

Principles and Foundations of Place Branding and Urban Green Space

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ABSTRACT:

The present study aims to examine the principles and foundations of place branding and urban green space. The research method is descriptive-analytical and is based on library resources. Place branding seeks to discover and create a distinctive identity for a place, differentiating it from other places and providing it with a competitive identity. In fact, place branding represents the re-presentation of a place's identity. City branding is widely used to enhance the credibility and prestige of a city, as well as to improve its position as a selected destination for tourism, trade and investment, residence, and education. Indeed, the purpose of the challenging strategy of branding is to create an identity for the city that develops within the framework of a wide range of conceptual variables, such as history, anthropology, economy, politics, and policies. On the other hand, the existence of urban green infrastructures based on the climate of a place influences the image of the place and the components that enhance its competitive identity. Therefore, by achieving a more accurate and comprehensive understanding of this issue and applying the obtained results, it is possible to increase the capacity for promoting the competitive identity of places and assist them in attaining greater benefits.

Keywords: Place branding, urban green infrastructures, competitive identity of places, place image

INTRODUCTION:

Urban branding is a relatively new science but an old art, and today it is regarded as one of the key tools in the competition among places for achieving a distinguished position in all dimensions of life, especially the economic dimension. Accordingly, places that succeed in establishing a distinctive brand in the realm of global communication are more rapidly and easily recognized by the world's public opinion and can exert greater influence within the global network (Asadi, 2016).

In place branding, the primary objective is to attract internal investment. In fact, place branding seeks to achieve competitive advantage in order to increase internal investment and tourism, achieve social development, strengthen local identity, reinforce citizens' recognition of their city, and mobilize all social forces to prevent social deprivation and unrest (Sebastian, 2017). A clear and coherent place brand helps residents and others understand the personality and identity of the place (Zavattaro, 2015).

The challenging strategy of urban branding aims to create an identity for the city that develops through a wide range of conceptual variables such as history, anthropology, economy, politics, and public policies. A city often possesses identifiable perceptions associated with intrinsic values recognized by its residents. For example, Milan is known for architecture, New York

for diversity and dynamism, and Tokyo for modernity. Urban branding is a strategy that grants a city an unforgettable identity and serves as a tool capable of rapidly conveying the city's core value (Constantinos, 2019).

Furthermore, urban places can achieve a lasting, unique, distinctive, and ultimately competitive identity by focusing on their existing strengths. Through this, they can manage their image and reputation, and be selected on the basis of their features, services, and the image they project by tourists, investors, students, and others as desirable destinations for various activities. Achieving a competitive identity for a place occurs through expanding tourism, exporting goods, art, music, and other cultural products, sports, people, and increasing investment. Strengthening the competitive dimension of place identity can, in fact, create a strong, unique, reputable image for a place, leading to greater economic benefits compared to other locations. A significant part of the process of building competitive identity is ensuring coherence among all its influencing components. When all these elements present a shared, powerful, believable, and compelling narrative about a place, the resulting image will be reputable, renowned, and unique (Stella, 2019).

The term "green infrastructure" has recently been frequently discussed worldwide as an approach in environmental protection and land development. It has gained particular attention in the fields of planning and

development, especially in formulating frameworks and determining certain implementation policies (Sunny, 2018). Green infrastructure is a network of waterways, wetlands, forests, wildlife habitats, green corridors, parks, protected lands, and open spaces that supports native species, preserves natural ecological processes, and maintains water resources and air sustainability, while contributing to public health and quality of life. Numerous studies have shown that urban green infrastructures can serve as a source for enhancing environmental quality, improving public health, providing valuable ecological services, promoting tourism, fostering economic growth, attracting advanced and clean industries, improving urban landscapes, reducing pollution, conserving energy, and playing an effective role in shaping place identity. Given the role and impact that urban green infrastructures have on cities, places, and urban spaces, it becomes evident that the presence of climate-based urban green infrastructures significantly influences place image and the components that enhance a place's competitive identity. Therefore, by achieving a more precise and comprehensive understanding of this issue and applying the resulting findings, it is possible to strengthen the capacity for improving the competitive identity of places and assist them in attaining greater benefits.

Urban Branding:

Kavaratzis argues that branding occurs through the interaction and interplay between the internal and external images of a place. According to this view, the branding process enhances the internal image of a place by influencing its accessible layers, which include functional and psychological data, and through expanding place communication, it enables the strengthening and development of the external image in accordance with the goals, vision, and brand identity of the place (Anholt, 2006).

Creating a brand for a city strengthens its position as a place for residence, business, or tourism. Developing a city brand, following the assessment of its current image, is considered the second or next stage in the urban marketing process. It can also be said that the ultimate goal of urban marketing is to create a brand or reputation for the city (Anholt, 2007: 67). City positioning is the first and most important step in urban branding. The position of a city refers to its exclusive advantages and unique status among other cities of the country or the world. This position shapes the collective memory and narrative of the city, leaving a consistent impression on people's minds. Such impressions motivate people to voluntarily cooperate with urban management in reducing costs, increasing revenues, protecting the environment, and participating in urban affairs. Urban branding also plays a significant role in attracting domestic and international tourists as well as foreign investors for urban development (Zenker, Braun, Peterson, 2017, cited in Dinnie, 2011).

Although creating a city brand may appear to be a modern concept, it actually corresponds to an element

of urban marketing that has existed from the beginning: shaping the image of the city. Urban marketing leads to the reconstruction of urban structures and reputation, and also involves promoting the place. Urban marketing creates greater opportunities for competition among cities; thus, the growing competition has increased the use of marketing methods in attracting tourists, investors, and residents (Rezvanpour, 2017: 125).

A city brand clearly contributes to strengthening the city's regional advantages. In fact, city branding targets both domestic and international markets. For domestic markets, the focus is primarily on developing the brand mark and linking the place to a meaningful identity; international markets, on the other hand, relate to the characteristics and expectations of external audiences (Chan, 2014: 71).

Branding highlights the unique characteristics of a destination or territory. The main goal of place branding is to present a distinctive image of the place, which includes its geography, history, art, music, culture, notable citizens, and other features, and can be used as a method to distinguish it from its competitors (Zhang, 2017: 104).

According to Ashworth (2009), place branding refers to discovering or creating certain distinctions that differentiate one place from another and provide it with a competitive brand value. Ashworth further states that such differentiation is generally achieved through three categories of efforts: association with notable individuals, landmark buildings (urban and local design), and iconic events. The association with individuals occurs when cities link themselves with particular people (often artistic figures) in the hope that the unique characteristics of those individuals will be transferred to the city (Graham, 2013).

The absence of place branding leads to the loss of potential tourists. For a brand to be successful, the needs and expectations of customers must be well understood. By doing so, we can create a degree of integration within the brand strategy and extend it to places with the highest tourism potential, ensuring that the brand remains strongly embedded in the hearts and minds of customers (Chung-Shing, 2018, cited in Kavaratzis, 2006).

Muniz and O'Guinn (Özlem, 2019), based on studies of commercial products, introduced the idea of brand communities, which can likewise be applied to places. This approach to place branding adds a new dimension to earlier conceptualizations of place brands proposed by Hankinson (2003). Social media provides an essential platform for forming these geographic and virtual communities. A city brand rooted in local communities is perceived by the public as more authentic and trustworthy than an official brand.

Vettrige, in emphasizing the brand of a place, refers to the "place brand fashion curve" and argues that a place brand initially enters its fashion phase through early adopters and visitors who, although small in number, strongly influence opinions. Once the place becomes widely known and loses its exclusive and novel appeal, these visitors move on to the next emerging destination,

as they do not wish to be seen in a location that has become mainstream. If a place fails to maintain its attractiveness, it will decline into a state of familiarity meaning that everyone knows about it and it no longer holds any appeal. Such familiarity may ultimately lead the place into a stage of fatigue, making customer attraction extremely difficult (Behzādfar, 2008: 4).

Urban branding is essential for the development of city policies and strategies because, on one hand, it supports economic development, and on the other, it acts as a channel for recognizing the city's identity (Golabkar, 2008: 67).

A city brand cannot be created without the actual existence of a functioning city. Similar to service branding, the internal and external aspects cannot be artificially separated. Moreover, it must be considered that the critical issue is not merely the technical task of "urban brand management," but rather "managing the city through its brand," which functions as a lever of collective awareness and commitment to accelerate social change (Monourian, 2013).

Some aspects of a city brand are inherently extensions of the national brand. One may consider the capital city as the premium product of a country. However, distinctions exist between a city brand and a national brand; each may follow its own trajectory. Regardless of the national brand's performance, the urban brand possesses its own pace and direction. A city brand cannot be viewed merely as a summary or pinnacle of the country's brand characteristics (Rabiei, 2013).

The Necessities of Urban Branding:

A review of studies and research conducted in this field shows that cities, in order to compete effectively and efficiently in attracting financial resources, investment, social capital, tourists, business activity, economic growth, prestige, dignity, greater credibility, and improved quality of life, must strive to create a distinctive and superior urban brand at the regional, national, and international levels. Cities that succeed in establishing a unique brand in the realm of global communications become recognized by the global public more quickly and easily, enabling them to exert greater influence within the global network, benefit more from tourism, business, and investment, and simultaneously attract the attention, respect, and recognition of the world (Zahedi, 2011).

The challenging strategy of urban branding seeks to create an identity for the city that evolves from a broad range of conceptual variables such as history, anthropology, economy, politics, and public policies. A city typically possesses recognizable perceptions or inherent values understood by its residents. For example, Milan is associated with architecture, New York with diversity and dynamism, and Tokyo with modernity. Urban branding is a strategy that provides a city with an unforgettable identity and serves as a tool capable of rapidly conveying the city's core value (Madanipour, 2000).

Urban Green Branding:

Urban green branding is a subset of the broader concept of *place branding*, which elevates the idea of place branding to a more advanced level (Rahimian, 2012). In place-branding processes, the aim is to identify a location's strengths and develop them to shape a positive and consistent image. If the image of a city has been mistakenly formed as negative, place branding seeks to transform that image. Urban green branding is a type of place branding that, through a structured process, introduces the historical, political, and cultural characteristics of a city.

The term "green," when used in a marketing context, encompasses both environmental policies and biophysical dimensions. The policy dimension of green space relates to sustainable urban development and focuses on crises arising from pollution, emphasizing reductions in carbon dioxide and the efficient use of limited resources (Kuan, 2006). The biophysical dimension includes those urban green elements that highlight the crucial and influential role of vegetation cover in enhancing quality of life. Therefore, urban green branding may be pursued with an emphasis on improving environmental characteristics, enhancing the quality of urban life, or focusing on both approaches simultaneously.

Urban Green Branding and the Concept of Sustainability:

The concept of sustainability used in urban green branding is essentially a by-product of the historical, political, and cultural contexts that emerge within a society. By constructing and presenting selected images of local characteristics, green city brands affirm and reconstruct an understanding of local identity for both internal and external audiences. The green city brand functions as an international tool within urban management, aimed at enhancing quality of life, fostering sustainable development, and amplifying positive attributes in these domains, thereby creating competitive advantages for cities.

Efforts made within this framework can contribute to the expansion of urban green spaces while preserving existing values, patterns, and social relations, ultimately supporting economic development and growth.

One of the outcomes of urban green branding is that certain unjust local power structures involved in shaping the image of the city may be marginalized or excluded, while fragmented and incoherent ideas in the process of place image construction are removed (Govers & Go, 2003, cited in Gulsrud, 2015). Furthermore, actions undertaken to achieve urban sustainability can create opportunities to reconstruct urban form and image, while also enabling the development of more equitable and just spaces (Krueger & Gibbs, 2007: 5, cited in Gulsrud, 2015).

The inclusion or exclusion of specific aspects of social identity within green space branding can influence decision-making power and, consequently, the allocation of resources (Govers & Go, 2003, cited in Gulsrud, 2015). In general, the green city approach and

the perspective associated with it function as an agenda-setting tool that shapes political and cultural norms and regulations, potentially producing significant outcomes in the creation and management of urban spaces, particularly urban green spaces (Gulsrud, 2015). Urban green branding for cities emerges from associating one aspect or a combination of green characteristics and elements—such as green spaces,

urban forests, biodiversity, energy, urban agriculture, waste management, and recycling—and transforming them into a competitive advantage for attracting the creative class and visitors to the city (Anholt, 2011).

Table 1: Characteristics of Urban Green Branding
Based on the Urban Brand Model (Source: Chan & Marafa, 2014, p. 7).

Dimensions of Urban Green Branding	Characteristics of an Urban Green Brand
Sustainable Place	Familiarity with the concept of a green city improving quality of life through a green living environment provision of parks and green spaces by urban authorities urban greening policies implemented by city management the role of greening in urban planning initiatives.
City Image and Representation	Pleasant experiences in parks and green spaces presence of trees and green aesthetics in urban areas scenic views from hillsides and surrounding landscapes of the city.
Green Potential	Willingness to pay more for business investments willingness to pay more for employment or job-seeking opportunities willingness to pay more for educational residence increased willingness to engage in tourism activities.
Vitality (Pulse)	Educational experiences in parks and green spaces recreational opportunities across various types of parks and green areas presence of animal species and flowering plants; preservation of old and valuable trees.
Green Citizenship	Citizen support for green initiatives environmentally responsible citizens friendly and socially engaging citizenship behaviors within parks and green spaces.
Green Prerequisites	Overall quality of parks and green spaces quality of park facilities and amenities accessibility of green spaces.

Urban Green Infrastructure as a Guiding Tool for Achieving Urban Green Branding:

With the transformation of cities' roles from producers of labor to providers of knowledge and environmental innovation, complex and extensive structural changes have occurred within urban political structures. One consequence of this transformation has been the shift from urban government to urban governance (Gulsrud, 2015). Within this framework, urban government is understood as the authority responsible for establishing large-scale, top-down regulations and for controlling political rules and standards. In contrast, urban governance is defined as a mechanism that guides the economic and social conditions of society in accordance with the broader objectives outlined in higher-level policies, while simultaneously reducing the direct intervention of governments in such matters (Ge, Q., 2008).

By situating this concept within urban contexts, urban management is defined as a set of coherent and interconnected decisions aimed at organizing and controlling urban affairs. In this sense, a city is understood as a place that initially possesses a spatial identity and, due to its high population density, is composed of a complex infrastructure of diverse social

fabrics, including urban districts, townships, and suburban areas. The acceptance of such changes by city managers and governments has been widely debated and criticized. However, because the structural and administrative division of responsibilities contributes to the development of urban spaces and offers a more effective approach to improving urban management conditions, this transformation has gained considerable support and adoption.

As the structures of urban management and urban governance have undergone transformation and evolved into more participatory and integrated forms of governance, it has become necessary for resources and powers within this framework to be redefined and to take on new roles in decision-making processes. A dominant theme that has emerged in this entrepreneurial mode of urban planning is a deep belief in the power of innovative green profiles to attract investment and talent for implementing sustainable urban development projects an idea strongly emphasized through green city branding campaigns (Hall & 2010).

Urban Green Infrastructure:

The term *green infrastructure*, as an approach, has been frequently discussed in recent years in debates

surrounding land protection and development around the world. However, this term may carry different meanings depending on the context in which it is used (Dinnie, 2011). In this regard, Ian Mell argues that the number of definitions currently proposed for green infrastructure is nearly equal to the number of researchers working in this field. These definitions, offered by organizations or scholars, are often directly related to the specific objectives pursued within the green infrastructure networks they address. For instance, in definitions emphasizing conservation aspects, the focus is placed on ecological goals and biodiversity protection; whereas in the context of planning and development, the green infrastructure perspective is often applied as a framework for plan

Green infrastructure refers to a network of waterways, wetlands, forests, wildlife habitats, green corridors, parks, protected lands, and open spaces that support native species, maintain natural ecological processes, preserve water resources, and contribute to air quality stability. Such networks ultimately enhance public health and improve the quality of life for communities.

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Today, green infrastructure has evolved into an international policy approach in many cities concerned with environmental challenges (Kathleen, 2012). In essence, green infrastructure represents a concept in urban planning and design that is fundamentally based on water networks, drainage systems, their interconnection, and the creation of green spaces within urban areas. Numerous studies have shown that green spaces can serve as a vital resource for improving environmental quality, promoting public health, providing services to valuable ecosystems, and supporting tourism and recreational activities. Green infrastructure is therefore considered an integral component of urban planning and can also be incorporated in an integrated manner with water management studies.

According to the definition provided by the **U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA¹)**, green infrastructure is described as follows: Green infrastructure comprises the natural life-support systems for humans, consisting of interconnected networks of waterways, wetlands, woodlands, wildlife habitats, and other natural areas, as well as greenways, parks, and other protected lands, including farms, rangelands, forests, and additional open spaces. These systems support native species, sustain natural ecological processes, and preserve water and air resources, thereby contributing significantly to improving the health and overall quality of life of communities and human populations.

Placemaking, Urban Design, and Place Branding:

Placemaking refers to the actions undertaken by local governments and other interested stakeholders to invest in places with distinctive cultural characteristics. *Placemaking* and *sense of place* are two closely related concepts, although they are viewed from different perspectives: placemaking concerns the process of creating and shaping a place, whereas the sense of place represents the final outcome of that process.

On the other hand, place marketing encompasses various forms of promoting a place through campaigns, advertisements, guidebooks, and television documentaries—what is commonly referred to as place marketing. The main objective is to present the city to the market through sophisticated strategies that associate it with positive images. Through place marketing over the past several decades, the sense of place has gradually transformed into a valuable cultural asset and an important economic activity.

The Symbolic Construction of a Place's Image:

The symbolic construction of a place's image is typically examined from two distinct perspectives: *insiders* and *outsiders*. For insiders (for example, local residents), the sense of place is shaped through everyday experiences within familiar environments. For outsiders, however, the city's image and sense of place are often vague, abstract, and simplified. Nevertheless, these images are important because they help people generalize and ultimately make decisions—for instance, about their investments, residential choices, or holiday destinations.

Creating positive and attractive images for cities is essentially one of the main reasons for the gradual development of place branding. Within the broader concept of place promotion, we can observe a gradual shift from *place marketing* toward *place branding*. The changes occurring in the field of marketing in recent years—which paved the way for a more accurate understanding of marketing concepts in urban development and planning—have facilitated the evolution of place marketing. The transition from place marketing to place branding has not only been encouraged by the widespread application and success of product branding, but more recently, by the rapid development of corporate branding as well.

Place branding focuses on people's perceptions and mental images, placing them at the core of coordinated activities designed to shape a place and its future. Today, place branding is widely regarded by place managers around the world as a remedy for economic and social challenges and as a potential tool for enhancing the competitiveness of cities and regions.

Creating positive and attractive images has therefore become a fundamental instrument for attracting global flows of investment and people in support of local development. At the same time, rewriting or redefining

¹ . United States Department of Agriculture

the city through branding strategies can stimulate the transformation and management of its physical spaces. In response to competition within the global economy, many places have supported extensive urban regeneration initiatives, which often include the construction or renovation of built elements in order to advance branding objectives and improve urban management.

Since placemaking and branding together clearly express the public face of a city and shape its image for residents and other users, urban design—through the creation of welcoming and attractive places and the development of local destinations that collectively form geographical marketing—has gained significant importance in urban branding. Moreover, because urban development is primarily a private commercial activity (carried out by landowners and developers), public space remains one of the few areas under the control of cities and local authorities where they can directly influence quality and primary use. In this regard, spatial design is crucial both for ensuring the effective flow and distribution of people with diverse purposes (residents, commuters, tourists) and for creating public spaces suitable for gatherings, official events, and the marketing of key urban groups and neighborhoods.

Consequently, the redesign of public squares in many city centers has become a priority within urban renaissance plans, traffic/pedestrianization initiatives, and placemaking strategies. Examples include Trafalgar Square in London, Times Square in New York, Centenary Square in Birmingham, Peace Gardens in Sheffield, and Plein 1992 in Maastricht (Gary, 2018:142). Public spaces are redesigned with the aim of aligning them with the city's brand, thereby enhancing their appeal to potential users and "customers."

Urban branding can be employed as a process for redefining or regenerating the identity of urban spaces. Based on the conceptual framework proposed by Khairfan and Monami, Mihalís argues that the re-creation of a city's identity is shaped through events, activities, spatial performances, and similar place-based expressions that emerge from the city's inherent characteristics and influence the city's identity as much as its citizens do. Cities must therefore possess meaning, authenticity, and clearly defined attributes consistent with these qualities. They should also offer distinctive options in terms of selected activities, diversity, and other experiential dimensions (Natalie, 2015).

Unique Urban Spaces and the Role of Planners in Revealing Their Potential:

There are many unique spaces and districts around the world that, in addition to possessing a stable identity, hold countless distinctive potentials and characteristics. If properly recognized and developed, these places could attract large numbers of tourists from many countries. However, due to the lack of attention from managers, designers, and urban planners, such spaces often continue to appear as ordinary locations.

The primary responsibility of urban planners, managers, and designers is to meet the fundamental functional needs of urban life—living, working, and well-being. These include housing, transportation, healthcare, education, retail centers, other public amenities, and opportunities for social interaction. By fulfilling these essential requirements, they create the conditions necessary for people to perceive and appreciate the unique potentials of the city.

The Relationship Between Place Branding and Urban Green Space:

The objective of urban place branding is to create differentiation between cities and their national and international competitors based on their strengths and competitive advantages. High-quality urban green space is one such strength, as it makes cities more attractive and livable and encourages the inflow of people and investment into urban centers.

One of the common themes in urban branding is the concept of the "green city" or environmentally friendly and sustainable city, which has emerged alongside the growing emphasis on sustainable development. When the term *green* is used in a marketing context, it encompasses both biophysical dimensions and environmental policy dimensions.

The environmental policy dimension addresses issues related to sustainable urban development, including concerns about pollution control, reduction of carbon dioxide emissions, and the consumption of limited natural resources. The biophysical dimension, on the other hand, refers to the presence of green spaces in cities and emphasizes the importance of urban vegetation in ensuring a high quality of life.

Therefore, a "green city" brand may include the following aspects:

- A vision for strengthening environmental governance and policy oversight within the city
- An aspiration to focus on and enhance the city's biophysical qualities
- A combination of both dimensions in order to achieve competitive market advantages

Green Spaces as Integral Components of City Brands:

Green spaces constitute an inseparable part of city brands, functioning as physical, visual, and multifunctional elements within the urban landscape. Increasing vegetative cover and creating new public spaces make cities more vibrant and appealing for businesses, residents, and tourists, and they play a significant role in enhancing quality of life in urban areas. Globally, the natural environment is recognized as a key factor and an essential component in the assessment and ranking of quality of life within cities.

The Role of Local Green Spaces in Urban Branding:

Local green spaces are recognized as factors that attract tourists and businesses, enhance public health and well-being, and reduce crime rates. These findings emphasize that green spaces contribute to social

cohesion and, more broadly, to an improved quality of life. We are entering an era in which urban life is once again being reconnected with the natural world. With the full participation of the civic community, there are virtually no limits to the opportunities for branding cities through green spaces. Unique green spaces often maintain strong connections with local resources and cultural identity, further strengthening their role in place branding.

Opportunities for branding cities through green spaces are expanding alongside people's growing expectations for daily experiences and higher living standards. These opportunities exist alongside ambitious urban environmental goals such as improving air quality, reducing infrastructure costs, decreasing waste production, and increasing access to green spaces. Examples include initiatives such as Copenhagen's ambition to become a carbon-neutral and bicycle-friendly city. Even already developed cities can be revitalized by utilizing existing urban spaces that have long been neglected. Streets, urban walls, rivers, and waterways—often buried beneath networks of highways and extensive hard surfaces—can be rediscovered and transformed, giving cities renewed vitality.

CONCLUSION:

Urban green infrastructure management is a form of environmental management and must evolve into an approach aligned with neoliberal and state-level urban policies. In the process of reorientation toward neoliberal urban governance, increasing emphasis should be placed on developing attractive and healthy urban environments that enhance cities' capacities to cope with the pressures of post-industrial trends within globalization processes (Lieberink, 2006:45, cited in Arts et al., 2006:99, cited in Gulrud, 2015). The management of urban green infrastructure can be understood as the coordinated and integrated steering of decision-making processes involved in the control and management of the physical form and interconnected functional networks of green spaces—ranging from woodlands and parks to community gardens.

Green infrastructure is a landscape planning approach that refers to a physically and functionally interconnected network of green spaces which collectively deliver ecosystem benefits to society (Laforteza & Konijnendijk, 2013, cited in Gulrud, 2015). When the concept of urban green infrastructure is applied within urban contexts, it refers to the integrated management of urban green and blue spaces, as well as environmentally sustainable infrastructures such as bicycle paths, flood-channel management systems, pedestrian routes, and energy-efficient buildings (Mell, 2013:153). One of the essential components of urban green infrastructure is the provision, management, and development of biophysical green resources, including urban parks, urban forests, and open spaces (Arts et al., 2006, cited in Hajer, 1995, cited in Gulrud, 2015). In particular,

green spaces such as forests, parks, and open areas are among the most influential factors enabling cities to address challenges associated with urbanization and climate change, including high temperatures, air pollution, floodwater regulation, and traffic-related noise pollution (Hajer, 1995, cited in Liefferink, 2006, cited in Gulrud, 2015).

On the other hand, urban branding is a relatively new field of study but an old art in practice. Today, it is considered one of the most important tools in the competition among places to achieve a distinguished position in various aspects of life, particularly in the economic sphere. Consequently, places that have succeeded in establishing a distinctive brand within the sphere of global communications are recognized more rapidly and easily by international public opinion and can exert greater influence within the global network (Mohammadi, 2017).

The introduction of the concept of branding into the realm of places can be clearly observed over the past three decades. Since the 1980s, places have increasingly been viewed as arenas of economic competition, attracting attention by presenting distinctive spatial qualities and unique characteristics in areas such as history, culture, art, industry, and nature. In the 1990s, the discussion of branding in relation to tourism was formally introduced at the annual conference of the Travel and Tourism Research Association.

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