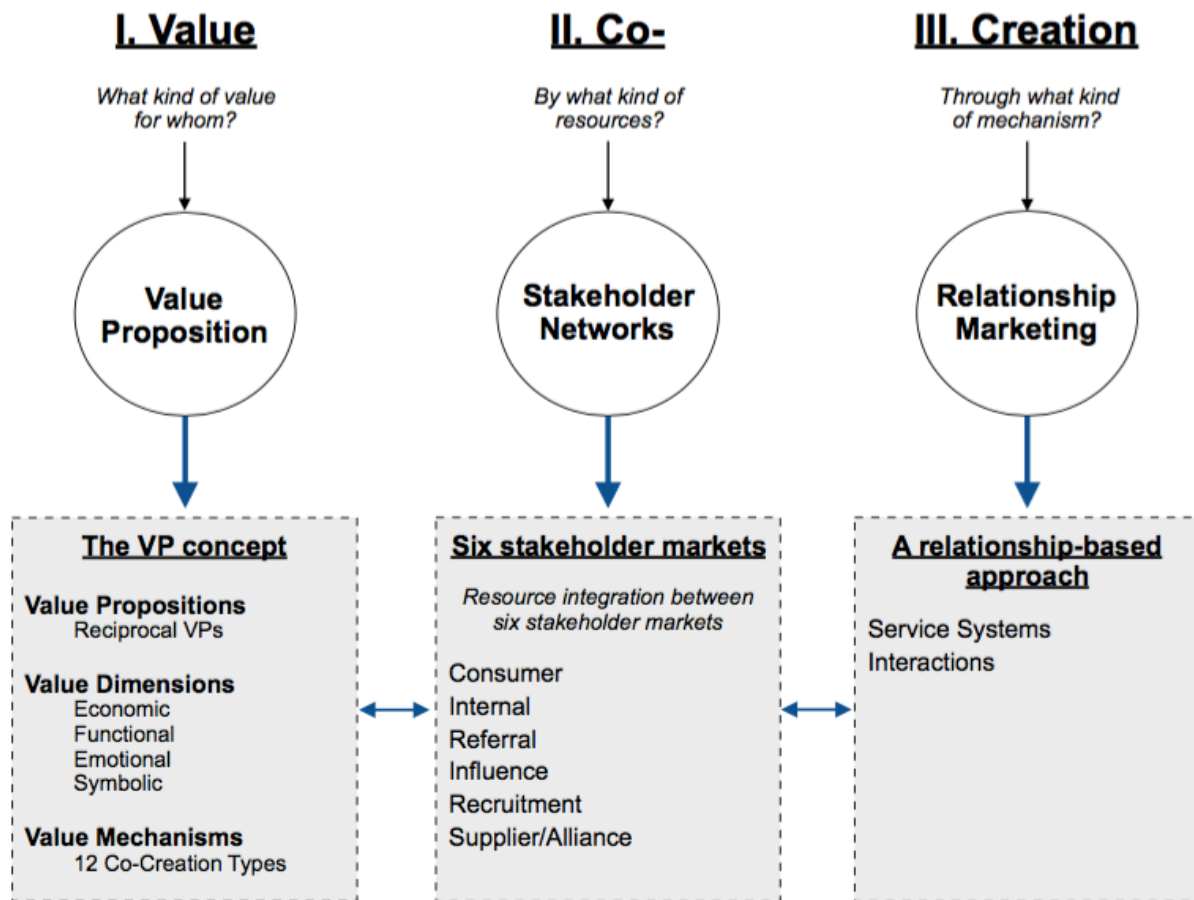
Chapter 3. Research Method

The objective of this chapter is to outline the research methodology utilized in this study. The methodology guides in setting the research design most suitable for answering the research question, by specifying how data will be collected, evaluated and analyzed in order to understand how co-creation can be implemented in the place branding process.

3.1 Research Perspective

The research perspective of a study contains important assumptions about the way in which the researcher views the world, thus motivating the choice of strategy and selected methods (Saunders et al. 2009, p.108). This choice is influenced both by practical considerations, as well as the researcher's own beliefs and assumptions of how knowledge is generated and what knowledge is considered important (ibid). More significantly, the researcher's view of what constitutes acceptable knowledge (epistemology) determines

what is included and excluded from the research (ibid).

A social constructivist perspective is taken throughout the entirety of this research, highlighting the subjective and meaning-oriented nature of this study. A social constructivist view stresses the social dimension of knowledge construction (Prawat, 1999; Vygotsky, 1986). The underlying assumption of social constructivism is that individuals assign subjective meanings to their experiences (Creswell, 2008), in an active and collaborative process of meaning-making through social interactions (Saunders et al., 2009). Within this worldview, the researcher perceives reality to be socially constructed (ibid), acknowledging that everything is context-dependent (Guba & Lincoln 1994). This has influenced the choice in methodology, as well as the interpretation of data. This approach also acknowledges that different meanings may emerge; leading to an understanding of what motivates the actions of different actors in place branding tasks (Saunders et al., 2009). In addition to exploring the motives that drive these individuals, a social constructivist approach seeks to understand the perceptions of individuals and their subjective representations of reality (ibid). This is taken into consideration especially during the empirical phase of this research, where knowledge is created through interpretation.

This approach will have an 'explicating' conceptual goal, being in between the 'summarizing' of how co-creation relates to place branding, and 'delineating' a conceptual model that maps out the focal entities (MacInnis, 2011). The evaluative quality criteria for an 'explicating' contribution are (1) to emphasize not only *what* the respondents think, but also *why* they do so, thereby gaining a deeper insight into the various meanings in their responses, and (2) to circumscribe the scope of what is relevant to the conceptual framework (ibid).

In line with the researcher's view of reality established above, this research adopts an interpretivist research philosophy, supporting the exploratory and qualitative inquiry used in this study. Interpretivist ideology takes into account the complexity that exists within a field, and the challenge to generalize complex situations (Saunders et al., 2009). This is particularly imperative in this study of co-creation in place branding, where each situation is unique and context-specific. From this perspective, reality is socially constructed and highly subjective, therefore, it is viewed differently by different people (ibid, p.134). Thus, the researcher, armed with this philosophy, is able to make interpretations by viewing situations from multiple perspectives and groups of people who produce different meanings (Blumberg et al., 2008).

3.2 Research Strategy

The research strategy used in this qualitative study is mainly abductive, combining both inductive and deductive elements to formulate a final model for co-creation in place brands (Saunders et al., 2009; Harryson, 2008). The purpose of this strategy is to develop theory based on a *grounded theory* approach and

empirically testing the theory by conducting an expert questionnaire. Grounded theory revokes the idea that theories emerge from the data itself by using the right methods, but argues that theories are slowly developed out of the data by active action of the scientist and is achieved by an iterative approach of referring back and forth between data collection and analysis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Bryman, 2008). The grounded theory coding techniques described in Section 3.5 are used for analyzing the collected data and developing a final conceptual model that describes co-creation in place branding. This intellectual task of coding and redeveloping definitions and theories permits for abductive reasoning, as it forces for creative jumps between the data collection and analysis part (Reichertz, 2010).

Typically, qualitative research relies on inductive reasoning to establish patterns and meanings from collected data, whereas quantitative studies utilize a deductive process to test hypotheses (Creswell, 2008). In addition, the inductive approach is customarily coupled with the interpretivist paradigm, where data is interpreted in order to establish new relationships between variables (Bryman, 2008). While an inductive approach was used to build theory from the empirical data, the literature review made use of deductive elements to develop a proposed framework that could be tested through the empirical data. Using the abductive logic of reasoning, different streams of literature (co-creation and place branding) were combined in a new and original way (Reichertz, 2014). The researcher explored different paths of literature by searching a variety of related sources, and using deductive elements to build a preliminary model for co-creation in place branding. As new information and knowledge emerged, both from the literature review and empirical research, the researcher further extended her literature search to find theories supporting the emerging data. Expert questionnaires were analyzed using an inductive approach by deriving meaning and categories from the responses using grounded theory coding. The final model for co-creation in place branding was developed using abductive reasoning to synthesize the findings and generate new intellectual insights (Peirce, 1992; Reichertz, 2010).

As demonstrated, an iterative process of going back and forth between theory and data collection is applied between different stages of the research in order to "fit" together the empirical data and theory (Reichertz, 2014, p. 131). This "interplay between induction and deduction" (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p.137) reveals that the research process was not rigid and pre-defined to a strict framework. The abductive approach is used because a certain freedom for creativity is necessary to conduct research in a topic that is so new and underdeveloped. This creativity enables the researcher "to break through assumptions" and think more freely, thus "generating stimulating questions" and making "a comparison that leads to discovery" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 27).

3.3 Research Design

As the purpose of this research is to understand, explain and conceptualize how value co-creation can occur in place branding, an exploratory study is most suitable for this inquiry. An exploratory method is appropriate in settings where the focus is on a new topic or phenomenon (Creswell, 2008). Exploratory research is especially useful when the research question seeks "to determine what is happening; to seek new insights; to assess phenomena in a new light" (Robson, 2002, p. 59). This creates a mindset of an "explorer" while collecting open-ended and emerging data, which is developed into themes and categories for further analysis (Creswell, 2008). The choice of research strategy is selected with the research task in mind, which explores the question of how a place brand can leverage co-creation opportunities in place branding processes. The strategy is to take an integrated approach, by first investigating the contemporary domain of value co-creation, and subsequently translating the relevant findings to the field of place branding, followed by an empirical study to verify the proposed conceptual model for co-creation in place branding.

The study begins with a review of relevant literature in order to critically evaluate the existing knowledge concerning value co-creation. Two streams of literature, value creation and relationship marketing, are combined, in order to represent a big-picture look at co-creation. The literature review encompasses peer-reviewed papers in multiple disciplines, such as marketing, management, organizational behavior, consumer behavior, and service science. The social constructivist view regarding knowledge construction influenced the choice to include multiple streams of research. Goulding (1998) and Brown (1995) further acknowledge the advantages of varied perspectives, which can deepen and enrich overall findings. **Appendix 9.3** represents the literature review process. Following an extensive literature review on value co-creation, the research design is divided into a two-phase process: I. Research Synthesis and II. Empirical Study. Each phase is introduced in the following section, with an explanation of why each strategy is suitable to this research.

3.3.1 Phase I: Research Synthesis

This first phase of the research employs a synthesis to translate and combine important findings from value co-creation and place branding, in order to determine how co-creation can occur in places.

The starting point of this process involved reviewing literature on 'brand', by researching a selection of keywords in management literature (such as brand image, identity, awareness, reputation, and meaning). In sources, such as *Journal of Brand Management*, *Journal of Marketing and Management*, *Psychology and Marketing* and *Strategic Management Journal* were used to ensure the quality of the research. After an initial understanding of 'brand,' the research direction moved towards to *place* brands, paying close attention to studies that referenced co-creation. It became evident, from initial readings, that co-creation, in place

branding, may not be mentioned explicitly. Consequently, the literature search also includes a range of keywords, such as participatory marketing, citizen participation, bottom-up approach, and community involvement. Principal sources included are the *Journal of Place Management and Development* and *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*. As a study, place branding also permeates a number of disciplines; hence, a variety of academic perspectives were also consulted, such as consumer behavior, public diplomacy, urban planning, public policy, and tourism management. Prominent sources include *Journal of Consumer Research*, *Annals of Tourism Research*, *International Journal of Tourism Research*, *Journal of Urban Technology*, and *Language and Intercultural Communications*. Early readings also revealed the importance of differentiating between the varied terminology describing 'place'. For these reasons, the literature review is focused on the most applicable and refers to the concept of 'place' in a general sense, avoiding a distinction between cities, regions, countries and destinations.

During this phase, findings were "put together" (Campbell et al., 2002) from both studies (value co-creation and place branding) in a coherent and meaningful way. Further, as explained by Campbell et al. (2002), "synthesis of qualitative research can be envisaged as the bringing together of findings on a chosen theme, the results of which should […] be greater than the sum of parts" (p. 672). The synthesis is conducted using the meta-ethnographic method proposed by Noblit and Hare (1988). It should be clarified that meta-ethnography can be used with different qualitative methodologies, not just ethnography (as the name suggests). This thesis utilizes the meta-ethnographic method on a very basic level, using Noblit and Hare's (1988) seven-phase process for synthesizing qualitative research. This method of synthesizing the research fit well with the epistemological paradigm of the research (Britten et al., 2002), as it seeks to compare and analyze texts in a more exploratory way than traditional methods (Noblit & Hare, 1988).

In accordance with Atkins et al. (2008), Campbell et al. (2002), and Snilstveit et al. (2012), the synthesis process is composed of two distinct parts. The first step is to determine *how value co-creation and place branding are related*. This is accomplished by identifying and categorizing common themes and concepts in both fields based from the literature review, similar to coding techniques used in the constant comparison method widely adopted in grounded theory methods (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). During this part, the interrelationships between value co-creation and place branding concepts are explored, in order to reveal similarities in the concepts from both fields. Secondly, reoccurring and overarching concepts are *translated*. From the interpretivist perspective of this research, the research synthesis is useful in generating meaningful interpretations in order to integrate similarities and differences between the translations, demonstrating a holistic union between the two fields (Pope et al., 2007). For example, the concept of 'brand loyalty' in value co-creation literature is analogous to the 'place attachment' concept in place branding.

3.3.2 Phase II: Empirical Study

In the second phase of this research, empirical research is employed. The purpose of this phase is to test the proposed research model from the research synthesis in place branding. To achieve this, a questionnaire is administered to a group of experts in the field, with the intention to collect qualitative data that represents views "nested in real context" (Miles & Huberman 1994, p. 10). This resonates with Saunders et al. (2009), who state that one of the primary ways of conducting an exploratory research is through interviewing experts in the subject. Further, in considering the most effective way of meeting the research objective, an empirical study is utilized, given that: a) empirical research in the form of an expert questionnaire can generate unique insights and knowledge in an understudied subject, where empirical studies are scarce (Payne, et al., 2008; Vargo & Lusch, 2008); and b) empirical data serves as an important supplement to the theory building carried out in the beginning of this research, effectively filling in data gaps. This type of focus creates an opportunity to further refine the initial version of the conceptual model developed during the Phase I research synthesis, as numerous co-creation components are identified and deemed relevant to place branding by the participating experts. For these reasons, an empirical study is a valuable approach for the exploratory nature of this thesis, seeking to explain how co-creation can occur in place branding.

In conclusion, the comparison between the theoretical and empirical phases of this research generates a unique understanding of the subject; the underlying interrelations between concepts are integrated in an insightful and coherent way, making predictions and generalized outcomes more operational. Figure 7 below demonstrates the research strategy process, signifying this interplay.

Figure 7. Research Strategy
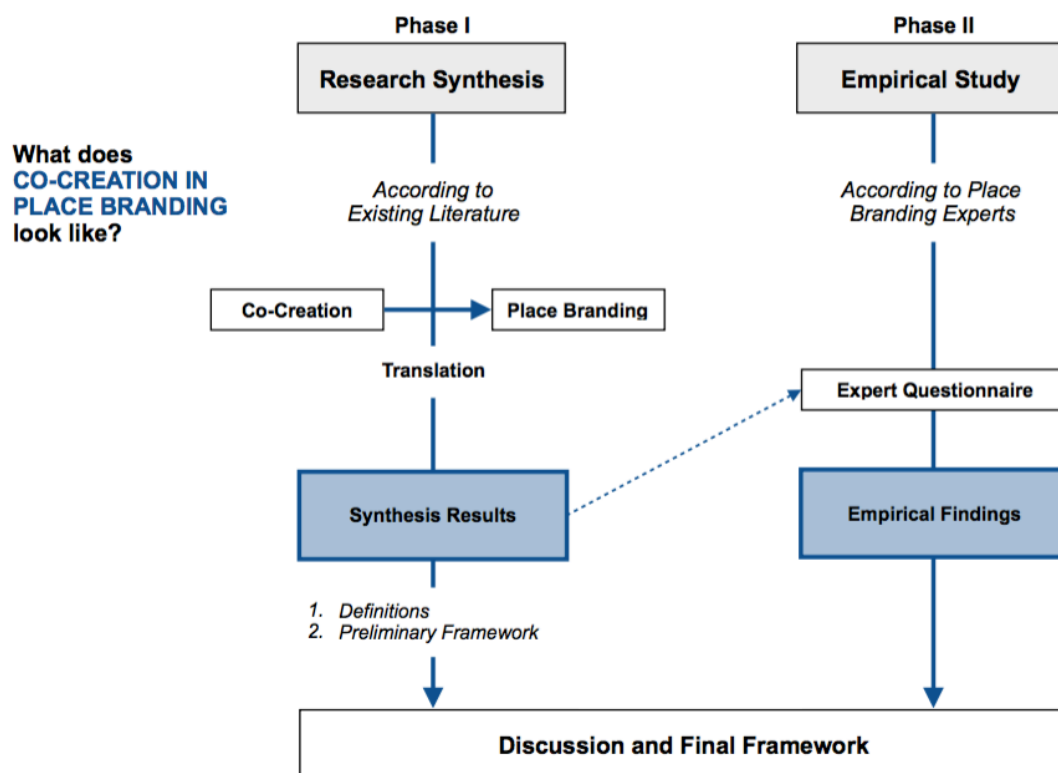
3.4 Data Collection and Analysis

In line with the research philosophy and approach, the following section describes the techniques and procedures used to gather and analyze the data. The first part describes how participants were selected and how the questionnaire was developed, followed by a description of the coding techniques used to analyze the data.

3.4.1 Selection of Participants

Experts who are currently active in the field of place branding were first identified, with importance given to individuals representing diverse perspectives (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007), such as economics, marketing, geography, anthropology, urban planning, international relations, public diplomacy, and design. In addition to limiting bias, this technique allows for a better grasp of the different perspectives, making it unlikely that respondents can engage in convergent retrospective sensemaking and/or impression management (ibid). This also enabled the researcher to select participants that could maximize the potential of discovering new and original knowledge (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This approach offered a unique and grounded representation of place branding, where multiple disciplines, with varying priorities, are overlapping.

Table 3. Participant selection process

Aspect	Elaboration
Selection Criteria	A criterion sampling technique (Patton, 1990) was used to select experts in place branding, using four criteria for each individual: 1. At least three years of international experience in place branding. 2. Currently active in the field. 3. Demonstrate a willingness to participate in this research. 4. Demonstrate a diverse perspective in place branding.
Target Participants	Three distinct groups of experts emerged from this sampling technique: 1) Academic 2) Practitioner 3) Pracademic: a pracademic is an individual who is both an academic and a practitioner in their field (Posner, 2009).
Selection Process	After a pre-selection of potential experts, nine experts (three per group) were selected. 1) *Introductory Email:* Each expert was first contacted via email. The initial message included a brief explanation and relevance of the study, asking for their participation in the research. This personal connection to participants was an added benefit, as it ensured participant response, while allowing for a level of informality with the experts. This helped in establishing trust from the beginning, making the process more dialogical and honest. 2) *Questionnaire Distribution*: Once the expert agreed to participate, a pre-written questionnaire was e-mailed, attached as a Word document, including instructions and a two-week time frame for submitting the questionnaire (**Appendix 9.4**). Since the experts were most likely travelling and busy, it would be in their best interest to have an extended period of time to conveniently add their insights to the research, while using an easy and familiar format of Word to complete the questionnaire.
Final Participants	A total of seven experts participated in this study. All participating experts were highly motivated to contribute to the research and showed strong sense of interest for the topic. A list of the experts can be found in **Appendix 9.5.**

3.4.2 Questionnaire Design and Characteristics

The questionnaire was designed according to questionnaire construction techniques proposed by Saunders et al. (2009). Following the construction of the questionnaire, a pilot test was conducted in order to revise and improve the questions and pre-test for potential issues and weaknesses (Sarantakos, 2005; Saunders et al., 2009). The final questionnaire consisted of seven sections, with some sections containing multiple questions. An effort was made to avoid leading or confusing questions, providing additional explanations to maintain clarity and reduce ambiguity.

Furthermore, careful considerations were made regarding the layout of the questionnaire, for the purpose of encouraging informative responses and freedom of thought from respondents. For example, the space provided for answering a question was customizable in size, while various design elements were used to contribute to a well-structured design. The final questionnaire design was structured to collect precise data required to: a) provide insight to the initial findings; b) test the preliminary conceptual framework; c) answer the research question; and d) meet research objectives. Therefore, the preliminary framework proposed in the research synthesis was instrumental in the design of the questionnaire and informed the majority of its content. Due to this, the questionnaire performed a highly valuable task in this research. The final questionnaire form can be found in Appendix 9.4.

3.5 Data Analysis

Following a grounded theory strategy, the data analysis is conducted using the coding techniques suggested by Corbin and Strauss (2008), involving three steps: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. Due to the comprehensive extent of data, categorization and unitization techniques were also applied, as proposed by Saunders et al. (2009), in order to reduce the amount of data (Birks et al., 2012). As Saunders et al. (2009) specify, "categorization of data involves two primary activities: developing categories and, subsequently, attaching these categories to meaningful chunks of data" (p. 492). These categories provide a "well-structured, analytical framework to pursue [the] analysis" (ibid, p. 493), creating an effective way to arrange and organize data in the following three steps:

Table 4. Data analysis techniques

Steps	Description
Open Coding	*Initial Conceptualizations of Data:* In step one, the researcher performed a line-by-line analysis of the data (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), remaining "open" to every possibility (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). All possible meanings of data were explored, and a comprehensive list of key phrases, ideas were created, to further break down the data. Similar concepts were sorted together under a common label, followed by further refinement into higher-level concepts, i.e. categories (ibid). The researcher used a very hands-on approach, continuously re-visiting and re-interpreting emerging concepts.

Axial Coding	*Relationship between Concepts:* In this step, the categories were further defined and developed from open coding processes. Using constant comparison methods. Similarities and differences in the data were examined to establish interrelationships amongst similar concepts (Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Concepts were linked together at various levels, which led to insights and discoveries as new relationships emerged (ibid). As a consequence, some categories were also revised. This allowed the researcher to differentiate amongst categories and identify their unique properties, which proved useful in conducting a research synthesis between co-creation and place branding. The axial coding process made the data more manageable and comprehensible (Saunders et al., 2009) and helped identify different perspectives expressed by the participants of the questionnaire.
Selective Coding	*Identifying Core Categories:* The final stage consisted of an examining concepts that had already emerged through the open and axial coding processes, and extracting core categories from this process. A rigorous examination was applied to the interrelationships between categories, validating those relationships, and "filling in categories that need further refinement and development (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 116). The core categories were then organized in a logical sequence as the main components of the co-creation model for place branding. During this step, the coding process was reviewed in its entirety, in order to ensure that the meaning of data was not destroyed during the simultaneous process of collecting and coding data (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

3.6 Verification of Data

Qualitative data is verified using Morse et al.'s (2002) approach in implementing verification strategies during the research process. Using this method, the *methodological coherence* is first assessed to ensure congruence between the research question and the research method used in this study (Morse et al., 2002). Methodological coherence is established by selecting the most suitable methods that are in alignment with the philosophical underpinnings of this study. Second, *an appropriate sample* is selected, based on the quality criteria used to select the experts in place branding, which ensures the credibility and trustworthiness of this study. Third, *data is collected and analyzed concurrently*. Accordingly, data is gathered and analyzed simultaneously through constant comparison techniques developed by Corbin and Strauss (2008), verifying the reliability and validity of data. Lastly, the fourth strategy for verification, *thinking theoretically*, compels the researcher to confirm any new data with data that has already been collected (Morse et al., 2002). The researcher did not employ this verification step in the data collection and analysis due to the fact that it would hinder new and original knowledge development, thus conflicting with the exploratory nature of this study.

3.7 Summary

This chapter outlined the methodology that is utilized in this study in order to answer the research question. Figure 8 shows that a social constructivist and an interpretivist lens is used to study the question of what value co-creation opportunities there are in place branding. Through a research synthesis, the key concepts and theories for place branding and co-creation are translated to a new domain of research so that a proposed conceptual framework can be developed. This framework is empirically tested by an expert questionnaire to validate and improve the current understanding. Using grounded theory coding, the data is analyzed to form

categories and refining the model. This entire process is iterative, making use of abductive reasoning to go back and forth between the data and theory development. In conclusion, the qualitative two-phase research design of this study resonates strongly with important constructs in the scholarship of place (See Tuan, 1975; Trentelman, 2009).

Figure 8: Methodological Overview

How can participatory marketing processes leverage opportunities of value co-creation in place branding?

Theoretical lens
Social Constructivism

Establish foundation of the research

Place Branding

Introduce most relevant concepts to this study

Key Place Branding Concepts

Apply relevant theories to build conceptual framework

Co-Creation

Select most relevant theoretical concepts

Value creation;
Relationship Marketing;
Stakeholder Approach

Develop theoretical framework

Translate theoretical constructs to a new domain of research

Research Synthesis

Exploration Phase

Integrate theoretical outcomes

Research methodology guides data collection

Develop definitions and framework for empirical study

Empirical Study

Conduct an explorative analysis with expert questionnaire

Empirical testing of theoretical framework

Findings

Implications and Reflections

Reflect on scientific contribution to the field

Consider managerial and theoretical implications

Key learnings

Critical reflection on project and lessons

Discussion

Summarize and discuss findings

Future research

Take a look at what's next

Answer research question: How can participatory marketing processes leverage opportunities of value co-creation in place branding?

Chapter 4. Research Synthesis

This chapter represents a synthesis between co-creation and place branding, in accordance with Noblit & Hare's (1988) meta-ethnographic approach to research synthesis (Chapter 3). The aim of this chapter is to translate key concepts from co-creation to place branding. Each concept from co-creation is compared, i.e. 'translated,' within place branding in a style reminiscent of constant comparative methods used in grounded theory research (p. 35). The translations are interpreted using existing place branding literature, with a focus "on constructing interpretations, not analyses" (Noblit & Hare, 1988, p. 11), in order to achieve new insights.

The chapter follows the structure of the theoretical foundation established in the literature review (Chapter 2) in order to present a natural progression towards translating co-creation concepts to place branding. For the scope of this research, the most relevant theoretical concepts are selected in order to elucidate the overall concept of co-creation in reconciliation with place branding. Revisiting Figure 6, the following key concepts emerged during the literature review on co-creation:

I. Value Proposition Concept	II. Relationship Marketing	III. Stakeholders
• Value Propositions	• Service Systems	• Six Stakeholder Markets
• Value Dimensions	• Interactions & Dialogue	
• Value Mechanisms	• Encounters	
	• Meaning Creation, Loyalty	

4.1 Service-Dominant Logic and Place Branding

Drawing parallels between the two fields, the foundational premises of service-dominant logic, are compared to place branding by Go & Govers (2012, p. 217). Kavaratzis, Warnaby & Ashworth (2015) further support the compatibility of the S-D logic view with place branding, referencing Warnaby (2009) and stating that "[S-D logic] could be a means by which place marketing [...] could be brought more into the marketing mainstream, as well as providing a specific avenue for research within the place marketing sub-discipline" (p. 36). It can be argued that the foundational premises of the S-D logic view resonate strongly with place branding constructs (Kavaratzis et al., 2015), discussed below. This is echoed by Buhalis & Inversini (2014), who compare travel and tourism brands to 'service brands' based on the relationships between its relevant stakeholders. Assuming that travel and tourism brands are parts of a place brand, a place brand can also be considered a 'service brand' that represents "a cluster of rational and emotional values that enable stakeholders to recognize a promise about a unique experience" (Buhalis & Inversini, 2014, p. 21).

4.2 Place Brand Value Proposition

Similar to a product or service, a place can also offer a unique value proposition (VP). Based on this, in order for value to be created in place branding, a place brand VP must be made. Applying the foundational premises of S-D logic to place branding, it can be said that a place brand "cannot deliver value, but only offer value propositions" (FP 7) (Vargo & Lusch, 2008, p. 7). More specifically, a place brand can "initiate or participate in developing VPs as reciprocal promises of value but beneficiaries will always determine what is of value in their own terms" (Ballantyne et al., 2011, p. 205). As the determinant of value, the place brand stakeholder will choose whether or not to accept the VP, depending on the appeal of the value offering. Taking this into consideration, a place brand should aim to design superior place brand VPs with relevant stakeholders. The inclusion of relevant stakeholders in the process of designing place brand VPs "implies reciprocity and focuses on the issue of how social and economic stakeholders can be transformed into resource integrators and place brand beneficiaries" (Go & Govers, 2012, p. 214).

Unfortunately, place brand VPs have been focused more on 'selling' than on 'value', trying to appeal solely to tourists by 'selling' an image to consumers (Bradley et al., 2002). Using approaches, such as 'place selling' and 'place promotion,' have resulted in negative consequences for place brand value (see Ashworth & Voogd, 1990, 1994; Ashworth & Kavaratzis, 2009; Ward, 1998; Zenker & Erfgen, 2014). Although their underlying intent is to create unique place VPs these strategies do not lead to desired outcomes in the long-term. Instead, "the 'true identity of place' should be the foundation on which to build the place branding proposition" (Govers & Go, 2009, p. 53). This is in line with Aitken and Campelo (2011), who propose, "place identity as the core brand essence might be the starting point to discuss place-brand management" (p .917). Drawing a comparison to branding literature, "an effective brand identity establishes the destination's character and value proposition, conveys the character in in a distinctive way, and delivers emotional power beyond a mental image" (Wheeler et al., 2011, p. 16). In other words, "For a place brand to be compelling, its value proposition needs to include a "dream" (Go & Govers, 2010, p. 39), that is considered to be 'emotionally powerful' for the stakeholder. Thus, stakeholders form an integral part in creating place brand VPs, as their input can determine the success of the VP, and whether or not it appeals and meets their specific needs. This positions superior place brand VPs as a core strategy to co-creation in place branding processes.

Two key concepts underpin the concept of place brand VPs. First, value is always determined by the beneficiary (FP10). Therefore, place brand value is subjectively determined by place brand stakeholders, making place brand perception and experience important considerations for a study in place branding. Second, a place brand is considered a 'multidimensional brand' (Morgan et al., 2004) with a number of stakeholders who have competing interests. Therefore, designing superior VPs for different stakeholders

necessitates an understanding of different value dimensions and value mechanisms. These two points are further explicated in the next sections.

4.3 Value Dimensions

In the S-D view, value is conceived in terms of operant resources (Lusch et al., 2006). It can be argued that the FP4 of S-D marketing, "operant resources are the fundamental source of competitive advantage" (Vargo & Lusch, 2008, p. 7), resonates strongly with place branding constructs (Kavaratzis et al., 2015). This research "consider[s] places as collections of resources—both operand and operant…" (p. 37), signifying both the tangible and intangible attributes of a place. With the intensification of global competition, it is becoming more difficult for places to differentiate themselves (Morgan & Pritchard, 2004). Operant resources, such as local skills and knowledge, can help a place with inimitable differentiating strategy. This idea that places contain both tangible and intangible assets is supported by place branding literature (e.g. Braun, 2008; Cai, 2002; Gaggiotti et al. 2008). This view is verified by Kavaratzis et al. (2015), who explain, "the dualistic nature of places…can capitalise upon both physical aspects (e.g. location, infrastructure etc.), and more service-oriented elements…" by utilizing operant and operand resources (p. 40).

Therefore, to design superior place brand VP, a 'winning combination' of operant and operand resources can be co-created and customized to relevant stakeholders by implementing the four value dimensions (Figure 2). In support, Kavaratzis (2004) states: "Like brands, [places] satisfy functional, symbolic and emotional needs (Rainisto, 2003) and the attributes that satisfy those needs need to be orchestrated into the [place's] unique proposition (Ashworth & Voogd, 1990)" (p. 65-6). As such, a compelling place brand VP will take into consideration the unique combination of value dimensions (economic, functional, emotional and symbolic values) that relate directly with stakeholders and communicate a 'reciprocal promise of value' (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005).

4.4 Value Co-Creation Types

Once a place brand VP is determined and designed using the different value dimensions, a mechanism is needed to actually 'carry out' the proposition the place brand is making. Twelve different types of co-creation were introduced from value co-creation literature in Section 2.4, describing potential mechanisms that could be used to apply and integrate resources in co-creation. Place branding, however, only refers to a handful of these mechanisms, concentrating predominantly on co-production and co-promotion (Lucarelli & Brorström, 2013). There is an overall lack of references to different types of value co-creation in the place branding literature, suggesting that this is an underdeveloped area in the field that needs further attention. Therefore the different forms of co-creation described by Frow et al. (2011) are translated into place branding by applying an S-D perspective to each mechanism. Then, critical elements from the VP concept

(including the value dimensions) are extracted to develop a concise definition of what each co-creation type could mean in place branding. Lastly, each definition has been externally validated with literature related to the field of the co-creation type. In order to develop the definition for co-distribution, for example, literature on distribution networks and supply chains was consulted.

Figure 9. Twelve Co-Creation Types for Place Branding

Co-Creation Type	Definition for Place Branding
Co-Conception	An iterative & collaborative process amongst different stakeholders during which necessary actions to launch & execute potential place branding initiatives are conceptualized, planned & analysed through cost, risk, feasibility & resource management to develop the aim, vision & strategy to enable well-informed decisions for initiating the next phases of a project.
Co-Design	An approach to place brand development that brings together different stakeholders connected to the development of a place through a collaborative process that involves ideating & prototyping place requirements & mapping specifications into the physical form & image representation of a product or service in order to ensure the outcomes meet their needs & are usable.
Co-Production	A joint process involving a set of activities prompted or executed by the active behaviour of stakeholders within a network, intentionally or unintentionally creating place brand value in the form of outputs or outcomes through collaboration & dialogue to integrate mutual resources into value configuration.
Co-Promotion	A collaborative process involving two or more stakeholders performing activities related to communications, advertising, marketing &/or publicity in order to raise place brand awareness, create place brand loyalty, & increase place brand differentiation.
Co-Pricing	A joint process amongst stakeholders to calculate the tangible (financial) and intangible (psychological, cultural, practical & social) value put to a product or service offering or exchange, which is determined by the market conditions of the place, relevant costs & the place consumer's perceived value of the product or service & their willingness to pay.
Co-Distribution	The joint process of making a place brand resource, product &/or service available for use or consumption to the end consumer or user, using direct means or indirect means with stakeholders who act as intermediaries in the delivery process.
Co-Consumption	The joint, reciprocal & iterative processes by place stakeholders performing the action of using, expending, incorporating or transforming a place brand-related value proposition, in which hedonic & non-utilitarian aspects (such as social, emotional, symbolic, & experiential phenomena) may play a role in addition to economic & functional aspects.
Co-Outsourcing	The joint practice of either intentionally or unintentionally transferring and delegating one or more place brand processes, including assets and functions, to an external stakeholder (from public to private), who then owns, manages and administers the selected processes to a jointly agreed standard.
Co-Maintenance	A joint process amongst different stakeholders performing technical, administrative &/or managerial activities during the life cycle of a place product or service, intended to preserve or restore it to a state in which it can perform the required function or combination of functions within the place brand.
Co-Disposal	The joint action of removing, destroying or storing damaged, used or other unwanted place products or services carried out between different place brand stakeholders, either intentionally or unintentionally, who share the responsibility of providing convenience & ease of disposal in an environmentally sustainable way.
Co-Experience	A joint, reciprocal & iterative process linked to the relationship between a stakeholder & a place brand value proposition, manifested in the form of the stakeholder's physical, cognitive & affective processes arising from the role of the stakeholder in the place brand process & the stakeholder's experiential evaluation of the place product or service proposition.
Co-Meaning Creation	A stakeholder's subjective assessment of a place brand value proposition that generates symbolic & non-utilitarian value in the forms of sense-making, interpretation, & understanding through emotional & psychological associations created through the experience of consuming or using the place brand resource.

4.5 Service Systems

A wide range of resources is needed to co-create reciprocal VPs in a place brand. This points towards considering a service systems approach (Section 2.6) in place branding. Places, in essence, are 'service systems': "Cities, city departments, businesses, business departments, nations, and government agencies are all service systems" (Maglio & Spohrer, 2008, p. 18).

Place branding literature further justifies the correlation between places and service systems. According to Kavaratzis et al. (2015), "the emergence of 'service science' … and the notion of 'service systems' has much potential utility in conceptualizing the nature of place products" (p. 44). Furthermore, the concept of a 'place brand' is analogous to a 'service ecosystem,' which is reflected in by Kavaratzis et al. (2015). Service ecosystems can be thought of as *systems of service systems* (Vargo & Akaka, 2012), where each network is a smaller 'sub-system' within a larger network (Chandler & Wieland, 2010). This notion of 'sub-system' can be matched with Van den Berg and Braun's (1999) three levels of urban place marketing. A service-ecosystem effectively demonstrates that a system is part of larger systems; in comparison, places are also part of a larger system, known as a 'system of place' (Zenker & Andéhn, 2015). To illustrate, the city Amsterdam is part of the province known as North Holland; in a larger context, it is part of the Netherlands, and in a larger scope, included in the European Union. To summarize, Gnoth (2007) articulates the 'place as service system' concept in an effective manner with the following explanation: "Places represent open, ecological systems of interacting organic and inorganic, sentient and non-sentient entities, generating socio-cultural and physical processes and outcomes…These pose as interacting subsystems creating dynamics that make the place evolve" (p. 10).

The concept of place, then, is compatible with the definition of service systems proposed earlier. The 'self-adjusting' quality of a system (i.e. a place brand) demonstrates its versatility in detecting, adapting and responding dynamically to change, making a 'systems approach' an ideal platform for fueling co-creation opportunities in place branding. Based on these observations, the following critical points are derived:

1) From a service systems viewpoint, value is defined "in terms of an improvement in the [place brand] *well-being*…[and] *adaptiveness* or ability to fit in its environment" (Vargo et al., 2008, p. 149). This view is complementary to the conceptualisation of value as a 'preferential judgment' (Holbrook, 1994), where a system 'judges' what is valuable to enhance the system's well-being. Thus, value is phenomenologically determined based on the place brand's capability to improve. Therefore, the value of the brand is based strongly on the perceived place image and identity (e.g. Hanna & Rowley, 2011; Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005). Hansen (2010) describes that a "place brand is perceived subjectively"

(p. 271). This is also associated with the feelings people develop through their place experience, and the 'sense of place'.

2) A service ecosystem perspective can mitigate the challenges associated with a more unpredictable and uncertain marketplace. Globalization has led to a new economic and social reality stimulated by increasing connectivity and revolutionary technologies (Kraemer et al., 2005). Consequently, place brands are faced with a range of uncertainty and risk. A service ecosystem, as an open system, is intuitively a 'complex adaptive system' (Haeckel, 1999), designed to detect and respond to both individual and collective needs, in order to reduce levels of uncertainty and risk. As stated by Kavaratzis et al. (2015), "This resonates with Turok's (2009, p. 14) description of cities as 'complex adaptive systems comprising multitudes of actors, firms and other organisations forming diverse relationships and evolving together' to develop place-based competitive advantage… (p. 44).

3) The sensing capability of a system includes monitoring and testing VPs and receiving feedback, as VPs are accepted, ignored or rejected. These feedback cycles sense 'clues' in the environment that can provide useful information to design superior VPs, leading to embedded *know-how* in the place. This is known as embedded knowledge, which is often tacit, non-verbal and based on personal experience (Gummesson, 2008). In place branding, this is "all those things that place brand stakeholders know and have transferred in memories, skills, experience and so on, into the productive system" (Go & Govers, 2010, p. 30). Place brand managers must be aware of how to leverage these unique resources and opportunities for the place. Furthermore, embedded knowledge is difficult to transfer (Gummesson, 2008). This sustains the competitiveness of a place brand (Ashworth, 2009, p. 9). In a place brand, embedded knowledge can be available on a broad spectrum (Gummesson, 2008): on one end, it can exist at the individual level, as well as in relationships between groups and organizations; on the other end, it can exist between large companies, governments and nations, making it a point of interest for value co-creation in place branding.

4) Lastly, an ecosystems-perspective correlates with the contextual nature of place branding. Chandler and Vargo (2011) state, "context frames these processes and links, and begins to clarify how resources and service contribute to value co-creation and the co-creation of [systems]" (p. 45). Kavaratzis et al. (2015) substantiate the "context specificity of places," stating that "each place will have its own unique combination of people responsible for its administration and marketing, with its own internal and external dynamics" (p. 44) To advance an understanding of the contextual nature of place branding, Chandler & Vargo (2011) propose a multi-perspective approach. This view of context within systems

adds a valuable dimension to a study in place branding because it is able to frame value creation from multiple levels.

4.5.1 A Participatory Approach

Dynamic-systems thinking also takes into account the non-linear and interconnected nature of value co-creation that operates on multiple levels of interaction in a place brand, transcending the traditional "value chain" (Porter, 1985) structure. Indeed, both co-creation and place branding literature distinguish between the top-down, hierarchical structures as opposed to more bottom-up, grassroots approach to management. The latter inspires a more participatory approach, which has become a trending topic in place brand research (e.g. Hatch & Schultz, 2010; Ind & Bjerke, 2007). Place branding literature criticizes the rigid top-down approaches used to 'control' place brand image, identity, arguing that it leads to inauthentic place brands (see Aitken & Campelo, 2011). Furthermore, an S-D view suggests a more bottom-up approach for successful co-creation with stakeholders. Place branding advocates a similar viewpoint: "a bottom-up approach based on the paradigm of co-creation should be taken to developing a place brand and that brand ownership is determined by the extent to which the representation of the place reflects the experience of the community" (Aitken & Campelo, 2011, p. 913). This resonates with Assche and Lo (2011) who call for more inclusive and participatory process for place brand development. Co-creation can be considered as a participatory process for place branding (Hatch & Schultz, 2010).

4.5.2 Engagement Platforms

Successful co-creation requires an engagement platform where actors are able to interact and share their resources (Frow et al., 2015; Ramaswamy & Gouillart, 2010). The engagement platform itself can be considered a system of ongoing communication and collaboration between stakeholders. According to Bhalla (2011), platforms "extend the range of interactions with other members of the ecosystem into new domains thereby significantly increasing the opportunities for co-creating new [stakeholder] value" (p. 137). Translating this to place branding, place branding is itself an engagement platform "for integrated communication… engaging stakeholders, customers and producers, who jointly create value propositions, more effectively, efficiently and equitably, than traditional, manipulative market structures" (Go et al., 2014, p. 18). Therefore, engagement platforms serve as 'space' for value co-creation, facilitating connectivity, interaction and dialogue amongst stakeholder groups, and harnessing opportunities for co-creation in place branding. As such, they should be designed to "enable the transformation of stakeholder experiences to create valuable outcomes together" (Ramaswamy & Ozcan, 2014, p. 41). Interestingly, the Internet serves as a type of 'virtual engagement platform' that enables co-creation processes with stakeholders (see Sawhney & Prandelli, 2000). Digital technologies allow individuals to participate in virtual communities, where "[d]ynamic online relationships between places and stakeholders allow transactions to take place outside of physical confines" (Go et al. 2014, p. 237).

4.6 Interaction

Service systems, including engagement platforms, facilitate co-creation opportunities through interaction and dialogue between stakeholders. According to Bhalla (2011), a VP "materializes only through interactions among different stakeholders" (p. 126), and Hatch and Schultz (2010) state that co-creation emerges from dialogue. Place branding literature supports the importance of interaction and dialogue in place branding. Kavaratzis and Hatch (2013) express, "The true nature of place branding is revealed as one of interaction and dialogue between stakeholders" (p. 69). Furthermore, Aitken & Campelo (2011) describe the place branding process as a "series of interactions that occur in all directions" (p. 926). As discussed, participatory marketing approaches encourage dialogue and interaction between stakeholders. Engagement platforms, such as online communities, allow for interaction to take place between different individuals. Therefore, dialogical interactions allow opportunities for co-creation to take place, to create authentic place brands and identities. As Govers and Go (2009) signify, "Through dialogue … place experiences can be enhanced dramatically (p. 140), indicating that facilitating the process of dialogue and interaction in co-creation can be a fruitful area of inquiry for successful place branding processes.

4.7 Meaning Creation and Sense of Place

Stakeholders become engaged in more meaningful relationships through co-creation, as co-creation allows for unique forms of interaction and participation to take place. The experience economy has shifted attention to the intangible attributes of products and services, emphasizing 'meaning' as a valuable component of consumption (Parjanen et al., 2011). Ng and Smith (2012) call this the 'lived experience' of the brand, which refers to "the actual engagement and use experience of the offerings" which hold meaning and symbolic value for actors (p. 228). According to Kavaratzis et al. (2015), this notion is well-matched with Cresswell and Hoskins' idea that the place is a 'lived concept' and a 'realm of meaning' (2008, p. 394). Furthermore, Hansen (2010) argues that meaning is constructed by powerful place narratives; therefore, one of the main goals of a place brand should be to construct a narrative "that communicate meanings and values that the nation or place wishes to be associated with in different target audiences" (Hansen, 2009, p. 271). Braun et al. (2013) assert, "only meaningful participation and consultation can produce a more effective and sustainable place brand[…]" (p. 18). Interaction in co-creation processes "brings multiple perspectives and participants to the process of creating, replicating, and re-creating meanings" in place branding (Aitken & Campelo, 2011, p. 914).

Place branding literature refers to the meaning-making processes as the 'sense of place', defined as "constructed from particular interactions and mutual articulations of social experiences embedded within subjective and emotional attachments" (Campelo et al., 2014, p. 155). The authors explain that meanings are

socially constructed and culturally dependent, and that place branding should understand how a place is experienced by its stakeholders. Individuals attach meanings to the experiential processes of a place, therefore creating the sense of place (Shamsuddina & Ujang, 2008).

In assessing the sense of place, place branding is understood as a socially constructed phenomenon that emerges from the interaction and dialogue of relevant stakeholders who attach meaning and symbolic value to their value-creating processes. This is also in line with the definition of place brand adopted in this study. Stakeholders interact in the place brand ecosystem to co-create meaningful value for themselves and others, corresponding to place brand VPs. Place brand management can play an important role in facilitating these meaning-making processes to create an authentic and coherent 'sense of place', since a lack of meanings in a place can weaken place identity (Shamsuddina & Ujang, 2008).

4.8 Loyalty and Place Attachment

An important element of sense of place is the concept of place attachment, which is defined as "an affective bond or link between people and specific places" (Hidalgo & Hernandez, 2001, p. 274). Shamsuddina and Ujang (2008) state, "Place attachment is constructed mainly as a result of people interaction with a place, the constructed meaning(s) and its corresponding attributes" (p. 400). The concept of attachment can be compared to the concept of loyalty in the co-creation literature discussed earlier. This is supported by the claim that there is a positive correlation between place satisfaction and attachment to a place (Insch & Florek, 2008). The underlying premise here is when an individual feels personally connected to the place, he/she will develop a strong attachment to that place (Suntikul & Jachna, 2016). Furthermore, it has been established that successful co-creation in place branding depends on the involvement of all relevant stakeholders; therefore, co-creation, in essence, leads to place attachment, because it creates a platform of engagement and meaningful relationship-building processes that create mutual trust, commitment, and satisfaction with a place. Therefore, place brand managers can support processes that enable positive relationships and facilitate the co-creation of superior place brand VPs.

4.9 Place Branding Stakeholders

Stakeholder value and its relevance in specific markets and segments form the core of how to build sustainable and successful relationships for long-term strategy (Christopher et al., 2002), where "bonds are strengthened" and stakeholder loyalty is achieved (Ravald & Grönroos, 1996, p. 19). Consequently, maintaining long-term relationships with stakeholders is one of the critical features of co-creation in place branding, which creates brand loyalty. Although in some cases co-creation activities may be short-term and temporary in nature, long-term relational bonds can provide significant value-adding benefits for the co-

creation ecosystem as a whole and can boost stakeholder value, increasing the place brand's equity, i.e. through loyalty and awareness (Aaker 1991; 1996).

4.9.1 Basis for the Stakeholder Model

The six-markets stakeholder model is selected because it can best apply to place branding for four reasons. Firstly, the model is "arguably the most comprehensive…in that each of the six market domains may be sub-divided in a manner which can cover all major stakeholder groups" (Payne et al., 2005, p. 857). This view is endorsed by Malhotra & Agarwal (2002), who confirm the framework to be the most complete "in terms of stakeholder representation" (p. 8). Less visible stakeholders are given an equal chance to be considered, just as much as highly noticeable stakeholders. The proper identification of all relevant stakeholder groups is especially useful for places unaware of their own presence or influence in a stakeholder market.

Secondly, the applicability of the model has been tested and used in organizations (e.g. Ballantyne et al., 2011), demonstrating its reliability and validity as a framework capable of transitioning between theory and practice, which makes it an appealing choice for this research.

Thirdly, this model recognizes the multiple roles that a stakeholder may simultaneously assume (Frow & Payne, 2011; Tzokas & Saren, 2004). For example, a local resident can be a potential influencer, as well as play a role in the recruitment and referral markets. Tzokas and Saren (2004) further note that "stakeholders are not perceived as totally separate groups, but their interrelationships are acknowledged and the multiple natures of their roles appreciated" (p. 127). The model's ability to include the "complex reality of the many-to-many relationships" (Pinho et al. 2014, p. 474) proves its usefulness in helping researchers and practitioners understand value co-creation from multiple stakeholder perspectives.

Lastly, the six-market model is structurally compatible with a service ecosystem perspective of value creation. On one hand, it allows places to review strategically critical relationships with external value networks (Payne et al., 2005). On the other hand, it successfully captures the dimensions of multiple interactions amongst the stakeholder markets themselves, an essential feature for facilitating internal dialogue and effective communication. As emphasized in RM, collaboration is at the forefront of the stakeholder agenda (Frow & Payne, 2011). Echoing S-D logic thinking, it is important that a stakeholder system supports and facilitates interactions in its own value network.

To summarize, this study has found that all stakeholders identified during the extensive literature reviews on both co-creation and place branding can be conveniently categorized into one of the six market domains, and therefore this model is found most suitable. The holistic design of the six-market stakeholder model helps simplify the complexity that exists in the multi-stakeholder and multi-relational environment of place

branding. It is essential that this complexity is taken into account while building a conceptual framework that will be adapted to place branding. The six-market stakeholder model is translated to place branding and a final version is represented in Table 12 in the Discussion section, which incorporates the results from the empirical study.

4.10 Co-Creation in Place Branding – A Preliminary Framework

The synthesis yielded seven core categories. These categories have been constructed into a conceptual framework introduced in Figure 10. The framework illustrates a preliminary design of what co-creation can look like in place branding. It also provides the context and direction of this research, with a visual depiction of what concepts are investigated and how they are interrelated. Components from the model are tested with empirical observations in the next chapter.

Figure 10. Preliminary Conceptual Framework
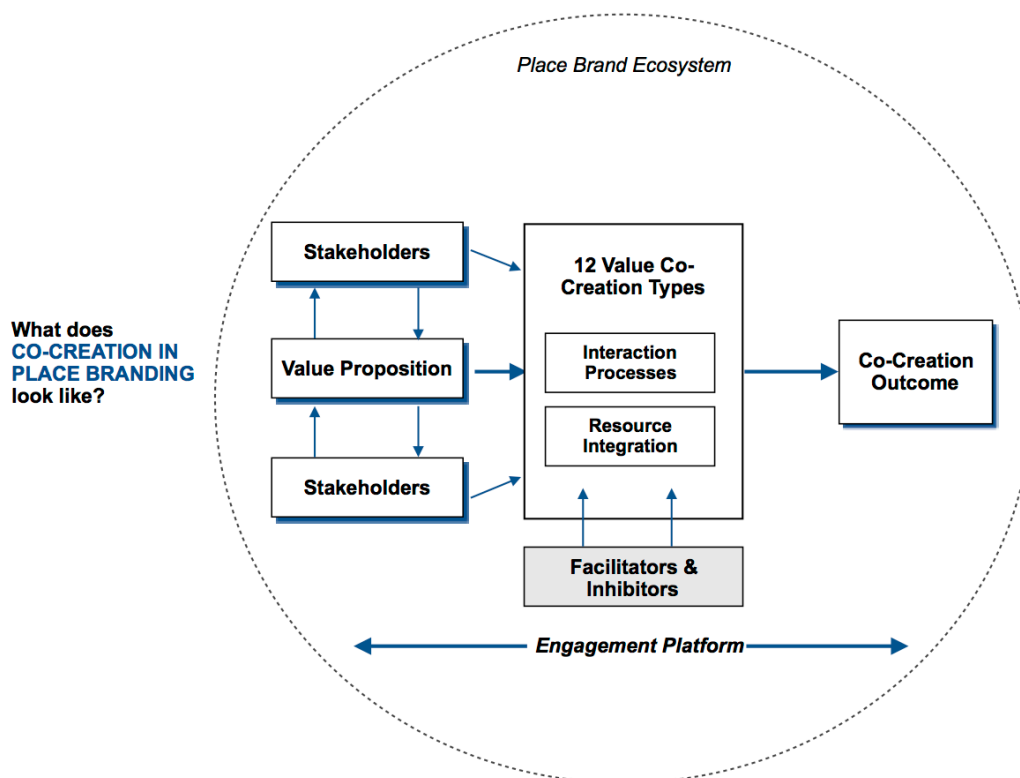
Based on this framework:

- The place brand ecosystem consists of stakeholders interacting through value propositions (economic, functional, emotional, and/or symbolic), which are the primary 'connectors' between place stakeholders.
- The value propositions are enacted through one (or more) of twelve co-creation types.
- An engagement platform facilitates interaction and resource integration.

- Facilitators and inhibitors can encourage or hinder value co-creation between stakeholders.
- Co-creation outcomes can include new knowledge and learning which can enhance the ecosystem.

Chapter 5. Empirical Findings & Data Analysis

The following chapter presents the empirical data, which is based on a questionnaire conducted with seven experts in place branding. In order to facilitate the legibility of the findings, the chapter is structured in the same way as the questionnaire (Appendix 9.4). The individual questions correspond to different concepts of co-creation in place branding, to identify similarities and differences between theory and practice, helping to answer the research question.

5.1 Defining Co-Creation in Place Branding

The first question of the questionnaire is, "From a place branding perspective, what does co-creation mean for you?" Table 5 exhibits the definition proposed by each respondent, along with main themes that emerged with coding techniques described in Section 3.4.

Table 5. List of Definitions

	Definition	Emerging Themes
A	"I would rather approach this question from a practical perspective. Co-creation, based on my experience, involves the active participation of place brand stakeholders in shaping / building the identity of a place. Here I would distinguish between two groups of stakeholders: a.) generalists which need to support/back-up the identity forming from a generic perspectives (such as lord mayor's) and specialists which support/back-up specific parts of the place identity. Such specialists need to be included based on the target group (investors, inhabitants, students,...) of the place branding effort. Specifically co-creation from generalists would involve drafting the framework, the cornerstones of a place identity while the role of the specialists would be more to contribute specific knowledge / direct-setting for the place brand, so they are much more content-focused then the generalists."	• Active participation of stakeholders • Building/shaping place identity • General versus specific stakeholder roles
B	"Different groups of individuals (stakeholders) working on developing and maintaining the identity (shared) of their place."	• Stakeholder groups • Shared place identity
C	"In short, it would be the involvement of stakeholders in parts of the process to create collective value as empowered co-authors of the place narrative and not just spectators. Benefits of this two-way collaboration are clear: enhancing trust and bonds while increasing the sense of belonging and attachment. About different stakeholders and levels of engagement, please see the answer for question 3. I also like the definition in the book Rethinking Place Branding: *"Co-creation involves working with the place brand community to increase place brand equity, in both physical and digital spaces, through co-creation of the brand identity and the experiences associated with the brand"*.	• Stakeholder involvement • Collective/collaborative value • Place narrative • Trust, Attachment • Sense of belonging • Place brand equity • Physical & digital spaces • Co-creation of brand identity
D	"To create a place-based 'experience environment' by creating an 'experience network' (see Prahalad & Ramaswamy) linking public, private and civil society stakeholders aiming at co-creating substance and symbolic actions (see Anholt's 'Competitive Identity') that build place brand awareness and reputation as strategically intended. The idea of the 'experience environment' allows 'customers' (travelers, international students, investors, business people, migrants, diplomats) to co-create their own 'on-brand' experience, which dramatically enhances social media sharing and hence engagement. Hence, in my book, the link between the concepts of place branding and	• Experience environment • Experience network • Stakeholder groups • Symbolic actions • Place brand awareness • Place reputation • On-brand experience • Increased engagement

	co-creation is a natural fit."	
E	"It refers to a strategy in which the organization tasked with the brand management of a place aims to work actively and on a equal level of ownership and makership with relevant external stakeholders in the creation of projects, activities, content and/or storylines."	• Place brand management • Ownership • Makership • Relevant stakeholders • Storyline / narrative of place
F	"In my view, co-creation has two aspects in a place branding setting. The first aspect is how the place brand is co-created (i.e. the process that allows people to understand the place as a brand and the process that helps them evaluate the brand of a given place) and the second is how this co-creation might be facilitated (i.e. the activities of place managers that aim at facilitating the interaction between people so that they get the chance to co-create the place brand). So the 'resource integration activity' mentioned in the definition is certainly applicable in the latter, i.e. in the management-led activities that aim at supporting and enabling co-creation. However, the 'resource integration' that happens in the first is not necessarily conscious so I am not sure that it can be called an 'activity'. To put it simply, for me co-creation is a term that describes the ways in which people are able to create shared meanings of the place and its brand through their interactions."	• Understanding & evaluating the place brand • Management-led co-creation activities • Facilitating factors • Shared meanings • Stakeholder interactions
G	"I would say it is similar to cobranding: two brands relate each other in an inclusive, synergic way…"	• Co-branding • Inclusiveness • Synergistic interaction

5.1.1 Significant Themes

According to the responses, a number of significant themes emerged during the data analysis of the definitions. For this study, a theme is considered significant if the majority of participants provided similar remarks. Among the definitions, the inclusion of relevant stakeholders in the co-creation process is the most dominant theme. Almost all (5 out of 7) respondents explicitly mention the term 'stakeholder' in their response. One of the respondents alludes to the concept of stakeholders, using the terms *"people"* and *"place managers"* to describe those involved in the co-creation processes in place branding (Expert F), while another respondent does not refer to the term either directly or indirectly (Expert G). Instead, the respondent refers to *"two brands"* relating to each other, possibly implying that place brand stakeholders are the brands themselves (Expert G). However, not enough information is presented to clearly determine the expert's view on stakeholder involvement. At the same time, there is no strong evidence that suggests that stakeholder involvement is not an already inherent element in the definition proposed by Expert G. Therefore, based on these results, it can be determined that stakeholders play a significant role in prompting co-creation in place branding.

A second theme is the concept of meaningful value creation. Specifically, a number of the respondents refer to symbolic value components in their definitions, proposing the idea that meaning creation is an underlying factor of co-creation processes. For example, Expert F addresses *"shared meanings"* in a place and states: *"Co-creation is a term that describes the ways in which people are able to create shared meanings of the place and its brand through their interactions."* Expert C explains that co-creation is a *"two way collaboration"* that leads to a number of benefits, such as *"enhancing trust and bonds while increasing the*

sense of belonging and attachment." Expert D refers to co-creating *"symbolic actions* […] *that build place brand awareness and reputation,"* further confirming that symbolic value components are an integral part of co-creation in place branding. In relation to this, the concept of 'experience' also contributes to the theme of meaning-making. Expert D explains that co-creation in place branding involves creating *"a place-based 'experience environment' by creating an 'experience network' linking public, private and civil society stakeholders* […]*"*. Furthermore, Expert D explains that *"the 'experience environment' allows 'customers' (travelers, international students, investors, business people, migrants, diplomats) to co-create their own 'on-brand' experience, which dramatically enhances social media sharing and hence engagement."* The findings reveal that value co-creation is a meaning-laden construct, evidenced through the notions of 'shared meaning', 'symbolic actions,' and 'experience environment' proposed by the experts. Furthermore, this points to the multi-dimensional construct of co-creation, indicating that co-creation involves a number of underlying, intangible elements.

5.1.2 Outlier Responses

In addition to the significant themes above, a number of less-dominant themes, or outliers, emerged during the analysis of the definitions. An outlier is a response stated by one or a few of the respondents (Sproull, 2004). Although outliers represent a minority opinion, they can disclose insightful knowledge worth for further inquiry (Osborne & Overbay, 2004). The following outliers emerged.

Three of the seven respondents directly refer to place identity in their definition, indicating that a considerable number of the respondents agree that the concept of place identity plays an important role in co-creation processes. For Expert A, co-creation in place branding *"involves the active participation of place brand stakeholders in shaping* [and] *building the identity of a place."* Expert A distinguishes between two groups of stakeholders who contribute to building place identity. The first group, generalists, *""need to support* […] *the identity forming from a generic perspectives,"* which also involves *"drafting the framework, the cornerstones of a place identity"* and the second group, specialists, *"support* […] *specific parts of the place identity,"* such as *"contribut*[ing] *specific knowledge"* to the place process (Expert A). Expert B also draws attention to the significance of place identity with the following definition: *"Different groups of individuals (stakeholders) working on developing and maintaining the identity (shared) of their place."* This definition implies that one of the primary goals of co-creation in place branding is to collectively develop and maintain place identity. Lastly, Expert C refers to a definition that mentions *"co-creation of the brand identity"* further confirming that co-creation processes directly affect place identity.

Among the definitions, two respondents make a reference to the concept of place narratives. Expert C describes co-creation as a *"process to create collective value as empowered co-authors of the place narrative."* This line of thinking is similar to the idea presented in the previous paragraph, where co-creation

processes contribute to developing the place identity. With this comment, Expert C indicates that co-creation processes also lead to constructing a collective place narrative. This is consistent with Expert E's observation, that co-creation includes *"relevant external stakeholders* [who are] *involved in the creation of projects, activities, content and/or storylines."* Here, the term *"storylines"* (Expert E) seems to correspond with the term *"narrative"* (Expert C).

Another outlier is the concept of *"attachment,"* introduced by Expert C as one of the benefits of co-creation in place branding. The notion of 'attachment' can also be comparable to feeling a *"sense of belonging"* (Expert C) with the place. Moreover, Expert E presents the concept of *"ownership"* in a similar context, showing that all three terms are interrelated, and can lead to more trust in relationships (Expert C).

5.2 Co-Creation Types

The second section of the questionnaire consists of two questions. In the first question, twelve types of co-creation are presented with corresponding definitions. The respondents are asked if they think the co-creation type is applicable to place branding (Table 6).

Table 6. Applicability of 12 Co-Creation Types in Place Branding

	Co-Creation Type	Expert							Responses		
		A	*B*	*C*	*D*	*E*	*F*	*G*	*Agree*	*Disagree*	*Not Sure*
1	**Co-Conception**	A	A	A	A	A	A	A	7/7	0	0
2	**Co-Design**	A	A	A	A	A	D	A	6/7	1/7	0
3	**Co-Production**	A	A	A	A	A	D	A	6/7	1/7	0
4	**Co-Promotion**	A	A	A	D	A	A	A	6/7	1/7	0
5	**Co-Pricing**	A	A	NS	D	NS	D	D	2/7	3/7	2/7
6	**Co-Distribution**	D	A	A	A	NS	D	D	3/7	3/7	1/7
7	**Co-Consumption**	D	A	NS	A	NS	A	A	4/7	1/7	2/7
8	**Co-Outsourcing**	D	A	NS	A	NS	D	D	2/7	3/7	2/7
9	**Co-Maintenance**	A	A	NS	A	NS	D	D	3/7	2/7	2/7
10	**Co-Disposal**	A	A	A	NS	D	D	D	3/7	3/7	1/7
11	**Co-Experience**	D	A	A	A	MD	A	A	5/7	1/7	0/7
12	**Co-Meaning Creation**	D	A	A	A	A	A	A	6/7	1/7	0

(Note. A = Agree =; D=Disagree; NS = Not Sure; MD = Missing Data)

In the second question, the respondents are asked to further comment on each definition. The results show that many of the definitions are inherently implemented in the concept of co-creation, and therefore, it is difficult to separate between them so discreetly (Expert B, Expert E). There appears to be a number of

considerable overlaps between the twelve concepts, both in theory and in practice. The results for each of the twelve co-creation types are presented below.

5.2.1 Co-Conception

The results in Table 6 above illustrate that all seven of the respondents agree that co-conception is a part of the place branding process. **"***It is impossible to imagine a place branding process wherein this doesn't take place. The question is to which extent, where the responsibilities are, and what the power-relationship is amongst the co's***"** (Expert E). Building on this notion, Expert D asserts that, "*Any place branding project should include this*". This is also consistent with the observation of Expert F, who suggests that most place branding initiatives include some form of co-conception. However, since co-conception is already widely practiced in place branding projects and consultations, the actual co-creative nature of co-conception activities is brought into question: "*Most places start with and aim for and probably this is also what is realized in most cases – although a number of cases it seems to me an "alibi" rather than a serious cooperative approach*" (Expert A). Furthermore, the experts agree with the proposed definition for co-conception. One expert suggested a more concise definition (Expert A) and Expert C proposed a revision to include who is responsible for leading co-conception processes.

5.2.2 Co-Design

The majority of respondents (6 out of 7) agree that co-design, in theory, can be an important co-creation mechanism used in place branding processes. However, the results show that the respondents are skeptical about whether co-design works in practice. Expert A states, *"I doubt whether this actually happens since it would require an expert knowledge of the stakeholders involved; this expert knowledge is usually not available, so stakeholders could not really contribute."* This is reiterated by Expert F:

> *"I can see the point of [co-design] although it sounds less relevant to place branding. It is closer to what urban planners would call 'collaborative planning', which is applicable and certainly good practice but in my view it is again a rather limited understanding of co-creation."*

This is consistent with Expert E, who believes that "*the distinction between co-conception and co-design is artificial*". Based on these results, co-design spans a wide range of activities. For example, Expert C explains:

> *"Co-design, in my opinion, can be related also to two different formats involving place identity/branding. The first [...] is mapping to design a better form to experience a place; in other words, wayfinding. Second, it can also be the result of a spontaneous private initiative, as in the case of Wow Moscow and its iconic representations of the city."*

Wayfinding, specified above, refers to "information systems that guide people through a physical environment and enhance their understanding and experience of the space" (SEGD, 2015, para. 1). Therefore, a pragmatic approach is to apply co-design processes specifically in wayfinding projects.

5.2.3 Co-Production

The majority of respondents (6 out of 7) agree that co-production is applicable. As Expert E states, *"This should always be part of what an organization tasked with place brand management does."* In contrast, one respondent disagrees that co-production is relevant. Expert F explains that the concept is too closely linked with industrial co-production, and therefore, it is often used as a way to engage consumers in new product development. Due to this close association with the manufacturing field, the expert believes that it is difficult to consider the relevancy of co-production to place branding. Nevertheless, most of the respondents indicate this type of co-creation is relevant and the definition is clear. In particular, one respondent acknowledges the 'intent' element in co-production:

> *"I agree and especially like the "unintentionally creating" part since I do not believe that the majority of stakeholders (even if they would) are able to act in a coherent and intentional way. I believe every stakeholder would co-produce his part; however I do believe that in the vast majority of cases, this is unintentional contribution which makes it hard for place branding professionals to align the different activities" (Expert A).*

This is consistent – for instance – with Expert E's observation, that co-production is an essential task of place brand management. These findings show that the management side of place branding has typically assumed the tasks and projects associated with co-production. Based on this, there is a limited understanding in practice regarding co-creation opportunities brought upon by co-production. The concept's close association to both industrial production, as well as its exclusive development as a management task reveals an overall lack of clarity and vagueness regarding the benefits and outcomes of co-production, even though the majority of respondents believe that it is applicable to the field.

5.2.4 Co-Promotion

Similar to co-production above, the majority of respondents (6 out of 7) agree with co-promotion as a practiced form of co-creation in places. As one expert states, *"This is probably the best way to get stakeholders involved and the most likely part they would like to participate in"* (Expert A). A common example of co-promotion is linking commercial and place brands (Expert G). In general, the findings reveal a pattern where co-promotion is strongly linked to advertising. As one expert explains, *"Examples* [of co-promotion] *include different places advertising together (e.g. region and city or country and city or two cities)* [or] *different stakeholders advertising together (e.g. local council and hotels, tourism office and theme parks)"* (Expert F). Acknowledging the close link between co-promotion and advertising, a number of the respondents describe a different point of view on co-promotion. Expert D explains, *"Not sure if this is really co-creation and I'm not convinced that promotion builds brand value. Many examples of places where stakeholders use the same visual design and promotion material, but I'm not convinced this makes a difference."* Although Expert F affirms that co-promotion is relevant to place branding and it is practiced, he also comments: *"I am not sure that this is something that goes deep into co-creation. It is about 'integrating*

resources' but the point of co-creation in my view is not about resources but about meaning." Based on these two observations, the concept of co-promotion, although widely practiced and adopted, does not always align with what co-creation stands for. Most respondents were in agreement and proposed minor changes to the definition. Particularly, one respondent asked why the definition includes "*two or more,*" pointing out that there can also be just one stakeholder (Expert C).

5.2.5 Co-Pricing

The results for co-pricing show a mixed response. Three out of seven respondents agree that co-pricing is a relevant co-creation strategy for place branding. One expert, in particular, supports the practice of co-pricing, strongly advocating for "*establishing a place brand equity*" (Expert A). Expert A further states that, unfortunately, co-pricing approaches are not a high priority and remain very rare in practice. In contrast to this viewpoint, two out of seven respondents disagree that co-pricing is applicable to place branding. For example, Expert D states that co-pricing is neither co-creation, nor relevant. In support of this, he explains, "*Dubai has tried this during festivals, in order to make the destination affordable and shed the image of being expensive, but it didn't work as market conditions will always prevail.*" Concurrently, two of the seven respondents remain uncertain about what co-pricing actually refers to. As Expert E inquires, "*Are we talking 'co-selling' by any chance? Or is this only focused on setting price-tags together?*" Expert C expresses a similar sentiment, that it is difficult to confirm whether co-pricing is "*feasible in place branding as a collaborative decision and not as a result of private groups' interests...*" Based on these responses, there appears to be a gap in a clear understanding about the concept, both in practice and in definition. The gap is widest regarding co-pricing's function as either a 'sales activity' or a 'purchasing activity,' and further indicates that pricing and financial procedures remain relatively undefined and undecided in place branding. Finally, the divergent examples presented in the responses reveal a general confusion surrounding the conceptualization of co-pricing, thus revealing a general sense of reluctance of adopting it in practice.

5.2.6 Co-Distribution

The expert opinions concerning co-distribution are diverse. Three of the seven respondents disagree with its relevance to place branding, while one respondent doubts what co-distribution entails, asking "*[…] how is this not different from distribution, multi-channel distribution etc.*" (Expert E). Furthermore, Expert A expresses strong concern regarding co-distribution as a co-creation strategy: "*Really, I do have a difficulty with this.*" Contrastingly, three respondents agree with co-distribution being applicable. Expert D indicates its current relevance with online platforms, such as Tripadvisor and AirBnB. For example, "*AirBnB sponsored the brand strategy for the city of Tel Aviv and is starting to create place brand value*" (Expert D). In this example, AirBnB, a commercial brand, has formed an alliance with the Tel Aviv place brand. By promoting the city through rental properties, AirBnB is able to draw more traffic to its site, increase the number of bookings, and as a result, increase the number of visitors to the city. This directly points to

common tourism marketing approaches: "*Well, this has been the way tourism destination have been selling themselves for years (e.g. through tour-operators etc.). I wouldn't personally call this relevant to place brand co-creation as this is not about shared meanings*" (Expert F). The example above also indicates that there is no clear distinction between co-distribution strategies and other types of co-creation, revealing an overlap between co-distribution and other forms, such as co-design and co-pricing (Expert C). The respondents suggest revisions to the definition of co-distribution to better emphasize how it differs from other types of distribution (Expert E). A further data analysis also reveals that there is no correlation between the responses and the background of the respondent; for example, the respondents with an 'academic' background provide different viewpoints regarding co-distribution.

5.2.7 Co-Consumption

Similar to co-pricing and co-distribution, there is an overall mixed response regarding the relevance of co-consumption to place branding. Three contrasting views emerge from the data. The first perspective, represented by four of the respondents, is favorable to co-consumption as a core element of co-creation. Expert F explains:

> "*In my view, this is coming to the very heart of what I call place brand co-creation. This is the reason why we are talking about co-creation of the place brand: because we realized these collaborative and co-creational aspects of place consumption. It is precisely this sharing of value propositions and all sorts of economic/functional and hedonistic/emotional aspects of the place and the place experience that is how the place brand is co-created*".

This is consistent with Expert D, who refers to co-consumption as a defining element of the experiential and symbolic nature of co-creation in place branding. Contrastingly, the second perspective, held by two experts, seeks a more transparent understanding of the meaning of 'consumption' and is unsure whether co-consumption is applicable. Expert C expresses this concern with the following: "*Not very clear how to integrate the notion of 'consumption' with a meaningful and active participation regarding the value proposition of the place*". This is also consistent with Expert E, who states that it is unclear by what 'consumption' refers to in this context. Lastly, the third perspective represents a minority view which disagrees that co-consumption is applicable: "*I can not really see how [co-consumption] is/can be linked to place branding*" (Expert A). The approval of co-conception as a co-creation type in place branding is moderate and appears to be fairly weakened by the uncertainty surrounding the meaning of 'consumption.' The disagreement amongst the experts is evident from their widely varying views. Furthermore, Expert B points out that co-consumption can involve experiencing the place brand both virtually and in reality. Based on these results, it can be concluded that co-consumption elicits extremely varying viewpoints by the experts, which acknowledges that co-consumption is a perceived construct.

5.2.8 Co-Outsourcing

The results indicate a low level of agreement with the relevance of co-outsourcing to place branding, as a majority of the respondents disagree (3 out of 7) or remain not sure (3 out of 7) with the applicability of co-outsourcing (Table 7):

Table 7. Views on Co-Outsourcing

	Response
Expert F	*"This is too administrative to be part of the essence of co-creation. The co-creation of the meaning of the place brand and the collaboration in certain managerial aspects is not the same thing."*
Expert C	*"Not clear how it could work..."*
Expert A	*"The definition might be comprehensive and correct, however I do not believe it to be applicable in practice. Usually one organization is charged with executing the place branding activities; so no need to "co" outsource. If activities should be outsourced, then this organization and its governing bodies will do so."*
Expert E	*"If it is not by intention – is it then co-outsourcing? I wouldn't think so. It's not co-buying it appears? What is the vantage point here – this seems to suggest that 'the place' is the vantage point and would therefore only be applicable when more 'places' co-outsource something together? Confused."*

The comments above demonstrate that the majority of respondents do not consider co-outsourcing to be a practical approach in place branding. Counter to this, two respondents agree that co-outsourcing is relevant, and that it *"happens in most places"* (Expert D). The overall lack of agreement in the findings suggests that it is difficult to empirically verify co-outsourcing as a co-creation mechanism as applicable co-creation strategies, signaling to the challenge of corroborating the diverse evidence presented by the experts above.

5.2.9 Co-Maintenance

The responses regarding co-maintenance are similar to co-outsourcing. The majority of respondents do not find co-maintenance to be a relevant component to co-creation in place branding, indicating that co-maintenance is too detailed and administrative to be part of co-creation (Expert F). Similarly, Expert D comments, *"Not sure. Getting into a bit too much detail here maybe."* While two respondents completely disagree with the applicability of co-maintenance, two respondents remain unsure and therefore are not convinced that co-maintenance is a relevant mechanism. One respondent further inquires, *"So if you have a Board with stakeholders you're engaged in co-maintenance?"* (Expert E). Expert C proposes an entirely different interpretation of co-maintenance, by suggesting the term 'co-management' in its place: "*Seems to me that it's more than maintaining, but managing, monitoring, tracking, improving, etc.*" Furthermore, although Expert A agrees that co-maintenance can potentially be relevant to place branding, he states, "*In practice I have seen no real life cycle management of place brands,*" establishing that co-maintenance is unlikely in place practices. The results show that while co-maintenance may work in theory, the majority of experts consider it to be unlikely in practice.

5.2.10 Co-Disposal

The responses reflect mixed results regarding co-disposal. Three of the respondents agree with the relevancy of co-disposal to place branding, while an equal number of respondents disagree with the application of co-disposal. One expert articulates strong disapproval with the concept, stating, *"Please ditch this. Doesn't make sense"* (Expert E). Some respondents offer a more moderate point of view that seeks to better understand what co-disposal entails. For example, Expert D remains doubtful whether co-disposal exists in place branding, speculating whether revitalization projects can be considered a possible form of co-disposal in place branding. Another expert suggests that co-disposal may be related to *"brand repositioning"* (Expert C), referring to a new initiative by the Costa Rican government to become carbon neutral by 2021 as an example of co-disposal in practice: *"Probably there are many more examples in places in the Northern Hemisphere. In my example it is more related to the brand repositioning than a regular process" (Expert C).* And while Expert A agrees with the relevance of co-disposal, he states, *"In practice I have not seen the destruction of a brand as a process."* The findings reveal two observations. Firstly, the respondents suggest a number of varying examples, i.e. revitalization projects, brand repositioning, and brand destruction. This indicates that co-disposal can involve a variety of activities, and therefore, there is uncertainty regarding what 'co-disposal' includes. On the other hand, this may also be an indication of its diversity as a concept. And secondly, the proposed definition of co-disposal may not be clearly expressed and needs revision. In general, there is a lack of agreement whether co-disposal is relevant and practiced in place branding.

5.2.11 Co-Experience

The majority of respondents (5 out of 7) agree that co-experience is a relevant co-creation type in place branding. As Expert D summarizes, *"Co-creation is always co-experience".* Based on this, co-experience can be considered as a built-in component to co-creation. This view is compatible with Expert F's observation that co-experience is at the heart of co-creation. Expert F also draws a comparison between co-experience and co-consumption, recognizing that co-experience also includes economic/functional and hedonistic/emotional elements. Specifically, he remarks that sharing VPs that involve these four elements (economic, functional, hedonistic, and emotional) generates a *"place experience,"* which is *"how the place brand is co-created"* (Expert F). These results indicate a strong correlation between co-experience and perception, where the individual's own perception of value and value dimensions play an important role in the co-creation process. A minority of respondents challenge this view, rejecting the relevance of co-experience and expressing reluctance to accept it as a co-creation type. One respondent states, *"Not applicable in my view"* (Expert A). There is also missing data, as one expert has responded to co-experience with a question mark (Expert E). This is taken into account by the researcher to ensure that the missing data does not produce any bias or distort the final conclusions that can be drawn from the analysis.

Nonetheless, there is no strong evidence that supports the exclusion of co-experience as a co-creation type. Therefore, the data suggests that co-experience is relevant and can be applied to place branding. An example of co-experience suggested by Expert C is the *Recife: The Playable City* project, which "brought together artists, producers and technologists from Pernambuco (Brazil) and the UK, to develop new ideas at the intersection of art, technology, society and culture (Watershed, 2016). The main premise of the program is to co-create an experience of a 'playable' city by bringing together relevant stakeholders in two cities. As Expert C comments, *"The example brings together the experience and experimentation linking two apparently very different cities in different continents. I'm wondering if we have another form of co-creation here..."* This suggests that according to Expert C, co-experience is not necessarily exclusive to an individual's own value creation processes; it can also include value co-creation between two places co-creating an experience through a unique process of interaction. For example, the Recife program included an installation titled, "Press Play," where various objects around the city emitted music as people touched them (Watershed, 2016). This showcases co-experience on multiple levels, where the co-creation opportunity is extended to participants, and both the stakeholders and the place interact through a VP to participate in a unique experience, in this case through music.

5.2.12 Co-Meaning Creation

The majority of respondents (6 out of 7) agree that co-meaning creation applies to place branding. As expressed by Expert D, *"That's the essence of place branding co-creation."* Expert F reiterates this by stating, *"Yes, great! Relevant and the main point!"* Representing the minority opinion, one of the seven respondents specifies that co-meaning creation is "not applicable" (Expert A), but does not offer more information. In regards to the proposed definition, a number of respondents express their reservations regarding the phrase 'subjective assessment' included in the definition. To recall, the proposed definition is the following: A stakeholder's subjective assessment of a place brand VP that generates symbolic & non-utilitarian value in the forms of sense-making, interpretation, & understanding through emotional & psychological associations created through the experience of consuming or using the place brand resource." One expert suggests replacing 'subjective assessment' with 'shared interpretation', explaining that subjectivity by definition contradicts the notion of co-creation: *"It it's subjective, then difficult to see how co- or joint"* (Expert B). Expert C seconds this notion with, *"The only point a but unclear is the 'subjective assessment.' What exactly does it mean?"* Moreover, Expert E comments, *"So storytelling that is created by more than one stakeholder? This is the only way to do it."* This comment puts forth the idea that co-meaning creation, in practice, can be linked to storytelling processes in a place. In general, the majority of respondents accept co-meaning creation as a relevant co-creation form. However, further revision is needed to the definition in order to clarify the subjective nature inherent in the concept.

5.3 Stakeholders

The third question asks, "Which stakeholders are and should be involved in the co-creation processes of a place?" The majority of respondents (4 out of 7) report that stakeholder involvement completely depends on the context. Expert F states, *"It is impossible to list all stakeholders as they also depend on local circumstances."* This is consistent with Expert E's response:

> *"This completely depends on the situation and context and the scalar level on which we're working. It is about power-relationships, legitimacy and commitment. I therefore cannot answer this question in the way in which you would like me to. No size fits all."*

Similarly, Expert B comments, *"The answer is context dependent. Different places will demonstrate a range (low, med, high) of stakeholder group involvement at different levels of engagement. It depends."* Expert D also states, *" […] stakeholder involvement depends on the specific projects and stage in the brand development."* These comments indicate that identifying stakeholders relevant to co-creation is contingent on the context.

The responses to Question 3 present a diverse outlook on the stakeholders in place branding; while some respondents are more specific in listing relevant stakeholders, others focus on distinguishing between stakeholders in a broader sense. Expert D, for example, takes a general perspective on stakeholders, encouraging the inclusion of everyone in co-creation processes: *"Potentially everyone should be involved […]"* Moving to a more specific approach to identifying stakeholders, Expert A proposes two broad categories of stakeholders, termed generalists and specialists:

> *"Specifically co-creation from generalists would involve drafting the framework, the cornerstones of a place identity while the role of the specialists would be more to contribute specific knowledge / direct-setting for the place brand, so they are much more content-focused then the generalists."*

Moving to a more specific approach, Expert C provides a list of the most relevant stakeholders, along with the corresponding level of their engagement in place branding processes (indicated by high, medium, or low):

Table 8. Stakeholders - Expert C

High	Medium	Low
• Civil society	• NGOs	• Tourists
• Residents	• Academia	
• Place Brand Managers	• Investors	
High to Medium		
• Place Ambassadors		
• Special Committees		

(Source: Taken from Expert C's questionnaire transcript; researcher's own visualization.)

In a similar fashion, Expert F reports the following stakeholders:

High	Medium	Low
• Local authorities	• Transportation providers	• Education
• Commercial / Retail sector	• National/International Authorities	• Residents
• Tourism Sector		

(Source: Taken from Expert F's questionnaire transcript; researcher's own visualization.)

Comparing tables 8 and 9 above, the experts have conflicting opinions regarding stakeholders and their level of engagement. For example, while both Expert C and F include tourists as relevant stakeholders, Expert F believes their level of engagement is much higher. Inversely, while Expert F believes residents have a low level of engagement in place branding, Expert C reports a stronger level of engagement with the place branding activities of a place. The results also show that, while there is some overlap between stakeholders, there are more differences than similarities.

'Residents' represent the most recurring stakeholders recognized by all three respondents who have taken a more specific approach in identifying relevant stakeholders (Expert A, C and F). Moreover, in some instances, the respondents differ in their terminology. For example, Experts C and F use the term *"resident"* to describe stakeholders living in a place on a long-term basis, while Expert A uses *"inhabitant"* instead. In this case, both terms are interchangeable. Comparably, all three respondents reference stakeholders from the education field in different terms: *"students"* (Expert A), *"academia"* (Expert C) and *"education"* (Expert F). While 'student' may refer to either a local or foreign exchange person enrolled in a study program, 'academia' may refer to the entire education system and community, including students. As the responses do not provide further specification, it cannot be determined whether these three education-related terms are equally comparable, and thus, interchangeable. Tourists (Experts C, F) and investors (Experts A, C) are each identified twice. In the same way, government stakeholders are identified by two respondents (Experts C and F). While Expert C refers to *"politics,"* Expert F distinguished between two groups: *"local authorities"* and *"national/international authorities."* In this case, the terms refer to the same stakeholder group describing governance at the local, national, and international levels.

Two essential points are revealed. First, there seems to be no general agreement on the terminology used in the field of place branding. Based on the responses of the questionnaire, the differences in terminology are especially visible, as each respondent applies different vocabulary to describe similar concepts. Taking into consideration the participants of this study, differences in terminology can be expected since the practical aspects of place branding are also diverse. The language depends on a number of factors such as the role (i.e. academic, practitioner, pracademic) and experience of the expert. However, the results show that there are more differences than similarities, as very few overlaps occur in the responses. Therefore, it can be determined that a standard approach to defining terms may be lacking in the field. Second, the general lack

of clarity in the terminology of the field may affect more specific segments within the field. For example, the responses in Question 3 demonstrate a lack of precision surrounding stakeholder terminology. This may cause confusion and other adverse effects on the development of the stakeholder segment in place branding. Or it may have the opposite effect, allowing a certain level of freedom and more room for development, since there are fewer restrictions from standardized terminology and procedures.

Expert C further details the stakeholder concept with the following:

> *"I believe that affinity is key to engage some groups, for example residents can directly benefit from a specific outcome of co-creation, while tourists could enjoy maybe a one-time benefit. Think affinity in terms of sense of belonging and attachment. Do people feel they are really part of a system and they have a clear role on the way a place is lived and perceived?"*

5. 4 Managing Co-Creation

The fourth question asks, "How can co-creation activities be managed in a place?" The respondents voice different perceptions regarding the management process of a place. Two contrasting perspectives emerge from the responses. The first group of respondents advocate for a more structured and centralized approach in managing co-creation in place branding processes. As Expert A explains, *"I do believe you need a strongly mandated centralized organization. This organization can involve / incorporate the individual partners needed."* This is consistent with Expert E's approach of place brand management:

> *"I think this is just part of place brand management in general. Co-creation requires a specific mind-set and organizational set-up to facilitate this. It also requires a clear definition of the different roles and responsibilities of the partners involved."*

In contrast, the second group of respondents supports a more de-centralized and hands-off approach to managing co-creation in place branding processes. Expert F outlines the underlying premise of this view:

> *"Co-creation cannot be 'managed (i.e. directed to whatever direction we want) but it can be facilitated. That means that we can plan and execute activities and events that allow people to exchange ideas about the place and its brand. If we create physical and virtual platforms where people can join and share experiences, then we can provide the means for co-creation to happen."*

Expert F's observations correspond directly with the following remark by Expert D:

> *"Stimulated is maybe a better word than managed, as place brand co-creation is hard to control. Usually there is an externalised semi-private public agency that tries to do this; i.e. bring stakeholders together and inspire them to develop on-brand initiatives."*

Finally, a third group of respondents offers a more moderate viewpoint. One respondent asserts that the appropriate management process is determined by the place itself: *"Having appropriate collaborative governance structures in place (in some countries/regions) or more open, grassroots organizations (in others)"* (Expert B). This viewpoint suggests a more adaptable approach to managing place branding

processes, indicating that there is no one-size-fits-all method. Instead, a combination of both a hands-on and hands-off approach produces a more flexible strategy, enabling the place brand processes to respond to local needs for co-creation, whether they necessitate a more top-down *"governance"* style of management, or a bottom-up *"grassroots"* style of collaboration. Expert G reflects a similar view by stating that the co-creation processes in place branding should be the *"same process as place branding."* Another respondent specifies the tasks involved in managing place brand processes for co-creation. According to Expert C, co-creation activities can be managed in a place via: "*Regular meetings with stakeholders* [led] *by place brand managers; regular meetings with place brand managers led by stakeholders; special committees in the case of events;* [and] *online contributions."* This view is compatible with using a flexible approach to *"facilitating"* (Expert E, F) and *"stimulating"* (Expert D) co-creation processes in place branding, proposed by Experts B and G above. As stated by Expert C, co-creation involves continuous engagement and involvement by all relevant parties. Furthermore, the respondent draws attention to who is 'leading' these processes, indicating that both place brand managers and stakeholders are able to lead co-creation in place branding.

5.5 Facilitators and Inhibitors

Question five asks, "What / who are the potential facilitators and inhibitors of co-creation in place branding?" The respondents report a wide variety of factors that facilitate or inhibit co-creation in place branding. Furthermore, while some respondents address specific facilitators and inhibitors, others choose to indicate what promotes or hinders co-creation in a more general sense. The specific responses (Experts D, G, and C) are presented in a table below, while the more general answers are discussed directly after.

Table 10. Facilitators and Inhibitors (Experts D, G, and C)

Expert	Facilitators	Inhibitors
D		
	• Private sector and marketing agencies (tourism/investment/export promotion agencies) that see the need for place brand awareness and reputation	• Inhibitors: very often politicians that are short-term oriented.
G		
	• Good place governance	• Bad place governance
C		
	• Cultural agents • Special events with national or international relevance (like in Olympics of World Soccer Cup) • Cultural homogeneity and a common heritage with a shared identity – think about Italian traditional cities • Repositioning projects with clear strategic and operational guidelines • A strong *genius loci* as a foundation for a unique and competitive place brand narrative. • Clear understanding of brand, its characteristics and ambitions	• Cultural mobility. The question here is who "owns" the place? What about involvement of newcomers, such as refugees? Do they have a 'voice' in co-creating the place? • Negative experiences (in tourism, for example) or natural disasters caused by lack of management of political interests • Lack of tracking or measurement of initiatives where public taxpayers' money was used to improve people's life • Lack of clarity from government regarding their goals • Lack of continuity between governments • Lack of credibility • Different political interests disputing the same projects • Placelessness (no distinctive features, or copying other

places' strategy)
- A focus on marketing and advertising campaigns with seasonal investments than long-term initiatives
- Ignoring spontaneous contributions or perceptions about aspects that should be considered in a co-creation agenda (eg. monitoring social media, protests, etc.).

The responses show that the majority of experts (5 out of 7) consider the most inhibiting factor to co-creation in place branding to be poor governance. The respondents use different terminology to describe different forms of governance, including politicians and other local governing bodies who, very often, *"are short-term oriented"* (Expert D) and thus promote agendas and policies that hinder co-creation opportunities in place branding. Expert C refers to *"lack of continuity between governments,"* and *"different political interests disputing the same projects."* As one respondent explains:

> *"The main thing that does not allow co-creation is the idea that the place brand needs to be created by managers and then people should adopt it or accept it. In this sense, co-creation is a frame of mind rather than the activities. So the main inhibitors are local authorities and non-enlightened politicians and some consultants." (Expert F)*

Similarly, Expert E observes that there are operational and tactical elements to consider in assessing the facilitators and inhibitors in co-creation in place branding. He further observes that there are also strategic elements to consider, which includes the *"place brand management organization, marketing organisations (if they're separate) and governance-partners (mainly government and network organisations)"* (Expert E*).* Another respondent states that four factors can either enable or obstruct co-creation opportunities in place branding: a) Levels of engagement; b) Attitudes to place branding; c) Communication + governance structures; and d) Types of vested interests in the community (Expert B).

The results show that lack of clarity in place-related processes is an inhibiting factor to co-creation. For example, Expert C lists a number of issues related to clarity that may impede co-creation. These include ineffective tracking and measuring procedures, "lack of clarity from government regarding their goals," a "lack of credibility" and "placelessness" which refers to a place that lacks the clarity in its identity and image. Another inhibiting factor considered by the respondents is the attitude and perceptions held by different stakeholders. Expert B considers the attitude to place branding to be a facilitating or inhibiting factor to co-creation. Furthermore, Expert C discusses the importance of perception, stating that a "*clear understanding of brand, its characteristics and ambitions"* is needed to facilitate co-creation opportunities. Simultaneously, *"negative experiences (in tourism, for example) or natural disasters caused by lack of management of political interests"* (Expert C) also make co-creation more difficult by creating negative perceptions surrounding the place brand. Negative consequences can also result from "*ignoring spontaneous contributions or perceptions about aspects that should be considered in a co-creation agenda (eg. monitoring social media, protests, etc.)* (Expert C). This reveals that attitudes and perceptions are more difficult to control; however, certain strategies can help enhance attitudes and perceptions in place branding, thus facilitating opportunities for co-creation.

In general, the results indicate a mixed response, making it difficult to report a majority and minority view. In addition to Expert E, a number of other respondents refer to brand management organizations, marketing agencies, and other similar organizations as facilitators to the process of co-creation. Expert D mentions, *"private sector and marketing agencies*, [including] *tourism, investment, export*, [and] *promotion agencies."* Expert C refers to cultural agents and *"a strong genius loci as a foundation for a unique and competitive place brand narrative."* The responses also indicate a preference for long-term thinking over short-term approaches. Specifically, Experts C and D comment on focusing on long-term initiatives in order to facilitate co-creation opportunities in place branding.

5.6 Outcomes of Co-Creation in Place Branding

The final question of the questionnaire asks, "What can be an outcome (or outcomes) of co-creation in place branding?" The majority of respondents (5 out of 7) report higher levels of engagement as an important outcome of co-creation in place branding. A higher level of engagement also leads to other outcomes, such as a higher sense of ownership, as explained by Expert F:

> *"The main positive outcome of place brand co-creation is that people will have a higher sense of brand ownership. They will feel that this is their brand and they will be more engaged with it. It will be 'their brand'. That is the aim of the whole branding effort."*

This reveals that with higher levels of engagement, stakeholders feel more ownership with the place brand, and therefore, are more invested in its success and failures. Expert E also comments on the outcomes of more engagement; in his opinion, the main outcome of co-creation in place branding is: *"Everything. More specifically a strategy/organization/project/action/etc. that enjoys more support from stakeholders (because they've been involved) and which is/are less vulnerable to external criticasters and political priority-shifts"* (Expert E).

A minority of the respondents (3 out of 7) also report that a main outcome of co-creation in place branding is *"a better place brand"* (Expert G), or in other words, a *"more effective and efficient place brand"* (Expert A). Similarly, Expert B includes a *"[s]tronger place brand image/identity"* as a primary outcome. More specifically, two out of the seven respondents (Expert B and C) report a number of concrete outcomes (Appendix 9.6); these findings could be an interesting starting point to investigate the specific outcomes of co-creation in place branding.

In conclusion, the responses to the questionnaire represent diverse viewpoints by the experts. In addition to similarities and overlaps in the findings, there are also a number of contrasting perspectives that will result in revisions to our preliminary conceptualization of co-creation in place branding. Based on the questionnaire

responses, the following results were derived. The co-creation definitions provide insight into the applicability of co-creation types. The experts also reveal that stakeholders are integral to co-creation. Furthermore, the management of co-creation can either require a structured and centralized approach, or, a more loosely-structured and decentralized approach. Facilitating and inhibiting factors of co-creation are associated strongly with short-term and long-tem strategies. And finally, the main outcome of co-creation is a higher level of engagement amongst all stakeholders in place branding.

Chapter 6. Discussion and Implications

This chapter presents a discussion of the insights derived from relating the data to the theoretical developments of this research. The following findings are noteworthy:

Relevance of co-creation types varies for place branding

Although co-creation literature distinguishes between twelve forms of co-creation (Frow et al., 2011), the empirical data collected during this study suggests that not all twelve co-creation types are relevant to place branding. Taking a look at the data, it can be determined that **co-conception** and **co-design** are strongly related; as Expert E expresses, *"the distinction between co-conception and co-design is artificial."* This means that co-design activities can be categorized within co-conception processes, because according to Expert C, co-designing can be considered a part of co-conceptualizing in mapping place branding efforts. Sanders and Stappers (2008) support this view, as concept development and idea generation are closely intertwined with design stages. Therefore, co-design is considered within co-conception and does not have to be represented as an independent co-creation type.

The participants express similar sentiments regarding **co-distribution**, revealing that there are overlapping features between co-distribution and other co-creation forms. While three respondents disagree with co-distribution as a relevant co-creative practice in place branding, three respondents respond positively and offer examples of co-distribution in practice. Considering that a) there are overlapping elements between co-distribution and other co-creation types; and b) actual examples in practice are verified by the participants, co-distribution can be categorized as a sub-activity of 'co-production'. This implies that **co-production** can serve as a more general co-creation type, encompassing different forms and co-creative activities that do not necessarily have to be considered as separate categories of co-creation. Co-distribution processes can be integrated into co-production (Burda, 2012).

A majority of the respondents (6 out of 7) agree with the relevance of **co-promotion** and admit that it is widely practiced. However, a few of the respondents raise concern in regards to its 'true' co-creative nature. Expert F states, *"I am not sure that this is something that goes deep into co-creation."* Expert D confirms

this view by expressing doubt about whether co-promotion builds brand value. A possible explanation for this may be derived from the negative connotations associated with traditional efforts in place promotion, which are often times mistaken for place branding (Braun, 2008). Place branding scholars have widely criticized the "fetish" places have with investing in logos and slogans as their main tool for place branding (Govers, 2013, p. 71). Unfortunately, logos and slogans are implemented without taking into consideration the nature and identity of a place that already exists in the minds of people (ibid). This results in more harm than good, as place branding becomes reduced to common product-promotion techniques, disregarding the complexities and organic dimensions of the place. Based on this, it is important to realize that co-promotion is only one of the many components of the overall place branding strategy, and not an overarching concept for the entire place branding effort. Based on expert suggestions, the definition for co-promotion is made more concise to avoid confusion. The final definition of co-promotion is: *A collaborative process involving two or more stakeholders performing activities related to communications, advertising, marketing &/or publicity.*

Taking a further look at the opinions of the participants, most respondents (4 out of 7) respond favorably to **co-consumption**. The findings show that co-consumption is closely related to the experiential and symbolic qualities of the place experience (Expert D, F). This result is similar to Holbrook and Hirschman (1982), who found that 'consumption' has important experiential aspects. This is also supported with the notion that consumers co-create their consumption experience, hence, co-consume (see Minkiewicz et al, 2014). This finding is rather surprising, because 'consumption' is often associated with a manufacturing, goods-dominant view of consuming tangible products (Vargo and Lusch 2004b). This is highlighted with the comments by three respondents who are skeptical that the idea of 'consumption' is suitable. Nonetheless, this research considers that 'co-consumption' is applicable to place branding for two reasons. First, the S-D logic adopted in this study assumes that services are distinguished between goods in four ways, one of which is the inseparability of production and consumption. And second, the S-D logic perspective argues that ''value can only be created with and determined by the user in the 'consumption' process and through use of what is referred to as value-in-use'' (Lusch & Vargo, 2006, p. 28), which is a central tenet of this research. However, it must be acknowledged that in practice, co-consumption raises doubt; therefore, it is not separated as a discrete co-creation type. Instead, certain elements that are proposed in the definition can be absorbed within **'co-experience'**, and thus, acknowledging the experiential nature of place-consumption (Hankinson, 2004).

The results also indicate that the majority of participants either do not agree or remain doubtful with the relevance of **co-pricing, co-maintenance, co-outsourcing and co-disposal** in place branding. While some of the participants indicate a strong disagreement with the concepts, others express a more moderate view that shows that each of the concepts are not clearly understood or are too-detailed. A possible explanation for

this may be that these forms are rarely used in practice, and therefore, the participants cannot adequately comment on them. A further explanation can also be attributed to the lack of established co-creation practices in place branding. Therefore, the four co-creation types – co, pricing, co-maintenance, co-outsourcing and co-disposal – are not considered relevant to place branding based on the findings of this research. But, as the field continues to evolve, these four types may have the opportunity to develop in the future as distinct forms of co-creation, displaying relevance to place branding.

Finally, a majority of the respondents agree with **co-meaning creation** (6 out of 7). Scholars have also emphasized the importance of meaning-creation in the place brand (e.g. Zavattaro, 2014).

Table 11. Final Co-Creation Types in Place Branding

Co-Creation Type	
1	Co-Conception
	Co-Design
2	Co-Production
	Co-Distribution
3	Co-Promotion
4	Co-Experience
	Co-Consumption
5	Co-Meaning Creation

The final co-creation types are shown in Table 11. The participants also identified the following additional types of co-creation types: co-management, co-upcycling, co-selling, co-buying, and co-branding. It can be relevant to explore these concepts in further research to identify new forms of co-creation that can be used in place branding.

These findings provide a clear understanding of which types of co-creation are possible in places. Clarifying and defining each co-creation type has led to two important implications. First, broadly-defined terminology often leads to incorrect applications of the term. This may lead to skewed interpretations of what the term means, since individuals are able to use the term in a self-serving way that 'fits' their agenda. In an emerging field of study, such as that of co-creation in place branding, it is important to develop definitions that can sufficiently capture the essential features of the concept, while at the same time, delimiting the term to its relevant domain. Second, taking into consideration the point above, co-creation types can significantly impact the outcomes of co-creative initiatives in a place brand. Co-creation types act as mechanisms for realizing place brand VPs. In "The mechanisms of value co-creation," Saarijärvi (2012) asserts that value creation types are "always subordinate to the value proposition" (p. 384). This, however, can be misleading since it may suggest that mechanisms are not as significant to the value co-creation process as the initial offering and the resulting outcome. The research from this study suggests that both the VP and the co-

creation type have equal significance as different elements of the VP concept. Due to their interdependency, the effectiveness of the VP is directly tied to the mechanism applied to fulfill its value promise. You can have a well-designed and planned place brand offering; however, if the appropriate co-creation type is not used or carried out, the VP will fail to actualize this offering. In other words, each of the co-creation types is equally as important as the VPs.

Facilitation is a preferred approach than management

Question four in the questionnaire reveals a varied perspective regarding how co-creation in place branding can be managed. The result of the research synthesis reveals two different paradigms of 'management styles': a bottom-up and top-down approach. A *bottom-up approach* promotes a more hands-off, grassroots style. In contrast, a *top-down approach* mandates a centralized, control-driven style of managing co-creation processes within a place brand. By definition, co-creation implies a participatory, grassroots style in which all stakeholders are active participants of the process. Based on this, the natural inclination is to lean towards a bottom-up approach that implies loosely-organized structures for 'facilitating' place branding processes. The results of this study show that a 'facilitation' approach is more favorable than a 'management' approach to co-creation in place branding. A pivotal point of this analysis is that co-creation in place branding cannot be 'managed' and the focus should be to facilitate, stimulate and encourage co-creation in place branding. This brings into question the notion of 'place brand management', which implies control and authority. Therefore, it may be more conducive to think of 'place brand management' in terms of 'place brand facilitation'. As Expert E states, *"Co-creation cannot be 'managed'…but it can be facilitated."* This discussion reveals a number of insights.

The most critical insight is that the appropriate management style is in fact determined by the place or co-creation initiative itself. Some projects or places may require stronger management and control, while others work most effectively with less involvement and organization. This points towards a more flexible and adaptive approach, similar to the concept of service systems discussed in this study. Systems are dynamic and autonomous, sensing and responding to changing circumstances, and adjusting their processes accordingly to feedback loops within the ecosystem. Adopting a service-systems perspective can therefore help facilitate the processes of co-creation in place branding by responding dynamically to local needs.

A critical component of this discussion is the dynamic team structures that facilitate co-creation in place brands, who are able to quickly respond to change and integrate new knowledge and skills to co-create value. Autonomous, "loosely-coupled," and self-organizing groups collectively (and often informally) respond to emerging opportunities and challenges within the ecosystem (Vargo & Lusch, 2011, p. 185). This has

implications for building an ideal co-creation structure that can support and generate co-creation opportunities. Decision-making is often decentralized, with little or no interference from a central governing power (Ind & Bjerke, 2007), making flexible and swift action possible. Therefore, place brand processes do not become restricted by structural constraints; stakeholders are able to better respond to situational circumstances unrestricted by formalized processes generally common in top-down approaches. However, this also poses a critical managerial challenge in finding a rewarding balance between centralized and de-centralized approaches, especially in relationship to place brand facilitation. Relying solely on a top-down place management structures becomes increasingly challenging, and often, unsuccessful. Furthermore, the rigid and static nature of the top-down approach often leads to a huge potential of resources and talent to remain untapped; therefore, place branding leaders need to cultivate this underdeveloped area, to ensure that the right combination of centralized and de-centralized style is implemented.

Engagement platforms should be considered for leveraging co-creation

The engagement platform was proposed in this study as structural support for successful co-creation processes in place branding. Both place branding and co-creation literature support this view (Ind & Bjerke, 2007; Ramaswamy & Ozcan, 2014). However, only one expert commented on a 'platform' concept for co-creation: *"If we create physical and virtual platforms where people can join and share experiences, then we can provide the means for co-creation to happen"* (Expert F). This result is unexpected, considering that many of the examples of co-creation found in place branding incorporate physical and virtual platforms that motivate, coordinate and monitor participatory practices. This fact is also surprising taking into consideration the significant role engagement platforms have in interaction processes between stakeholders, as established in the research synthesis. One explanation for this can be that the concept of an 'engagement platform' was not specifically asked about in the questionnaire to avoid steering the responses of the experts. Nevertheless, this study proposes that the engagement platform is indeed an effective method for facilitating co-creation, and this can be worthy area to confirm with further research.

Engagement platforms can be designed to support stakeholder participation through a wide range of co-creation types. This means that the platform design should be able to support any (and all) of the place branding co-creation types. For example, an effective engagement platform design will be able to simultaneously harness the benefits of co-design and co-promotion activities. Furthermore, the design should aim to be all-encompassing to the different roles of stakeholders. This means that the design of the platform does not hinder the different roles stakeholder may assume during co-creation processes. The platform can enable the evolution of co-creation; that is, as stakeholders dive deeper into the co-creation process of a place brand, their co-creation experience will evolve, and may require more opportunities for engagement and

involvement. Therefore, an effective engagement platform design has to remain semi-structured and flexible, to allow for the dynamic processes of place branding to occur organically.

The platform also represents the interconnectedness of different stakeholders, locally and globally. Therefore, an engagement platform is a valuable source of collective knowledge, which can be optimized for leveraging co-creation opportunities in place branding.

The focal actor plays an important role as facilitator

Another critical point of this discussion concerns the role of a focal actor in the facilitation process. A focal actor is defined as "a network actor wanting to design a business model for value co-creation (Storbacka et al., 2012, p. 55). The findings show that although a flexible approach is preferred, a 'focal actor' can still play a significant role in more effectively leveraging co-creation opportunities. Co-creation is difficult to control; however, it has a greater chance of exceeding its potential with the leadership of a focal actor, who is responsible for initiating and leading the co-creation efforts in place branding. Expert F refers to this focal actor as *"an externalised semi-private public agency that…bring[s] stakeholders together and inspire[s] them to develop on-brand initiatives."* A number of the experts refer to different organizations tasked with place brand management, confirming that a focal actor can have major implications for co-creation opportunities. The results of the study show that the focal actor's main role as 'facilitator' involves mobilizing stakeholder resources, optimizing the engagement processes between stakeholders, and improving the 'co-creation experience' to increase efficiency and effectiveness in the overall system. Engagement is found to be an overarching concept throughout the study. The results also reveal that co-creation in place branding leads to higher levels of engagement between stakeholders, as well as with the place brand itself. By harnessing this power, focal actors can leverage stakeholder resources (e.g. competencies, skills, talents) and deploy them where needed to encourage co-creation. In conclusion, the focal actor is an important addition to a final conceptualization of co-creation in place branding.

'Context' has a significant impact on the conceptualization of co-creation

Context is important because it represents a frame of reference for working and analyzing. This means that the contextual nature of co-creation in place branding can delimit both domains to focus within a specific arena, more effectively and efficiently leveraging opportunities for co-creation. Taking things 'in context' also allows focal actors and stakeholders to mobilize their resources more strategically to create superior place brand s. For example, context informs an actor which value dimensions to focus on, such as economic, functional, emotional or symbolic. In this way, value dimensions provide a stakeholder with a context for

designing the VP, and therefore, they are can be more targeted towards specifically meeting a goal, addressing a need or providing a solution. Additionally, context shapes the meanings associated with the interactions, engagement, and overall experience of stakeholders in the co-creation process. The context of the stakeholders should therefore be taken into consideration when implanting co-creation in place branding.

Identifying stakeholders improves participatory place brand processes

One critical component of this discussion is the role of stakeholder groups in the place brand facilitation process. The six-market stakeholder market was proposed as the most effective model for identifying relevant stakeholders. Stakeholders from both value co-creation literature and place branding literature were translated to each of the six markets (Column B). Next, the empirical results were analyzed and categorized into the appropriate market groups (Column C). Table 12 below represents potential stakeholders who may be involved in co-creation in place branding.

Table 12. Identifying Place Brand Stakeholders with the Six-Market Model

A) Theoretical VP Market	B) Synthesis *How can it translate to place branding?*	C) Empirical *Who are place brand stakeholders?*
Consumer Market	Tourists; Visitors; Residents; Commuters; Expats; Students; Investors.	Civil society; NGOs; Academia; Education; Special committees; Inhabitant
Internal Market	Place branding agencies & organizations; Other PR & marketing organizations; DMO; Non-DMO.	Place brand managers, Transportation providers
Referral Market	Virtually anyone - More specifically: Word-of mouth marketing; Travel bloggers; Enthusiasts and fans; Sports fans; Online referrals (e.g.Trip Advisor).	Place ambassador
Influence Market	Investors; Unions; Industry bodies; Regulatory bodies; Media; Environmental groups; Competitors	National and international authorities; Local authorities; Commercial and retail sector;
Recruitment Market	Education sector (students); Employment sector (jobs); Housing market; Visa restrictions, International friendliness	Tourists; Reputation management
Supplier and Alliance Market	Airports; Airline Alliances; Neighborhood developments; Regional alliances; Trade alliances	

Looking at the results, there seems to be a lack of coherence in the responses to Question Three in the questionnaire. Though a number of stakeholders are mentioned in the literature and expert responses, there seems to be no common practice or strategy in identifying stakeholders. This finding is surprising, especially when taking into consideration that scholars and practitioners have consistently stressed the critical importance of stakeholders. Based on this, we can conclude that place branding can significantly benefit from integrating the six-market stakeholder model in order to identify the most relevant stakeholders.

Additionally, the results of question three reveal that there may be a discrepancy between the theoretical and practical dimensions of place branding in regards to the importance of 'relationships'. The research synthesis revealed that relational constructs, such as interactions, are critical to the success of co-creation processes.

Based on this, it can be determined that successful relationships (either between stakeholders, or between stakeholders and the place brand) can leverage unique opportunities for co-creation. However, there is a general a lack of attention to 'relationships' and relational constructs in the empirical findings of this study.

Based on the results between the research synthesis and the empirical findings of this study, it can be argued that the relationship philosophy can be a valuable approach to co-creation in place brands. The relationship philosophy is a meaning-based approach, where meaning is created through interactions between stakeholders within a service system. Through individual or collective interactions, consumers are able to co-create unique value for themselves through their experiences (Prahalad & Ramaswamy, 2003). In co-creative processes, stakeholders feel their input is valuable and that they were actually 'heard', which transforms the interaction into a more intimate experience. When a stakeholder feels valued, they are more likely to continue contributing and sharing resources because they will feel a deeper bond with the brand or other actors. Not only does this encourage reciprocal value-creating processes, it also makes it easier to determine which encounters are critical for the continuation of the relationship (Storbacka et al., 1994). This calls for further research that considers an interdisciplinary approach between RM and place branding theory.

Towards a final definition of co-creation in place branding

Based on the synthesis and the empirical findings, the initial definition of co-creation in place branding can be revised to:

> **Definition of Co-Creation in Place Branding:** *A value proposition process involving the active involvement of a focal actor and relevant stakeholders engaging in interactions and knowledge sharing, resulting in a shared creation of value and meaning in a place brand ecosystem.*

6.1 Final Framework

Figure 11. Final Conceptual Framework
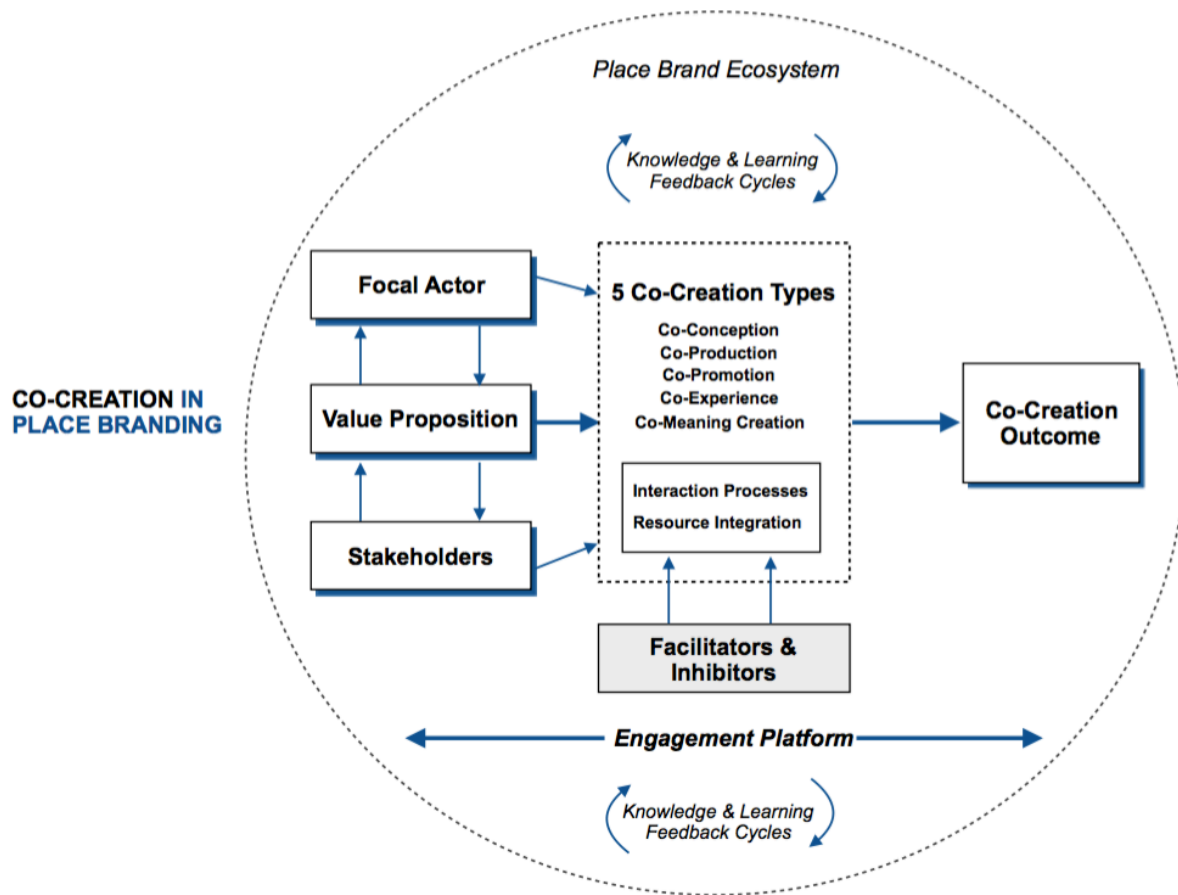
Table 13. Final Propositions

A final conceptual framework represents the following:

- The focal actor plays a significant role in facilitating and leveraging co-creation opportunities.

- The final five co-creation types can be aggregate and continuous, permeating different processes within the ecosystem. Therefore, they are represented within dotted lines.

- The place branding value proposition is a catalyst for co-creation opportunities between stakeholders.

- The place brand ecosystem is a system of relationships. These relationships are represented by the arrows between actors and processes, emphasizing a relational approach to effective co-creation in place branding.

- Iterative cycles of knowledge creation, learning, and feedback are an important element for improving the overall system, designing superior value propositions, and establishing effective and brand-enhancing co-creation approaches.

6.2 Limitations

A number of limitations must be acknowledged. Due to the qualitative nature of this study, an interpretive approach was used to collect and analyze data in two fields of study – co-creation and place branding. The in-depth nature of the data can indicate limited generalizability (Patton, 2002). Additionally, a qualitative analysis can lead to bias, where the researcher's own views may influence the interpretation of data (Bryman, 2012). However, taking an exploratory research, the researcher was aware that the aim of this research was to explore a new phenomenon and suggest a conceptual roadmap for co-creation in a place branding context. As such, these limiting considerations did not limit the qualitative findings that resulted from this exploration. Seven experts have participated in the empirical study, providing rich and in-depth data to the subject. Due to the limited number of participants, the results can only be generalized to the extent of the data collected. The selection of participants is also a limitation of the research, focusing solely on place branding experts who practice predominantly in Europe. However, the narrower focus has allowed for deeper and more specific insights to be generated. Furthermore, it can be concluded that the expertise of the participants provides a deeper understanding about the true nature and practice of co-creation in place branding, inspiring further investigation into the field. Additionally, although rich-data has been collected from conducting a pre-written expert questionnaire, this method did not allow for further questioning and probing, which may have generated interesting findings. Nevertheless, despite these limitations, the research provides relevant insights into how co-creation can leverage place branding practices.

Chapter 7. Conclusion

The main research question is: *How can participatory marketing processes leverage opportunities of value co-creation in place branding?* In order to answer the research question, a qualitative study was conducted in three parts: a) a literature review of value co-creation; b) a research synthesis between place branding and co-creation; and c) an empirical questionnaire with seven place branding experts.

Based on the service-dominant perspective taken in this research, three important aspects to the 'co-creation paradigm' were identified: value propositions, multiple stakeholders, and relationship marketing theory. A research synthesis was undertaken to translate key constructs from co-creation to the place branding domain, which resulted in a preliminary conceptual framework for co-creation in place branding. Expert feedback was collected to verify components of the model. A final model was proposed, consisting of core elements suggested to leverage co-creation opportunities in place branding. These elements were: focal actor, stakeholder, value proposition, co-creation type, facilitators and inhibitors, and engagement platform.

The research has provided evidence that co-creation can positively benefit the field of place branding. In order to address the unique challenges of place branding, the participation and collaboration of many stakeholders is required. A co-creation approach can leverage unique opportunities for the place brand, enhancing brand equity, and representing a more authentic and coherent place identity & image (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2010).

The collected data revealed that 'facilitating' co-creation is more effective than 'managing' co-creation in place brands. Therefore, this study proposes a shift to 'place brand facilitation,' implying a more flexible and dynamic structure that can encourage and promote participation in value-creating processes. Attention has also been drawn to engagement platforms, which can increase interaction between stakeholders, as well as serve as important sources of collective and real-time knowledge. By looking at place brands as service systems, the research in this study suggests that we can better understand the interactions between multiple groups of stakeholders that co-create value.

Furthermore, this study considers a broader perspective by adopting relationship marketing as a philosophy that can guide the facilitation and understanding of co-creation opportunities for a place brand. Specifically, a relationship approach is suggested in order to facilitate co-creation in a participatory place branding process. This area remains underdeveloped in research and can greatly benefit for a deeper and more holistic understanding of value co-creation processes in place branding.

Through the insights collected from the definitions and conceptual framework, this thesis aimed to provide a more comprehensive understanding of how the opportunities for co-creation could be leveraged in place branding.

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Appendices

9.1 Value Dimensions

ECONOMIC VALUE	FUNCTIONAL VALUE	EMOTIONAL VALUE	SYMBOLIC VALUE
Focus on Price	**Focus on Solutions**	**Focus on Experience**	**Focus on Meaning**
• Utilitarian value: Delivering value at low monetary sacrifice. • Value Perceptions: Instrumental, task-related, rational, cognitive and a means to an end. • Requires resources and competencies based on economies of scale. • Value driver is price.	• Functional value: Meet stakeholder needs by increasing convenience. • Value Perceptions: Convenience, providing support, continuously meeting needs, minimizing customer sacrifices in terms of time and effort. • Processes that increase convenience at different stages of the consumption experience.	• Emotional value: Experiential and memorable aspects in consumption experience. • Value Perceptions: Enjoyment, favorable, pleasant, and positive experience. • Effective use of visual, auditory, olfactory, sensory, and gustatory clues. • Hedonic motivations.	• Symbolic value: Self-expression through socially interpreted codes in consumption experience. • Value Perceptions: Positive consumption meanings that are attached to self and/or communicated to others. • Symbols help define image and shared meaning to a receiver.

| Cognitive Process		Experiential Process	
• Stakeholders are thinkers. • Judgement of VP benefits & sacrifices (Zeithaml,1988). • Example: Goal-oriented activities (e.g. searching for information, evaluating options, purchase decision).		• Stakeholders are feelers. • Emphasis on emotional, contextual, symbolic and non-utilitarian aspects of VP. • Example: The flow of fantasies, feelings, and fun (Holbrook & Hirschman 1982).	

(Source: Own consolidation, based on Saarijärvi, 2012; Rintamäki et al. 2007; and Payne et al., 2008).

9.2 Comparison of Major Schools of Relationship Marketing

Key Component	IMP Group	Nordic School	Anglo-Australian Approach
Theoretical foundation	Organisational marketing	Service marketing, Interactive network theory	Quality management
Orientation	Interaction approach	Network approach	Integrated model
Basis	Relationship between actors	Service	Service/quality marketing
Duration	Short and long-term	Long-term	Long-term
Market	Multiple, network	30 markets w. 4 categories	6 markets
Organisation		Functional and cross-functional process	Cross-functional, Process-based
Basis of exchange	Offering (product/service), information, financial, and social	Less sensitive to price	Perceived value
Product /quality dimension	Technological	Interaction quality	Function of value and cost of ownership
Measurement	Consumer profitability	Quality, value, loyalty, satisfaction	Consumer satisfaction
Service	Close relations between provider and beneficiary	Integral to offering	Basis for differentiation and competitive advantage
Core process	Continuous stream of interactions	3 core processes: interaction process, dialogue process and value process	Extension of Nordic School - social process of mutual interaction, dialogue and value creation and sharing.
Prominent authors	Håkan Håkansson, Lars-Gunnar Mattsson, Jan Johanson, Peter Turnbull and Luís Araújo	Christian Grönroos and Evert Gummesson	Francis Buttle, Martin Christopher, Adrian Payne and David Ballantyne

(Sources: Aijo (1996); Christopher (1996); Christopher et al. (1991); Ford (1994); Grönroos (1994); Kotler (1992); Ravald and Gummesson (1996); Turnbull et al. (1996); According to Palmer et al. (2005, p. 322). Adapted to this study by the author.)

9.3 Overview of Primary Literature
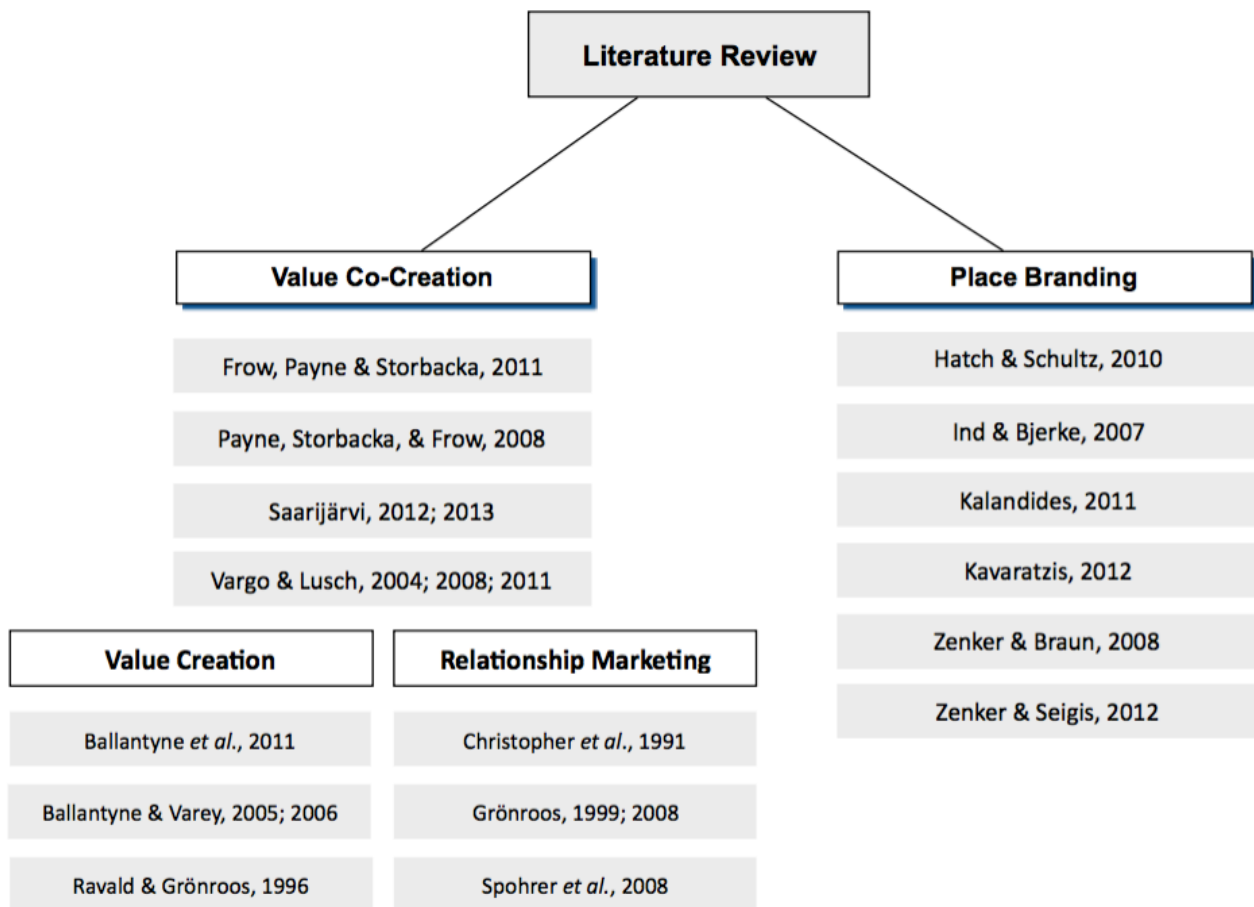
(Source: Author's own illustration)

9.4 Questionnaire

Dear participant,

Welcome! Thank you for agreeing to take part in this questionnaire.

As part of my master's thesis at Copenhagen Business School, I am researching **co-creation in place branding**.

I am interested in your opinion regarding *current* characteristics of co-creation in place branding, elements of co-creation that *can* be applied in place branding, and outcomes that may result from a co-creative approach in place branding.

The questionnaire consists of **seven questions** and may take approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. Your responses will be treated confidentially and used solely for my thesis research. Please complete your responses by **Tuesday, the 22nd of December, 2015.**

I highly appreciate your time in helping me out with this study. If you have any questions concerning the questionnaire or the results of the project, please **contact** me at **shoushan.tavlian@gmail.com**.

Thank you very much for your time and suggestions.

Kind regards,

Shoushan Tavlian

Questionnaire

In the following sections, you will be asked a series of questions along with a clarifying text designed to help you clearly understand each question. If at any time you are unable to answer the question, please feel free to indicate so with "Not applicable."

This study is not focused on a specific place (such as city, region or nation). Therefore, questions refer to a place in general. In your answers, feel free to adapt the questions to a specific place for your convenience.

The following **definition of co-creation** proposed by Frow et al. (2012) is adopted for the purposes of this study: ***A resource integration activity involving the active involvement of at least two 'actors' engaging in interactions, encounters and knowledge sharing, resulting in shared creation of value.***

Question 1. From a place branding perspective, what does co-creation mean for you?

Question 2. **In the table below, you will find 12 types of co-creation which are derived from scientific literature on co-creation. Alongside each of these co-creation types, I have listed an interpretation for the context of place branding.**

In **column A,** you can comment and indicate a level of agreement or disagreement with each statement. Do you find the proposed definition fitting? Would you define/describe the concept differently? Or do you think it is not applicable for place branding? Please feel free to disagree, comment, or propose a different definition.

In **column B,** please give an example of this co-creation type if you see this being practiced in a place *(e.g., an example of how co-pricing is carried out in a place)*.

	Co-Creation Type	Definition for Place Branding	A *(Comments)*	B *(Example)*
1	Co-Conception	An iterative & collaborative process amongst different stakeholders during which necessary actions to launch & execute potential place branding initiatives are conceptualized, planned & analysed through cost, risk, feasibility & resource management to develop the aim, vision & strategy to enable well-informed decisions for initiating the next phases of a project.		

	Co-Creation Type	Definition for Place Branding	A *(Comments)*	B *(Example)*
2	Co-Design	An approach to place brand development that brings together different stakeholders connected to the development of a place through a collaborative process that involves ideating & prototyping place requirements & mapping specifications into the physical form & image representation of a product or service in order to ensure the outcomes meet their needs & are usable.		
3	Co-Production	A joint process involving a set of activities prompted or executed by the active behaviour of stakeholders within a network, intentionally or unintentionally creating place brand value in the form of outputs or outcomes through collaboration & dialogue to integrate mutual resources into value configuration.		
4	Co-Promotion	A collaborative process involving two or more stakeholders performing activities related to communications, advertising, marketing &/or publicity in order to raise place brand awareness, create place brand loyalty, & increase place brand differentiation.		
5	Co-Pricing	A joint process amongst stakeholders to calculate the tangible (financial) and intangible (psychological, cultural, practical & social) value put to a product or service offering or exchange, which is determined by the market conditions of the place, relevant costs & the place consumer's perceived value of the product or service & their willingness to pay.		
6	Co-Distribution	The joint process of making a place brand resource, product &/or service available for use or consumption to the end consumer or user, using direct means or indirect means with stakeholders who act as intermediaries in the delivery process.		
7	Co-Consumption	The joint, reciprocal & iterative processes by place stakeholders performing the action of using, expending, incorporating or transforming a place brand-related value proposition, in which hedonic & non-utilitarian aspects (such as social, emotional, symbolic, & experiential phenomena) may play a role in addition to economic & functional aspects.		
8	Co-Outsourcing	The joint practice of either intentionally or unintentionally transferring and delegating one or more place brand processes, including assets and functions, to an external stakeholder (from public to private), who then owns, manages and administers the selected processes to a jointly agreed standard.		
9	Co-Maintenance	A joint process amongst different stakeholders performing technical, administrative &/or managerial activities during the life cycle of a place product or service, intended to preserve or restore it to a state in which it can perform the required function or combination of functions within the place brand.		
10	Co-Disposal	The joint action of removing, destroying or storing damaged, used or other unwanted place products or services carried out between different place brand stakeholders, either intentionally or unintentionally, who share the responsibility of providing		

	Co-Creation Type	Definition for Place Branding	A *(Comments)*	B *(Example)*
		convenience & ease of disposal in an environmentally sustainable way.		
11	Co-Experience	A joint, reciprocal & iterative process linked to the relationship between a stakeholder & a place brand value proposition, manifested in the form of the stakeholder's physical, cognitive & affective processes arising from the role of the stakeholder in the place brand process & the stakeholder's experiential evaluation of the place product or service proposition.		
12	Co-Meaning Creation	A stakeholder's subjective assessment of a place brand value proposition that generates symbolic & non-utilitarian value in the forms of sense-making, interpretation, & understanding through emotional & psychological associations created through the experience of consuming or using the place brand resource.		

Please list any additional co-creation types you have come across which are not listed in the table above.

Question 3. **Which stakeholders are and should be involved in the co-creation process(es) of a place? Please name the different groups and indicate how strongly they are currently engaged with the marketing activities of the place (High, Medium, Low).**

With this question, I am interested in exploring who the principal influencers in place brand co-creation are. This may be stakeholder already involved with place branding processes or it may be a stakeholder who is currently not being considered in the place branding process but can potentially become involved. By understanding how strongly the actor is engaged with marketing activities in the place will help me determine how much influence the actor will have on the co-creation processes implemented and practiced in a place.

Question 4. **How can co-creation activities be managed in a place?**
With this question, I am interested in discovering what the management of co-creation in a place brand could entail.

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[   ]

Question 5. What / who are the potential facilitators and inhibitors of co-creation in place branding?

[   ]

Question 6. What can be an outcome (or outcomes) of co-creation in place branding?

[   ]

Question 7. Any additional comments?

[   ]

9.5 List of Participating Experts

Andrea Insch	Ms. Insch's research expertise is focused on place-based marketing, with an emphasis on understanding and measuring the ways that place identity can create stakeholder value. Currently she is working on defining and measuring place brand equity in New Zealand's cities and regions and hopes to extend this research to other countries.
Björn P. Jacobsen	Mr. Jacobsen is a Professor in Intercultural and International Management at the Stralsund University of Applied Sciences. He has 20 Years Experience in Local and (Inter-)Regional Economic Development and has publications in the field of Strategic Place Brand Development, Place Brand Equity and Cluster Development.
Gildo Seisdedos	Mr. Seisdedos is specialized in cities, marketing and development, and also holds a law degree. He is the director of the Urban Innovation Club at IE Business School, a project led by the Madrid-based School and Philips and which enjoys the active support of leading Spanish companies in the field of urban services. His most prominent published book is "Managing 21st-century cities".
Martin Boisen	Mr. Boisen is specialized in the marketing and branding of places as instruments for urban and regional governance. As a researcher and lecturer he is involved in the establishment of place branding and place marketing as an academic topic. As an advisor he has been involved in more than 50 projects.
Mihalis Kavaratzis	Mr. Kavaratzis is a Senior Lecturer in Marketing at the University of Leicester - Great Britain; His main interest lie in the theory and practice of city- and regional marketing and, especially, the application of branding within place management. Furthermore, he regularly acts as trainer and adviser on place marketing and place branding programmes.
Raquel Goulart Sztejnberg	Ms. Goulart Sztejnberg is passionate about Branding, Design and Place Branding, she has been involved as a Brand Strategist in more than 70 projects at national and international levels in the last decade. Currently, she is following a Master Degree in Anthropology and Mobility at the Radboud University, Nijmegen.
Robert Govers	Mr. Govers is currently Managing Research Partner at good.country and independent Place Branding advisor, as well as a visiting scholar at the Rotterdam School of Management, IULM University Milano, and several institutes in Dubai. Furthermore, he is co-editor of the Journal of Place Branding and Public Diplomacy.

Questionnaire 1 // Expert B

BUSINESS SCHOOL
HANDELSHØJSKOLEN

Questionnaire

In the following sections, you will be asked a series of questions along with a clarifying text designed to help you clearly understand each question. If at any time you are unable to answer the question, please feel free to indicate so with "Not applicable."

This study is not focused on a specific place (such as city, region or nation). Therefore, questions refer to a place in general. In your answers, feel free to adapt the questions to a specific place for your convenience.

The following definition of co-creation proposed by Frow et al. (2012) is adopted for the purposes of this study: *A resource integration activity involving the active involvement of at least two 'actors' engaging in interactions, encounters and knowledge sharing, resulting in shared creation of value.*

Question 1.   From a place branding perspective, what does co-creation mean for you?

Different groups of individuals (stakeholders?) identify [shared] ways of developing and maintaining the ... of their place. en

Question 2. In the table below, you will find 12 types of co-creation which are derived from scientific literature on co-creation. Alongside each of these co-creation types, I have listed an interpretation for the context of place branding.

In **column A**, you can comment and indicate a level of agreement or disagreement with each statement. Do you find the proposed definition fitting? Would you define/describe the concept differently? Or do you think it is not applicable for place branding? Please feel free to disagree, comment, or propose a different definition.

In **column B**, please give an example of this co-creation type if you see this being practiced in a place (e.g., an example of how co-pricing is carried out in a place).

	Co-Creation Type	Definition for Place Branding	A (Comments)	B (Example)
1	Co-Conception	An iterative & collaborative process amongst different stakeholders during which necessary actions to launch & execute potential place branding initiatives are conceptualized, planned & analysed through cost, risk, feasibility & resource management to develop the aim, vision & strategy to enable well-informed decisions for initiating the next phases of a project.		
2	Co-Design	An approach to place brand development that brings together different stakeholders connected to the development of a place through a collaborative process that involves ideating & prototyping place requirements & mapping specifications into the physical form & image representation of a product or service in order to ensure the outcomes meet their needs & are usable.		
3	Co-Production	A joint process involving a set of activities prompted or executed by the active behaviour of stakeholders within a network, intentionally or unintentionally creating place brand value in the form of outputs or outcomes through collaboration & dialogue to integrate mutual resources into value configuration.		
4	Co-Promotion	A collaborative process involving two or more stakeholders performing activities related to communications, advertising, marketing &/or publicity in order to raise place brand awareness, create place brand loyalty, & increase place brand differentiation.		
5	Co-Pricing	A joint process amongst stakeholders to calculate the tangible (financial) and intangible (psychological, cultural, practical & social) value put to a product or service offering of exchange, which is determined by the market conditions of the place, relevant costs & the place consumer's perceived value of the product or service & their willingness to pay.		
6	Co-Distribution	The joint process of making a place brand resource, product &/or service available for use or consumption to the end consumer or user, using direct means or indirect means with stakeholders who act as intermediaries in the delivery process.		
7	Co-Consumption	The joint, reciprocal & iterative processes by place stakeholders performing the action of using, expending, incorporating or transforming a place brand-related value proposition, in which hedonic & non-utilitarian aspects (such as social, emotional, symbolic, & experiential phenomena) may play a role in addition to economic & functional aspects.	also involves experiencing the place brand virtually or in situ in reality	

	Co-Creation Type	Definition for Place Branding	A (Comments)	B (Example)
8	Co-Outsourcing	The joint practice of either intentionally or unintentionally transferring and delegating one or more place brand processes, including assets and functions, to an external stakeholder (from public to private), who then owns, manages and administers the selected processes to a jointly agreed standard.		
9	Co-Maintenance	A joint process amongst different stakeholders performing technical, administrative &/or managerial activities during the life cycle of a place product or service, intended to preserve or restore it to a state in which it can perform the required function or combination of functions within the place brand.		
10	Co-Disposal	The joint action of removing, destroying or storing damaged, used or other unwanted place products or services carried out between different place brand stakeholders, either intentionally or unintentionally, who share the responsibility of providing convenience & ease of disposal in an environmentally sustainable way.		
11	Co-Experience	A joint, reciprocal & iterative process linked to the relationship between a stakeholder & a place brand value proposition, manifested in the form of the stakeholder's physical, cognitive & affective processes arising from the role of the stakeholder in the place brand process & the stakeholder's experiential evaluation of the place product or service proposition.		
12	Co-Meaning Creation	A stakeholder's subjective assessment of a place brand value proposition that generates symbolic & non-utilitarian value in the forms of sense-making, interpretation, & understanding through emotional & psychological associations created through the experience of consuming or using the place brand resource.	If it's subjective → then difficult to see how co- → maybe shared interpretation is more fitting → or joint	

Please list any additional co-creation types you have come across which are not listed in the table above.

This list above is very thorough and you have developed a solid list of conceptual definitions. It occurs to me that some of these elements are also part of a process where its difficult to separate them so discretely.

Question 3. Which stakeholders are and should be involved in the co-creation process(es) of a place? Please name the different groups and indicate how strongly they are currently engaged with the marketing activities of the place (High, Medium, Low).

With this question, I am interested in exploring who the principal influencers in place brand co-creation are. This may be stakeholder already involved with place branding processes or it may be a stakeholder who is currently not being considered in the place branding process but can potentially become involved. By understanding how strongly the actor is engaged with marketing activities in the place will help me determine how much influence the actor will have on the co-creation processes implemented and practiced in a place.

The answer is context dependent. Different places will demonstrate a range (low, med, high) of stakeholder group involvement at different levels of engagement. It depends.

Question 4. How can co-creation activities be managed in a place?
With this question, I am interested in discovering what the management of co-creation in a place brand could entail.

Having appropriate collaborative governance structures in place (in some countries regions), or more open, grass roots organisations (in others).

Question 5. What / who are the potential facilitators and inhibitors of co-creation in place branding?

- Levels of engagement
- Attitudes to place branding
- Communication, governance structures
- Types of vested interests in the community.

Question 6. What can be an outcome (or outcomes) of co-creation in place branding?

- High levels of engagement with place & place brand.
- Residents / businesses / customers as place brand ambassadors.
- Stronger place brand image / identity.
- + Economic / socio-cultural benefits

Questionnaire 2 // Expert A

In the following sections, you will be asked a series of questions along with a clarifying text designed to help you clearly understand each question. If at any time you are unable to answer the question, please feel free to indicate so with "Not applicable."

This study is not focused on a specific place (such as city, region or nation). Therefore, questions refer to a place in general. In your answers, feel free to adapt the questions to a specific place for your convenience.

The following **definition of co-creation** proposed by Frow et al. (2012) is adopted for the purposes of this study: ***A resource integration activity involving the active involvement of at least two 'actors' engaging in interactions, encounters and knowledge sharing, resulting in shared creation of value.***

Question 1. **From a place branding perspective, what does co-creation mean for you?**

I would rather approach this question from a practical perspective. Co-creation, based on my experience, involves the active participation of place brand stakeholders in shaping / building the identity of a place. Here I would distinguish between two groups of stakeholders: a.) generalists which need to support/back-up the identity forming from a generic perspectives (such as lord mayor's) and specialists which support/back-up specific parts of the place identity. Such specialists need to be included based on the target group (investors, inhabitants, students, …) of the place branding effort.

Specifically co-creation from generalists would involve drafting the framework, the cornerstones of a place identity while the role of the specialists would be more to contribute specific knowledge / direct-setting for the place brand, so they are much more content-focused then the generalists.

Question 2. **In the table below, you will find 12 types of co-creation which are derived from scientific literature on co-creation. Alongside each of these co-creation types, I have listed an interpretation for the context of place branding.**

In **column A,** you can comment and indicate a level of agreement or disagreement with each statement. Do you find the proposed definition fitting? Would you define/describe the concept differently? Or do you think it is not applicable for place branding? Please feel free to disagree, comment, or propose a different definition.

In **column B**, please give an example of this co-creation type if you see this being practiced in a place *(e.g., an example of how co-pricing is carried out in a place)*.

	Co-Creation Type	Definition for Place Branding	A *(Comments)*	B *(Example)*
1	Co-Conception	An iterative & collaborative process amongst different stakeholders during which necessary actions to launch & execute potential place branding initiatives are conceptualized, planned & analysed through cost, risk, feasibility & resource management to develop the aim, vision & strategy to enable well-informed decisions for initiating the next phases of a project.	This is a very comprehensive definition; I would rather like to see it more concise. But I do agree on the content.	I think this is what most place start / aim for and probably this is also what is realized in most cases, although in a number of cases is seems to me an "alibi" rather than a serious cooperative approach.
2	Co-Design	An approach to place brand development that brings together different stakeholders connected to the development of a place through a collaborative process that involves ideating & prototyping place requirements & mapping specifications into the physical form & image representation of a product or service in order to ensure the outcomes meet their needs & are usable.	Again I could agree to this comprehensive definition.	I doubt whether this actually happens since it would require an expert knowledge of the stakeholders involved; this expert knowledge is usually not available, so stakeholders could not really contribute.
3	Co-Production	A joint process involving a set of activities prompted or executed by the active behaviour of stakeholders within a network, intentionally or unintentionally creating place brand value in the form of outputs or outcomes through collaboration & dialogue to integrate mutual resources into value configuration.	I agree and especially like the "unintentionally creating" part since I do not believe that the majority of stakeholders (even if they would) are able to act in a coherent and intentional way.	I believe every stakeholder would co-produce his part; however I do believe that in the vast majority of cases, this is unintentional contribution which makes it hard for place branding professionals to align the different activities.
4	Co-Promotion	A collaborative process involving two or more stakeholders performing activities related to communications, advertising, marketing &/or publicity in order to raise place brand awareness, create place brand loyalty, & increase place brand differentiation.	Good, again I could agree to that.	This is probably the best way to get stakeholders involved and the most likely part they would like to participate in.
5	Co-Pricing	A joint process amongst stakeholders to calculate the tangible (financial) and intangible (psychological, cultural, practical & social) value put to a product or service offering or exchange, which is determined by the market conditions of the place, relevant costs & the place consumer's perceived value of the product or service & their willingness to pay.	Well, I'm a strong advocate of establishing a place brand equity. This should probably be included in the definition.	On a world-wide scale I can count the examples on the finger of one hand where such approaches have been used. And I doubt whether this is of high priority. Unfortunately.
6	Co-Distribution	The joint process of making a place brand resource, product &/or service available for use or consumption to the end consumer or user, using direct means or indirect means with stakeholders who act as intermediaries in the delivery process.	Really I do have a difficulty with this. See example section.	I can not really see who co-distribution is / can be linked to place branding. Sorry.
7	Co-Consumption	The joint, reciprocal & iterative processes by place stakeholders	See comments to point 6.	See comments to point 6.

	Co-Creation Type	Definition for Place Branding	A (Comments)	B (Example)
		performing the action of using, expending, incorporating or transforming a place brand-related value proposition, in which hedonic & non-utilitarian aspects (such as social, emotional, symbolic, & experiential phenomena) may play a role in addition to economic & functional aspects.		
8	Co-Outsourcing	The joint practice of either intentionally or unintentionally transferring and delegating one or more place brand processes, including assets and functions, to an external stakeholder (from public to private), who then owns, manages and administers the selected processes to a jointly agreed standard.	The definition might be comprehensive and correct, however I do not believe it to be applicable in practice.	Usually one organization is charged with executing the place branding activities; so no need to "co" outsource. If activities should be outsourced, then this organization and its governing bodies will do so.
9	Co-Maintenance	A joint process amongst different stakeholders performing technical, administrative &/or managerial activities during the life cycle of a place product or service, intended to preserve or restore it to a state in which it can perform the required function or combination of functions within the place brand.	Could agree to that.	In practice I have seen no real life cycle management of place brands.
10	Co-Disposal	The joint action of removing, destroying or storing damaged, used or other unwanted place products or services carried out between different place brand stakeholders, either intentionally or unintentionally, who share the responsibility of providing convenience & ease of disposal in an environmentally sustainable way.	Could agree to that.	In practice I have not seen the distruction of a brand as a process.
11	Co-Experience	A joint, reciprocal & iterative process linked to the relationship between a stakeholder & a place brand value proposition, manifested in the form of the stakeholder's physical, cognitive & affective processes arising from the role of the stakeholder in the place brand process & the stakeholder's experiential evaluation of the place product or service proposition.	Not applicable to my view.	
12	Co-Meaning Creation	A stakeholder's subjective assessment of a place brand value proposition that generates symbolic & non-utilitarian value in the forms of sense-making, interpretation, & understanding through emotional & psychological associations created through the experience of consuming or using the place brand resource.	Not applicable to my view.	

Please list any additional co-creation types you have come across which are not listed in the table above.

Question 3. Which stakeholders are and should be involved in the co-creation process(es) of a place? Please name the different groups and indicate how strongly they are currently engaged with the marketing activities of the place (High, Medium, Low).

With this question, I am interested in exploring who the principal influencers in place brand co-creation are. This may be stakeholder already involved with place branding processes or it may be a stakeholder who is currently not being considered in the place branding process but can potentially become involved. By understanding how strongly the actor is engaged with marketing activities in the place will help me determine how much influence the actor will have on the co-creation processes implemented and practiced in a place.

Please see my comments to question 1 (generalists / specialists and their roles). I also include an inventory of place branding stakeholders for the City of Lübeck which we did about 10 years ago; Sebastian might help you with interpretation or you can contact me. From the diagram you see that there are by far too many people involved in the process ;-)

Question 4. How can co-creation activities be managed in a place?
With this question, I am interested in discovering what the management of co-creation in a place brand could entail.

I do believe you need a strongly mandated centralized organization. This organization can involve / incorporate the individual partners needed.

Question 5. What / who are the potential facilitators and inhibitors of co-creation in place branding?

See my comments to question 1.

Question 6. What can be an outcome (or outcomes) of co-creation in place branding?

More effective and efficient place brands.

Questionnaire 3 // Expert G

In the following sections, you will be asked a series of questions along with a clarifying text designed to help you clearly understand each question. If at any time you are unable to answer the question, please feel free to indicate so with "Not applicable."

This study is not focused on a specific place (such as city, region or nation). Therefore, questions refer to a place in general. In your answers, feel free to adapt the questions to a specific place for your convenience.

The following **definition of co-creation** proposed by Frow et al. (2012) is adopted for the purposes of this study: ***A resource integration activity involving the active involvement of at least two 'actors' engaging in interactions, encounters and knowledge sharing, resulting in shared creation of value.***

Question 1.   **From a place branding perspective, what does co-creation mean for you?**

I would say it is similar to cobranding: two brands relate each other in an inclusive, synergic way…

Question 2. **In the table below, you will find 12 types of co-creation which are derived from scientific literature on co-creation. Alongside each of these co-creation types, I have listed an interpretation for the context of place branding.**

In **column A,** you can comment and indicate a level of agreement or disagreement with each statement. Do you find the proposed definition fitting? Would you define/describe the concept differently? Or do you think it is not applicable for place branding? Please feel free to disagree, comment, or propose a different definition.

In **column B**, please give an example of this co-creation type if you see this being practiced in a place *(e.g., an example of how co-pricing is carried out in a place)*.

	Co-Creation Type	Definition for Place Branding	A *(Comments)*	B *(Example)*
1	**Co-Conception**	An iterative & collaborative process amongst different stakeholders during which necessary actions to launch & execute potential place branding initiatives are conceptualized, planned & analysed through cost, risk, feasibility & resource management to develop the aim, vision & strategy to enable well-informed decisions for initiating the next phases of a project.	agree	Master plans
2	**Co-Design**	An approach to place brand development that brings together different stakeholders connected to the development of a place through a collaborative process that involves ideating & prototyping place requirements & mapping specifications into the physical form & image representation of a product or service in order to ensure the outcomes meet their needs & are usable.	agree	Participatory processes in urban governance
3	**Co-Production**	A joint process involving a set of activities prompted or executed by the active behaviour of stakeholders within a network, intentionally or unintentionally creating place brand value in the form of outputs or outcomes through collaboration & dialogue to integrate mutual resources into value configuration.	agree	
4	**Co-Promotion**	A collaborative process involving two or more stakeholders performing activities related to communications, advertising, marketing &/or publicity in order to raise place brand awareness, create place brand loyalty, & increase place brand differentiation.	agree	Linking commercial and place brands
5	**Co-Pricing**	A joint process amongst stakeholders to calculate the tangible (financial) and intangible (psychological, cultural, practical & social) value put to a product or service offering or exchange, which is determined by the market conditions of the place, relevant costs & the place consumer's perceived value of the product or service & their willingness to pay.	Not applicable	
6	**Co-Distribution**	The joint process of making a place brand resource, product &/or service available for use or consumption to the end consumer or user, using direct means or indirect means with stakeholders who act as intermediaries in the delivery process.	Not applicable	
7	**Co-Consumption**	The joint, reciprocal & iterative processes by place stakeholders performing the action of using, expending, incorporating or transforming a place brand-related value proposition, in which hedonic & non-utilitarian aspects (such as social, emotional, symbolic, & experiential phenomena) may play a role in addition to economic & functional aspects.	agree	Touristic experiences (mastercard priceless cities style)

	Co-Creation Type	Definition for Place Branding	A (Comments)	B (Example)
8	Co-Outsourcing	The joint practice of either intentionally or unintentionally transferring and delegating one or more place brand processes, including assets and functions, to an external stakeholder (from public to private), who then owns, manages and administers the selected processes to a jointly agreed standard.	Not applicable	
9	Co-Maintenance	A joint process amongst different stakeholders performing technical, administrative &/or managerial activities during the life cycle of a place product or service, intended to preserve or restore it to a state in which it can perform the required function or combination of functions within the place brand.	Not applicable	
10	Co-Disposal	The joint action of removing, destroying or storing damaged, used or other unwanted place products or services carried out between different place brand stakeholders, either intentionally or unintentionally, who share the responsibility of providing convenience & ease of disposal in an environmentally sustainable way.	Not applicable	
11	Co-Experience	A joint, reciprocal & iterative process linked to the relationship between a stakeholder & a place brand value proposition, manifested in the form of the stakeholder's physical, cognitive & affective processes arising from the role of the stakeholder in the place brand process & the stakeholder's experiential evaluation of the place product or service proposition.	agree	
12	Co-Meaning Creation	A stakeholder's subjective assessment of a place brand value proposition that generates symbolic & non-utilitarian value in the forms of sense-making, interpretation, & understanding through emotional & psychological associations created through the experience of consuming or using the place brand resource.	agree	

Please list any additional co-creation types you have come across which are not listed in the table above.

What about cobranding? Isnt it better than co-creation as a term? Isnt co-creatoing a brand cobranding? Licensing could be also an interesting place brand approach?

Question 3. Which stakeholders are and should be involved in the co-creation process(es) of a place? Please name the different groups and indicate how strongly they are currently engaged with the marketing activities of the place (High, Medium, Low).

With this question, I am interested in exploring who the principal influencers in place brand co-creation are. This may be stakeholder already involved with place branding processes or it may be a stakeholder who is currently not being considered in the place branding process but can potentially become involved. By understanding how strongly the actor is engaged with marketing activities in the place will help me determine how much influence the actor will have on the co-creation processes implemented and practiced in a place.

Same than in the place branding proccess

Question 4. How can co-creation activities be managed in a place?
With this question, I am interested in discovering what the management of co-creation in a place brand could entail.

Same as place branding

Question 5. What / who are the potential facilitators and inhibitors of co-creation in place branding?

Good / Bad place governance

Question 6. What can be an outcome (or outcomes) of co-creation in place branding?

A better place brand

Questionnaire 4 // Expert E

In the following sections, you will be asked a series of questions along with a clarifying text designed to help you clearly understand each question. If at any time you are unable to answer the question, please feel free to indicate so with "Not applicable."

This study is not focused on a specific place (such as city, region or nation). Therefore, questions refer to a place in general. In your answers, feel free to adapt the questions to a specific place for your convenience.

The following **definition of co-creation** proposed by Frow et al. (2012) is adopted for the purposes of this study: ***A resource integration activity involving the active involvement of at least two 'actors' engaging in interactions, encounters and knowledge sharing, resulting in shared creation of value.***

Question 1.   From a place branding perspective, what does co-creation mean for you?

It refer to a strategy in which the organization tasked with the brand management of a place aims to work actively and on a equal level of ownership and makership with relevant external stakeholders in the creation of projects, activities, content and/or storylines.

Question 2. **In the table below, you will find 12 types of co-creation which are derived from scientific literature on co-creation. Alongside each of these co-creation types, I have listed an interpretation for the context of place branding.**

In **column A,** you can comment and indicate a level of agreement or disagreement with each statement. Do you find the proposed definition fitting? Would you define/describe the concept differently? Or do you think it is not applicable for place branding? Please feel free to disagree, comment, or propose a different definition.

In **column B,** please give an example of this co-creation type if you see this being practiced in a place *(e.g., an example of how co-pricing is carried out in a place)*.

	Co-Creation Type	Definition for Place Branding	A *(Comments)*	B *(Example)*
1	Co-Conception	An iterative & collaborative process amongst different stakeholders during which necessary actions to launch & execute potential place branding initiatives are conceptualized, planned & analysed through cost, risk, feasibility & resource management to develop the aim, vision & strategy to enable well-informed decisions for initiating the next phases of a project.	It is impossible to imagine a place branding process wherein this doesn't take place. The question is to which extend, where the responsibilities are and what the power-relationship is amongst the co's. To me, the distinction between co-conception and co-design is artificial.	
2	Co-Design	An approach to place brand development that brings together different stakeholders connected to the development of a place through a collaborative process that involves ideating & prototyping place requirements & mapping specifications into the physical form & image representation of a product or service in order to ensure the outcomes meet their needs & are usable.	It is impossible to imagine a place branding process wherein this doesn't take place. The question is to which extend, where the responsibilities are and what the power-relationship is amongst the co's. To me, the distinction between co-conception and co-design is artificial.	
3	Co-Production	A joint process involving a set of activities prompted or executed by the active behaviour of stakeholders within a network, intentionally or unintentionally creating place brand value in the form of outputs or outcomes through collaboration & dialogue to integrate mutual resources into value configuration.	: This should always be part of what an organization tasked with place brand management does. The definition is clear.	
4	Co-Promotion	A collaborative process involving two or more stakeholders performing activities related to communications, advertising, marketing &/or publicity in order to raise place brand awareness, create place brand loyalty, & increase place brand differentiation.	This should always be part of what an organization tasked with place brand management does. I would leave out the "in order to"-part. That unnecessarily confuses the definition.	
5	Co-Pricing	A joint process amongst stakeholders to calculate the tangible (financial) and intangible (psychological, cultural, practical & social) value put to a product or service offering or exchange, which is determined by the market conditions of the place, relevant costs & the place consumer's perceived value of the product or service & their willingness to pay.	: I think this definition is fairly unclear. Are we talking 'co-selling' by any change? Or is this only focused on setting prize-tags together?	
6	Co-Distribution	The joint process of making a place brand resource, product &/or service available for use or consumption to the end consumer or user, using direct means or indirect means with stakeholders who act as intermediaries in the delivery process.	: Fine, but how is this different from distribution, multi-channel distribution etc.?	
7	Co-Consumption	The joint, reciprocal & iterative processes by place stakeholders performing the action of using, expending, incorporating or transforming a place brand-related value proposition, in which hedonic & non-utilitarian aspects (such as social, emotional, symbolic, & experiential phenomena) may play a role in addition to economic & functional aspects.	Unclear. What is meant by 'consumption' here?	

	Co-Creation Type	Definition for Place Branding	A *(Comments)*	B *(Example)*
8	Co-Outsourcing	The joint practice of either intentionally or unintentionally transferring and delegating one or more place brand processes, including assets and functions, to an external stakeholder (from public to private), who then owns, manages and administers the selected processes to a jointly agreed standard.	: If it is not by intention – is it then co-outsourcing? I wouldn't think so. It's not co-buying it appears? What is the vantage point here – this seems to suggest that 'the place' is the vantage point and would therefore only be applicable when more 'places' co-outsource something together? Confused.	: If two governments creates a common place branding organization to manage a common brand – would that fit your definition?
9	Co-Maintenance	A joint process amongst different stakeholders performing technical, administrative &/or managerial activities during the life cycle of a place product or service, intended to preserve or restore it to a state in which it can perform the required function or combination of functions within the place brand.	So if you have a Board with stakeholders your engaged in co-maintenance?	
10	Co-Disposal	The joint action of removing, destroying or storing damaged, used or other unwanted place products or services carried out between different place brand stakeholders, either intentionally or unintentionally, who share the responsibility of providing convenience & ease of disposal in an environmentally sustainable way.	Please ditch this. Doesn't make sense.	
11	Co-Experience	A joint, reciprocal & iterative process linked to the relationship between a stakeholder & a place brand value proposition, manifested in the form of the stakeholder's physical, cognitive & affective processes arising from the role of the stakeholder in the place brand process & the stakeholder's experiential evaluation of the place product or service proposition.	?	
12	Co-Meaning Creation	A stakeholder's subjective assessment of a place brand value proposition that generates symbolic & non-utilitarian value in the forms of sense-making, interpretation, & understanding through emotional & psychological associations created through the experience of consuming or using the place brand resource.	: So storytelling that is created by more than one stakeholder? This is the only way to do it.	

Please list any additional co-creation types you have come across which are not listed in the table above.

Co-selling and Co-buying (although the latter might overlap with co-outsourcing)

Question 3. Which stakeholders are and should be involved in the co-creation process(es) of a place? Please name the different groups and indicate how strongly they are currently engaged with the marketing activities of the place (High, Medium, Low).

With this question, I am interested in exploring who the principal influencers in place brand co-creation are. This may be stakeholder already involved with place branding processes or it may be a stakeholder who is currently not being considered in the place branding process but can potentially become involved. By understanding how strongly the actor is engaged with marketing activities in the place will help me determine how much influence the actor will have on the co-creation processes implemented and practiced in a place.

This completely depends on the situation and context and the scalar level on which we're working. It is about power-relationships, legitimacy and commitment. I therefore cannot answer this question in the way in which you would like me to. No size fits all.

Question 4. How can co-creation activities be managed in a place?
With this question, I am interested in discovering what the management of co-creation in a place brand could entail.

I think this is just part of place brand management in general. Co-creation requires a specific mind-set and organizational set-up to facilitate this. It also requires a clear definition of the different roles and responsibilities of the partners involved. That's it.

Question 5. What / who are the potential facilitators and inhibitors of co-creation in place branding?

Operational – Tactical – The place brand management organization and it's tactical partners
Strategic – The place brand management organization, marketing organisations (if their separate) and governance-partners (mainly government and network organisations).

Question 6. What can be an outcome (or outcomes) of co-creation in place branding?

Everything. More specifically a strategy/organization/project/action/etc. that enjoys more support from stakeholders (because they've been involved) and which is/are less vulnerable to external criticasters and political priority-shifts.

Question 7. Any additional comments?

Disclaimer: I'm always heartbreakingly honest in my feedback and comments to students. Just so you know ;-)

1) There is absolutely **no way** in which this questionnaire could be completed within 20 minutes. :-(

2) A lot of the definitions are written in an unnecessary complex version of the English language. It feels like you either try to mask that you might not be fully aware of the differences between the concepts (which would not be a shame, since I think they overlap and interfere with each other), or that you translate concepts from scholars that have made the common mistake of trying to make their work sound more complicated (and thus more thoughtful) than it actually is. Especially when concerned with place branding – clarity in formulation is an absolute must. Definitions shouldn't be so complicated that they take longer to decipher than to write down.

3) Also, the questions overlap profoundly, which makes it difficult to reply in a concise and precise manner. You need to be more tangible when you ask questions such as these, otherwise you will end up with a lot of information that is not comparable and/or does not really focus on the issues you want each question/answer to be addressed towards.

4) With that said, this is a very interesting topic – and I was wondering to what extend you've included the old ideas of the different steps in the citizens participation ladder in your theoretical framework (Sherry Arnstein)? After all, the co-whatever terminology is nothing more than reframing and emphasizing strategies and processes that are as old as the birth of the second human being :-)

5) As a general comment – I wonder to what extend most of these definitions aren't matter-of-fact-ish to the practice of place branding? They seem inherently implemented in the concept in the first place.

Questionnaire 5 // Expert F

In the following sections, you will be asked a series of questions along with a clarifying text designed to help you clearly understand each question. If at any time you are unable to answer the question, please feel free to indicate so with "Not applicable."

This study is not focused on a specific place (such as city, region or nation). Therefore, questions refer to a place in general. In your answers, feel free to adapt the questions to a specific place for your convenience.

The following **definition of co-creation** proposed by Frow et al. (2012) is adopted for the purposes of this study: ***A resource integration activity involving the active involvement of at least two 'actors' engaging in interactions, encounters and knowledge sharing, resulting in shared creation of value.***

Question 1.   From a place branding perspective, what does co-creation mean for you?

In my view, co-creation has two aspects in a place branding setting. The first aspect is how the place brand is co-created (i.e. the process that allows people to understand the place as a brand and the process that helps them evaluate the brand of a given place) and the second is how this co-creation might be facilitated (i.e. the activities of place managers that aim at facilitating the interaction between people so that they get the chance to co-create the place brand). So the 'resource integration activity' mentioned in the definition is certainly applicable in the latter, i.e. in the management-led activities that aim at supporting and enabling co-creation. However, the 'resource integration' that happens in the first is not necessarily conscious so I am not sure that it can be called an 'activity'. To put it simply, for me co-creation is a term that describes the ways in which people are able to create shared meanings of the place and its brand through their interactions.

Question 2. **In the table below, you will find 12 types of co-creation which are derived from scientific literature on co-creation.**
Alongside each of these co-creation types, I have listed an interpretation for the context of place branding.

In **column A,** you can comment and indicate a level of agreement or disagreement with each statement. Do you find the proposed definition fitting? Would you define/describe the concept differently? Or do you think it is not applicable for place branding? Please feel free to disagree, comment, or propose a different definition.

In **column B**, please give an example of this co-creation type if you see this being practiced in a place *(e.g., an example of how co-pricing is carried out in a place)*.

	Co-Creation Type	Definition for Place Branding	A *(Comments)*	B *(Example)*
1	**Co-Conception**	An iterative & collaborative process amongst different stakeholders during which necessary actions to launch & execute potential place branding initiatives are conceptualized, planned & analysed through cost, risk, feasibility & resource management to develop the aim, vision & strategy to enable well-informed decisions for initiating the next phases of a project.	I agree with the explanation and I think that this is applicable in place branding, although this is a very basic understanding of co-creation.	A lot of the research projects and public consultations that happen within place branding are actually of this nature.
2	**Co-Design**	An approach to place brand development that brings together different stakeholders connected to the development of a place through a collaborative process that involves ideating & prototyping place requirements & mapping specifications into the physical form & image representation of a product or service in order to ensure the outcomes meet their needs & are usable.	I can see the point of this although it sounds less relevant to place branding. It is closer to what urban planners would call 'collaborative planning', which is applicable and certainly good practice but in my view it is again a rather limited understanding of co-creation.	All sorts of consultations about the 'new plans for our square' or 'how to re-develop the riverfront' etc.
3	**Co-Production**	A joint process involving a set of activities prompted or executed by the active behaviour of stakeholders within a network, intentionally or unintentionally creating place brand value in the form of outputs or outcomes through collaboration & dialogue to integrate mutual resources into value configuration.	I'm afraid this explanation is not clear to me and it seems to be drawn from industrial co-production (e.g. as one of the ways to get consumers engaged in New Product Development). In this sense, I would say that it is not really relevant to place branding.	Not sure.
4	**Co-Promotion**	A collaborative process involving two or more stakeholders performing activities related to communications, advertising, marketing &/or publicity in order to raise place brand awareness, create place brand loyalty, & increase place brand differentiation.	This is relevant to place branding and it is practiced. I am not sure that this is something that goes deep into co-creation. It is about 'integrating resources' but the point of co-creation in my view is not about resources but about meaning.	Examples include different places advertising together (e.g. region and city or country and city or two cities), different stakeholders advertising together (e.g. local council and hotels, tourism office and theme parks)
5	**Co-Pricing**	A joint process amongst stakeholders to calculate the tangible (financial) and intangible (psychological, cultural, practical & social) value put to a product or service offering or exchange, which is determined by the market conditions of the place, relevant costs & the place consumer's perceived value of the product or service & their willingness to pay.	I wouldn't think that this is relevant.	
6	**Co-Distribution**	The joint process of making a place brand resource, product &/or service available for use or consumption to the end consumer or user, using direct means or indirect means with stakeholders who act as intermediaries in the delivery process.	Well, this has been the way tourism destination have been selling themselves for years (e.g. through tour-operators etc.). I wouldn't personally call this relevant to place brand co-creation as this is not about shared meanings.	
7	**Co-Consumption**	The joint, reciprocal & iterative processes by place stakeholders	In my view, this is coming to the very heart of what I can place	

Questionnaire - Co-Creation in Place Branding

	Co-Creation Type	Definition for Place Branding	A *(Comments)*	B *(Example)*
		performing the action of using, expending, incorporating or transforming a place brand-related value proposition, in which hedonic & non-utilitarian aspects (such as social, emotional, symbolic, & experiential phenomena) may play a role in addition to economic & functional aspects.	brand co-creation. This is the reason why we are talking about co-creation of the place brand: because we realized these collaborative and co-creational aspects of place consumption. It is precisely this sharing of value propositions and all sorts of economic/functional and hedonistic/emotional aspects of the place and the place experience that is how the place brand is co-created.	
8	Co-Outsourcing	The joint practice of either intentionally or unintentionally transferring and delegating one or more place brand processes, including assets and functions, to an external stakeholder (from public to private), who then owns, manages and administers the selected processes to a jointly agreed standard.	This is too administrative to be part of the essence of co-creation. The co-creation of the meaning of the place brand and the collaboration in certain managerial aspects is not the same thing.	
9	Co-Maintenance	A joint process amongst different stakeholders performing technical, administrative &/or managerial activities during the life cycle of a place product or service, intended to preserve or restore it to a state in which it can perform the required function or combination of functions within the place brand.	I have the same comment as for co-outsourcing.	
10	Co-Disposal	The joint action of removing, destroying or storing damaged, used or other unwanted place products or services carried out between different place brand stakeholders, either intentionally or unintentionally, who share the responsibility of providing convenience & ease of disposal in an environmentally sustainable way.	Not sure how this would apply to place branding.	
11	Co-Experience	A joint, reciprocal & iterative process linked to the relationship between a stakeholder & a place brand value proposition, manifested in the form of the stakeholder's physical, cognitive & affective processes arising from the role of the stakeholder in the place brand process & the stakeholder's experiential evaluation of the place product or service proposition.	I agree with this explanation. Again, this is the heart of it and you will mention that I referred to the term experience in my comment on co-consumption.	
12	Co-Meaning Creation	A stakeholder's subjective assessment of a place brand value proposition that generates symbolic & non-utilitarian value in the forms of sense-making, interpretation, & understanding through emotional & psychological associations created through the experience of consuming or using the place brand resource.	Yes, great! Relevant and the main point!	

Please list any additional co-creation types you have come across which are not listed in the table above.

Question 3. **Which stakeholders are and should be involved in the co-creation process(es) of a place? Please name the different groups and indicate how strongly they are currently engaged with the marketing activities of the place (High, Medium, Low).**

With this question, I am interested in exploring who the principal influencers in place brand co-creation are. This may be stakeholder already involved with place branding processes or it may be a stakeholder who is currently not being considered in the place branding process but can potentially become involved. By understanding how strongly the actor is engaged with marketing activities in the place will help me determine how much influence the actor will have on the co-creation processes implemented and practiced in a place.

It is impossible to list all stakeholders as they also depend on local circumstances. However, an incomplete list would include: Local authorities (High), commercial/retail sector (High), tourism sector (high), education (low), residents (low), transportation providers (medium), national/international authorities (medium).

Question 4. How can co-creation activities be managed in a place?
With this question, I am interested in discovering what the management of co-creation in a place brand could entail.

Co-creation cannot be 'managed (i.e. directed to whatever direction we want) but it can be facilitated. That means that we can plan and execute activities and events that allow people to exchange ideas about the place and its brand. If we create physical and virtual platforms where people can join and share experiences, then we can provide the means for co-creation to happen.

Question 5. What / who are the potential facilitators and inhibitors of co-creation in place branding?

The main thing that does not allow co-creation is the idea that the place brand needs to be created by managers and then people should adopt it or accept it. In this sense, co-creation is a frame of mind rather than the activities. So the main inhibitors are local authorities and non-enlightened politicians and some consultants.

Question 6. What can be an outcome (or outcomes) of co-creation in place branding?

The main positive outcome of place brand co-creation is that people will have a higher sense of brand ownership. They will feel that this is their brand and they will be more engaged with it. It will be 'their brand'. That is the aim of the whole branding effort.

Questionnaire 6 // Expert C

In the following sections, you will be asked a series of questions along with a clarifying text designed to help you clearly understand each question. If at any time you are unable to answer the question, please feel free to indicate so with "Not applicable."

This study is not focused on a specific place (such as city, region or nation). Therefore, questions refer to a place in general. In your answers, feel free to adapt the questions to a specific place for your convenience.

The following **definition of co-creation** proposed by Frow et al. (2012) is adopted for the purposes of this study: ***A resource integration activity involving the active involvement of at least two 'actors' engaging in interactions, encounters and knowledge sharing, resulting in shared creation of value.***

Question 1. **From a place branding perspective, what does co-creation mean for you?**

In short, it would be the involvement of stakeholders in parts of the process to create collective value as empowered co-authors of the place narrative and not just spectators. Benefits of this two-way collaboration are clear: enhancing trust and bonds while increasing the sense of belonging and attachment.

About different stakeholders and levels of engagement, please see the answer for question 3.

I also like the definition in the book Rethinking Place Branding: *"Co-creation involves working with the place brand community to increase place brand equity, in both physical and digital spaces, through co-creation of the brand identity and the experiences associated with the brand"*.

Question 2. **In the table below, you will find 12 types of co-creation which are derived from scientific literature on co-creation.**
Alongside each of these co-creation types, I have listed an interpretation for the context of place branding.

In **column A,** you can comment and indicate a level of agreement or disagreement with each statement. Do you find the proposed definition fitting? Would you define/describe the concept differently? Or do you think it is not applicable for place branding? Please feel free to disagree, comment, or propose a different definition.

In **column B,** please give an example of this co-creation type if you see this being practiced in a place *(e.g., an example of how co-pricing is carried out in a place)*.

	Co-Creation Type	Definition for Place Branding	A *(Comments)*	B *(Example)*
1	Co-Conception	An iterative & collaborative process amongst different stakeholders during which necessary actions to launch & execute potential place branding initiatives are conceptualized, planned & analysed through cost, risk, feasibility & resource management to develop the aim, vision & strategy to enable well-informed decisions for initiating the next phases of a project.	Agree with the definition. Miss something about who's leading all those stakeholders.	case Sudtirol / Alto Adige (http://pt.slideshare.net/Insider/suedtirole-case)
2	Co-Design	An approach to place brand development that brings together different stakeholders connected to the development of a place through a collaborative process that involves ideating & prototyping place requirements & mapping specifications into the physical form & image representation of a product or service in order to ensure the outcomes meet their needs & are usable.	Co-design, in my opinion, can be related also to two different formats involving place identity/branding. The first (my example on the right box) is mapping to design a better form to experience a place; in other words, wayfinding. Second, it can also be the result of a spontaneous private initiative, as in the case of Wow Moscow and its iconic representations of the city.	City ID design company (http://www.city-id.com) - see examples of NY, Bristol and Moscow + website Wow Moscow (http://www.underconsideration.com/brandnew/archives/moscow_embraces_emoticons.php#.VnfVJ9Dt4RY)
3	Co-Production	A joint process involving a set of activities prompted or executed by the active behaviour of stakeholders within a network, intentionally or unintentionally creating place brand value in the form of outputs or outcomes through collaboration & dialogue to integrate mutual resources into value configuration.	In my example private and public spheres joined successfully to reposition the country. Could be also co-conception, but goes beyond it in this case.	video Colombia (https://vimeo.com/49426896)
4	Co-Promotion	A collaborative process involving two or more stakeholders performing activities related to communications, advertising, marketing &/or publicity in order to raise place brand awareness, create place brand loyalty, & increase place brand differentiation.	Why only two or more? Maybe there could be just one...My example involves also co-design (graphic, not product or design experience), so there may be some overlapped situations.	video Porto (https://vimeo.com/107190411)
5	Co-Pricing	A joint process amongst stakeholders to calculate the tangible (financial) and intangible (psychological, cultural, practical & social) value put to a product or service offering or exchange, which is determined by the market conditions of the place, relevant costs & the place consumer's perceived value of the product or service & their willingness to pay.	Which stakeholders? Maybe it should be more specific in the definition. What about heritage? I would need an example to be sure it's feasible in place branding as a collaborative decision and not as a result of private groups' interests...maybe in the case of special guided tours in famous soccer stadiums?	website Maracanã (https://www.maracana.com/site/en)
6	Co-Distribution	The joint process of making a place brand resource, product &/or service available for use or consumption to the end consumer or user, using direct means or indirect means with stakeholders who act as intermediaries in the delivery process.	Here maybe co-design and co-pricing can be intertwined with co-distribution (see example).	film Mokotow (http://monocle.com/film/edits/property-prospectus-mokotow/)

	Co-Creation Type	Definition for Place Branding	A *(Comments)*	B *(Example)*
7	Co-Consumption	The joint, reciprocal & iterative processes by place stakeholders performing the action of using, expending, incorporating or transforming a place brand-related value proposition, in which hedonic & non-utilitarian aspects (such as social, emotional, symbolic, & experiential phenomena) may play a role in addition to economic & functional aspects.	Not very clear how to integrate the notion of 'consumption' with a meaningful and active participation regarding the value proposition of the place. My two examples are very different in format and I'm not sure if the are correctly classifiable under this type of co-creation	film Porta Poznania (https://youtu.be/eS-TepAIQ0k) + website Rio 450 (http://www.rio450anos.com.br/conheca-a-marca/)
8	Co-Outsourcing	The joint practice of either intentionally or unintentionally transferring and delegating one or more place brand processes, including assets and functions, to an external stakeholder (from public to private), who then owns, manages and administers the selected processes to a jointly agreed standard.	Not clear how it could work...I would need an example to contextualize it better.	---
9	Co-Maintenance	A joint process amongst different stakeholders performing technical, administrative &/or managerial activities during the life cycle of a place product or service, intended to preserve or restore it to a state in which it can perform the required function or combination of functions within the place brand.	Maybe a better world could be co-management? Seems to me that it's more than maintaining, but managing, monitoring, tracking, improving, etc.	site IAmsterdam (http://www.iamsterdam.com/en/)
10	Co-Disposal	The joint action of removing, destroying or storing damaged, used or other unwanted place products or services carried out between different place brand stakeholders, either intentionally or unintentionally, who share the responsibility of providing convenience & ease of disposal in an environmentally sustainable way.	Probably there are many more examples in places in the Northern Hemisphere. In my example it is more related to the brand repositioning than a regular process.	news on Costa Rica (http://www.go100percent.org/cms/index.php?id=70&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=34)
11	Co-Experience	A joint, reciprocal & iterative process linked to the relationship between a stakeholder & a place brand value proposition, manifested in the form of the stakeholder's physical, cognitive & affective processes arising from the role of the stakeholder in the place brand process & the stakeholder's experiential evaluation of the place product or service proposition.	The example brings together the experience and experimentation linking two apparently very different cities in different continents. I'm wondering if we have another form of co-creation here...	video Playable city Recife-Bristol (https://vimeo.com/91674946)
12	Co-Meaning Creation	A stakeholder's subjective assessment of a place brand value proposition that generates symbolic & non-utilitarian value in the forms of sense-making, interpretation, & understanding through emotional & psychological associations created through the experience of consuming or using the place brand resource.	The only point a bit unclear is the 'subjective assessment'. What exactly does it mean?	website People make Glasgow (https://peoplemakeglasgow.com)

Please list any additional co-creation types you have come across which are not listed in the table above.

- Co-management, in the case of Place Making initiatives
- Co-design thinking processes to improve place experiences
- Co-upcycling (a step beyond co-disposal)

Question 3. Which stakeholders are and should be involved in the co-creation process(es) of a place? Please name the different groups and indicate how strongly they are currently engaged with the marketing activities of the place (High, Medium, Low).

With this question, I am interested in exploring who the principal influencers in place brand co-creation are. This may be stakeholder already involved with place branding processes or it may be a stakeholder who is currently not being considered in the place branding process but can potentially become involved. By understanding how strongly the actor is engaged with marketing activities in the place will help me determine how much influence the actor will have on the co-creation processes implemented and practiced in a place.

Stakeholders could be understood as residents, tourists, place brand managers, politics, academia, NGO's, and other groups with different levels of engagement towards a location/region/country. I believe that affinity is key to engage some groups, for example residents can directly benefit from a specific outcome of co-creation, while tourists could enjoy maybe a one-time benefit. Think affinity in terms of sense of belonging and attachment. Do people feel they are really part of a system and they have a clear role on the way a place is lived and perceived?

Tourists – low
NGO's – medium
Academia – medium
Investors – medium
Special committees with locals having different backgrounds (journalists, teachers, housekeepers, students, etc.) – medium to high
Place ambassadors – medium to high
Civil society – high
Residents – high
Place brand managers (from different areas not directly related to image and reputation management) – high

> In the case of a region or even a country, maybe other cities (and their managers) could be considered as stakeholders, working together to project the image of the region/country as a hole - collaborating instead of competing. The same for a destination in a city (like a neighborhood), where entrepreneurs could engage to promote the local talents and vocations. In all cases, I would classify the engagement as medium.

Question 4. How can co-creation activities be managed in a place?
With this question, I am interested in discovering what the management of co-creation in a place brand could entail.

Via:
- Regular meetings with stakeholders leaded by place brand managers
- Regular meetings with place brand managers leaded by stakeholders
- Special committees in the case of events
- Online contributions

Question 5. What / who are the potential facilitators and inhibitors of co-creation in place branding?

FACILITATORS
- Cultural agents
- Special events with national or international relevance (like in Olympics of World Soccer Cup)
- Cultural homogeneity and a common heritage with a shared identity – think about Italian traditional cities
- Repositioning projects with clear strategic and operational guidelines
- A strong *genius loci* as a foundation for a unique and competitive place brand narrative.
- Clear understanding of brand, its characteristics and ambitions

INHIBITORS
- Cultural mobility. The question here is who "owns" the place? What about involvement of newcomers, such as refugees? Do they have a 'voice' in co-creating the place?
- Negative experiences (in tourism, for example) or natural disasters caused by lack of management of political interests
- Lack of tracking or measurement of initiatives where public taxpayers' money was used to improve people's life
- Lack of clarity from government regarding their goals
- Lack of continuity between governments
- Lack of credibility
- Different political interests disputing the same projects
- Placelessness (no distinctive features, or copying other places' strategy)
- A focus on marketing and advertising campaigns with seasonal investments than long-term initiatives
- Ignoring spontaneous contributions or perceptions about aspects that should be considered in a co-creation agenda (eg. monitoring social media, protests, etc.).

Question 6. What can be an outcome (or outcomes) of co-creation in place branding?

- Promotional campaigns aligned to the needs of the place
- Consistent communication in different contact points
- Revitalization of public areas
- Thematic events (fashion week, design week)
- Positioning or repositioning of places (Alto Adige)
- Local products gaining national and international exposure (crafts, food, etc.)
- Special events (place anniversary)
- Technical collaborations at national and international levels
- Policies
- Educational projects
- Integration of non locals within local community
- Impacts (positive or negative...) in image and reputation
- Improving the value of immaterial heritage and teaching about it to future generations
- A more sustainable tourism
- Preparing future place brand leaders / fostering leadership skills in different spheres of society

Question 7. **Any additional comments?**

Would love to follow your work and read the thesis!

Questionnaire 7 // Expert D

In the following sections, you will be asked a series of questions along with a clarifying text designed to help you clearly understand each question. If at any time you are unable to answer the question, please feel free to indicate so with "Not applicable."

This study is not focused on a specific place (such as city, region or nation). Therefore, questions refer to a place in general. In your answers, feel free to adapt the questions to a specific place for your convenience.

The following **definition of co-creation** proposed by Frow et al. (2012) is adopted for the purposes of this study: *A resource integration activity involving the active involvement of at least two 'actors' engaging in interactions, encounters and knowledge sharing, resulting in shared creation of value.*

Question 1. **From a place branding perspective, what does co-creation mean for you?**

To create a place-based 'experience environment' by creating an 'experience network' (see Prahalad & Ramaswamy) linking public, private and civil society stakeholders aiming at co-creating substance and symbolic actions (see Anholt's 'Competitive Identity') that build place brand awareness and reputation as strategically intended. The idea of the 'experience environment' allows 'customers' (travelers, international students, investors, business people, migrants, diplomats) to co-create their own 'on-brand' experience, which dramatically enhances social media sharing and hence engagement. Hence, in my book, the link between the concepts of place branding and co-creation is a natural fit.

Question 2. **In the table below, you will find 12 types of co-creation which are derived from scientific literature on co-creation. Alongside each of these co-creation types, I have listed an interpretation for the context of place branding.**

In **column A,** you can comment and indicate a level of agreement or disagreement with each statement. Do you find the proposed definition fitting? Would you define/describe the concept differently? Or do you think it is not applicable for place branding? Please feel free to disagree, comment, or propose a different definition.

In **column B**, please give an example of this co-creation type if you see this being practiced in a place *(e.g., an example of how co-pricing is carried out in a place)*.

	Co-Creation Type	Definition for Place Branding	A *(Comments)*	B *(Example)*
1	**Co-Conception**	An iterative & collaborative process amongst different stakeholders during which necessary actions to launch & execute potential place branding initiatives are conceptualized, planned & analysed through cost, risk, feasibility & resource management to develop the aim, vision & strategy to enable well-informed decisions for initiating the next phases of a project.	Spot on	Any place branding project should include this. The new Oslo strategy is a good example I think
2	**Co-Design**	An approach to place brand development that brings together different stakeholders connected to the development of a place through a collaborative process that involves ideating & prototyping place requirements & mapping specifications into the physical form & image representation of a product or service in order to ensure the outcomes meet their needs & are usable.	Agree	Maybe Eindhoven365 co-design of the visual identity (which in my mind, gets far too much attention, but still is an interesting way they developed it in Eindhoven, by not having local design agencies pitch against each other, but made them collaborate to come up with one joint design)
3	**Co-Production**	A joint process involving a set of activities prompted or executed by the active behaviour of stakeholders within a network, intentionally or unintentionally creating place brand value in the form of outputs or outcomes through collaboration & dialogue to integrate mutual resources into value configuration.	Agree	On-brand events
4	**Co-Promotion**	A collaborative process involving two or more stakeholders performing activities related to communications, advertising, marketing &/or publicity in order to raise place brand awareness, create place brand loyalty, & increase place brand differentiation.	Not sure if this is really co-creation and I'm not convinced that promotion builds brand value	Many examples of places where stakeholders use the same visual design and promotion material, but I'm not convinced this makes a difference
5	**Co-Pricing**	A joint process amongst stakeholders to calculate the tangible (financial) and intangible (psychological, cultural, practical & social) value put to a product or service offering or exchange, which is determined by the market conditions of the place, relevant costs & the place consumer's perceived value of the product or service & their willingness to pay.	Not sure if this is really co-creation and / or relevant to place branding	Dubai has tried this during festivals, in order to make the destination affordable and shed the image of being expensive, but it didn't work as market conditions will always prevail.
6	**Co-Distribution**	The joint process of making a place brand resource, product &/or service available for use or consumption to the end consumer or user, using direct means or indirect means with stakeholders who act as intermediaries in the delivery process.	With online mediation this is becoming increasingly important (e.g. Tripadvisors and AirBnBs of this world)	AirBnB sponsored the brand strategy for the city of Tel Aviv and is starting to create place brand value

	Co-Creation Type	Definition for Place Branding	A *(Comments)*	B *(Example)*
7	Co-Consumption	The joint, reciprocal & iterative processes by place stakeholders performing the action of using, expending, incorporating or transforming a place brand-related value proposition, in which hedonic & non-utilitarian aspects (such as social, emotional, symbolic, & experiential phenomena) may play a role in addition to economic & functional aspects.	Sport on as you will also see from my own definition	See the strategy we created here: http://www.limburgcrossborders.com/ and then one of the implementations here: http://www.visitlimburg.com/no-boundaries/
8	Co-Outsourcing	The joint practice of either intentionally or unintentionally transferring and delegating one or more place brand processes, including assets and functions, to an external stakeholder (from public to private), who then owns, manages and administers the selected processes to a jointly agreed standard.	Yes, happens in most places	Connect Limburg is a good example again.
9	Co-Maintenance	A joint process amongst different stakeholders performing technical, administrative &/or managerial activities during the life cycle of a place product or service, intended to preserve or restore it to a state in which it can perform the required function or combination of functions within the place brand.	Yes, I guess so	Not sure. Getting into a bit too much detail here maybe.
10	Co-Disposal	The joint action of removing, destroying or storing damaged, used or other unwanted place products or services carried out between different place brand stakeholders, either intentionally or unintentionally, who share the responsibility of providing convenience & ease of disposal in an environmentally sustainable way.	Possibly	Revitalization projects?
11	Co-Experience	A joint, reciprocal & iterative process linked to the relationship between a stakeholder & a place brand value proposition, manifested in the form of the stakeholder's physical, cognitive & affective processes arising from the role of the stakeholder in the place brand process & the stakeholder's experiential evaluation of the place product or service proposition.	Co-creation is always co-experience (Prahalad & Ramaswamy)	
12	Co-Meaning Creation	A stakeholder's subjective assessment of a place brand value proposition that generates symbolic & non-utilitarian value in the forms of sense-making, interpretation, & understanding through emotional & psychological associations created through the experience of consuming or using the place brand resource.	That's the essence of place branding co-creation	

Please list any additional co-creation types you have come across which are not listed in the table above.

Question 3. Which stakeholders are and should be involved in the co-creation process(es) of a place? Please name the different groups and indicate how strongly they are currently engaged with the marketing activities of the place (High, Medium, Low).

With this question, I am interested in exploring who the principal influencers in place brand co-creation are. This may be stakeholder already involved with place branding processes or it may be a stakeholder who is currently not being considered in the place branding process but can potentially become involved. By understanding how strongly the actor is engaged with marketing activities in the place will help me determine how much influence the actor will have on the co-creation processes implemented and practiced in a place.

Potentially everyone should be involved and since I am defending the substance and symbolic actions school (as opposed to the marketing and promotion school) stakeholder involvement depends on the specific projects and stage in the brand development.

Question 4. How can co-creation activities be managed in a place?
With this question, I am interested in discovering what the management of co-creation in a place brand could entail.

Stimulated is maybe a better word than managed, as place brand co-creation is hard to control. Usually there is an externalised semi-private public agency that tries to do this; i.e. bring stakeholders together and inspire them to develop on-brand initiatives.

Question 5. What / who are the potential facilitators and inhibitors of co-creation in place branding?

Facilitators: private sector and marketing agencies (tourism/investment/export promotion agencies) that see the need for place brand awareness and reputation
Inhibitors: very often politicians that are short-term oriented.

Question 6. What can be an outcome (or outcomes) of co-creation in place branding?

See my earlier definition: engagement!