

STAGING THE NEW BERLIN

PLACE MARKETING AND
THE POLITICS OF URBAN
REINVENTION POST-1989



CLAIRE COLOMB

ROUTLEDGE

STAGING THE NEW BERLIN

This book explores the politics of place marketing and the process of ‘urban reinvention’ in Berlin between 1989 and 2011. In the context of the dramatic socio-economic restructuring processes, changes in urban governance and physical transformation of the city following the Fall of the Wall, the ‘new’ Berlin was not only being built physically, but *staged* for visitors and Berliners and marketed to the world through events and image campaigns which featured the iconic architecture of large-scale urban redevelopment sites. Public–private partnerships were set up specifically to market the ‘new Berlin’ to potential investors, tourists, Germans and the Berliners themselves. The book analyzes the images of the city and the narrative of urban change, which were produced over two decades. In the 1990s three key sites were turned into icons of the ‘new Berlin’: the new Potsdamer Platz, the new government quarter, and the redeveloped historical core of the Friedrichstadt. Eventually, the entire inner city was ‘staged’ through a series of events which turned construction sites into tourist attractions. New sites and spaces gradually became part of the 2000s place marketing imagery and narrative, as urban leaders sought to promote the ‘creative city’. By combining urban political economy and cultural approaches from the disciplines of urban politics, geography, sociology and planning, the book contributes to a better understanding of the interplay between the symbolic ‘politics of representation’ through place marketing and the politics of urban development and place making in contemporary urban governance.

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Reinvention Post-1989

Claire Colomb

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Glossary of English and German Acronyms and Abbreviations

AEG	<i>Allgemeine Elektrizitäts-Gesellschaft</i> (General Electricity Company)
AL	<i>Alternative Liste</i> (Alternative List)
Amefra	<i>Ausstellungs-, Messe- und Fremdenverkehrsamt der Stadt Berlin</i> (Exhibitions, Trade Fair and Tourism Bureau of the City of Berlin)
AOK	<i>Anti-Olympia-Komitee</i> (Anti-Olympics Committee)
AvB	<i>Abgeordnetenhaus von Berlin</i> (Berlin House of Representatives)
BAO	<i>Berlin Absatzorganisation</i> (Berlin Marketing Service)
BBI	Berlin-Brandenburg International (new airport due to open in 2012)
BIC	Berlin Information Centre
BLEG	<i>Berlin Landesentwicklungsgesellschaft</i> (Berlin Land Development Company)
BMVBW	<i>Bundesministerium für Verkehr, Bau- und Wohnungswesen</i> (German Federal Ministry for Transport, Building and Housing, 1998–2009)
BTM	<i>Berlin Tourismus Marketing</i> (since January 2011 <i>Berlin Tourismus & Kongress</i> or <i>visitBerlin</i>)
Bü90	<i>Bündnis 90</i> (Alliance 90)
BUND	<i>Bund für Umwelt und Naturschutz Deutschland</i> (German League for the Environment and Nature Protection)
BWB	<i>Berlin-Werbung Berolina</i> (Berlin Advertising Berolina)
CDA	critical discourse analysis
CDU	<i>Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands</i> (Christian Democratic Party of Germany)
CEO	chief executive officer
COMECON	Council for Mutual Economic Assistance
CPE	cultural political economy
DA	discourse analysis
DEWAG	<i>Deutsche Werbe- und Anzeigengesellschaft</i> (German Promotion and Advertising Company)
DM	<i>Deutschmark</i>
DSK	<i>Deutsche Stadt- und Grundstückentwicklungsgesellschaft</i> (German Urban and Property Development Company)
EU	European Union
eV	<i>eingetragener Verein</i> (registered association)
FDI	foreign direct investment
FDP	<i>Freie Demokratische Partei</i> (Free Democratic Party)
FIFA	Fédération Internationale de Football Association
FNP	<i>Flächennutzungsplan</i> (land use plan)
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
GDP	gross domestic product
GDR	German Democratic Republic

GmbH	<i>Gesellschaft mit beschränkter Haftung</i> (limited liability company)
GNP	gross national product
HWK	<i>Handwerkskammer</i> (Chamber of Skilled Crafts and Small Businesses)
IBA	<i>Internationale Bauausstellung</i> (International Building Exhibition)
IBB	<i>Investitionsbank Berlin</i> (Investment Bank Berlin)
ICT	information and communication technologies
IHK	<i>Industrie- und Handelskammer</i> (Chamber of Commerce and Industry)
IOC	International Olympic Committee
IWF	<i>Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung</i> (Institute for Economic Research)
KOAI	<i>Koordinierungsausschuß für innerstädtische Investitionen</i> (Coordination Committee for Inner-city Investments)
LDP	<i>Liberal-Demokratische Partei</i> (Liberal-Democratic Party)
NGO	non-governmental organization
NSDAP	<i>Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei</i> (National Socialist German Workers' Party)
NUTS	nomenclature des unités territoriales statistiques (nomenclature of territorial units for statistics used by the European Union)
PDS	<i>Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus</i> (Party of Democratic Socialism until 2005, then renamed <i>Die Linkspartei</i> (The Left Party). Since 2007 <i>Die Linke</i> (The Left))
PfB	<i>Partner für Berlin, Gesellschaft für Hauptstadtmarketing</i> (Partners for Berlin, Company for Capital City Marketing)
PPS	purchasing power standards
PR	public relations
SED	<i>Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands</i> (Socialist Unity Party of Germany)
SenBau	<i>Senatsverwaltung für Bau- und Wohnungswesen</i> (Senate Department for Building and Housing. In 1999 it was integrated into SenStadt).
SenFin	<i>Senatsverwaltung für Finanzen</i> (Senate Department for Finance)
SenInn	<i>Senatsverwaltung für Inneres</i> (Senate Department for Internal Affairs)
SenStadt	<i>Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung</i> (Senate Department for Urban Development, which changed names several times since 1991 and included, variously, Environment, Technology and Transport)
SenWi	<i>Senatsverwaltung für Wirtschaft</i> (Senate Department for Economics, which changed names several times since 1991 and included, variously, Employment, Women, Energy and Technology)
SME	small and medium-sized enterprise
SPD	<i>Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands</i> (Social Democratic Party of Germany)
TMB	<i>Tourismus Marketing Brandenburg</i> (Tourism Marketing Brandenburg)
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
US(A)	United States (of America)
VIP	very important person
WFB	<i>Wirtschaftsförderung Berlin</i> (Berlin Company for Economic Promotion)
ZAB	<i>ZukunftsAgentur Brandenburg</i> (Economic promotion agency of the Land of Brandenburg)

Chapter 1

Introduction: the Reinvention of the ‘New’ Berlin Post-1989

Of most cities people have a sort of image in their head; an image of what the city looks like through a collection of icons. Berlin does not have such an image. One cannot go to the central market place, or the grand palace, to look for its identity. The city is not beautiful, but presents itself more as a challenge. It pushes its visitors to explore it and ever again it confronts them with new and different perspectives, always postponing the moment where one gets a grip of it. Berlin is clumsily unfinished. Its appearances do not reveal its different meanings. (Cupers and Miessen, 2002, p. 58)

After the Fall of the Wall and the reunification of the city in 1989, a decade of intense and rapid urban development began in Berlin. In the mid-1990s visitors to the city’s central areas were welcomed by an endless landscape of cranes and construction sites: around Potsdamer Platz, alongside the river Spree where the new seat of the German government was being built, around the old historical core of the Friedrichstadt. The scale and amount of redevelopment was, by European standards, striking. Omnipresent were the noise, the dust, the bustle and rustle of construction activity, the intriguing presence of large water pipes running up and down streets to drain the water away from the construction sites of a city built on sand and swamps. Equally striking was the highly visible presence of images and texts surrounding the construction sites: billboards featuring pictures of the architecture of the new developments under construction, a red information centre built on stilts displaying three-dimensional visualizations of the future Potsdamer Platz, exhibitions with large-scale models of the city, posters advertising guided tours of the construction sites, or observation platforms inviting the passer-by to peer into the construction process (figure 1.1).

The emerging landscape of the new Berlin under construction was not only being physically built, it was also *staged* for visitors and Berliners and marketed to the world through city marketing events and campaigns which featured the iconic architecture of large-scale urban redevelopment sites. Public-private partnerships were set up specifically to market the new Berlin to different target groups – potential investors, tourists and the Berliners themselves. Throughout the 1990s and early 2000s, a complex network of public and private actors were involved



Figure 1.1. Watching the construction process at Potsdamer Platz from the viewing platform of the INFOBOX, Leipziger Platz (5 July 1996). (Source: Landesarchiv Berlin/Edmund Kasperski)

in practices of place marketing for Berlin, producing images of, and a discourse on, the city, urban change and place identity. The production of a new material built environment in reunified Berlin was accompanied by the ‘social construction of a particular image and meaning’ (Lehrer, 2002, p. 61). This formed part of the political responses to the enormous challenges unleashed by the Fall of the Wall and subsequent reunification of the city: the loss of the political ‘status of exception’, the retrieved status as capital city, intense economic restructuring, deep social and demographic transformation.

More than a decade later, in the spring of 2007, a headline displayed on the promotional TV screen of a Berlin underground carriage captured my attention: ‘Berlin turned into a brand. Wanted: a new slogan for the city’. This headline was intriguing. It seemed to ignore the fact that during the previous fifteen years, a plethora of activities of place marketing, slogan making, image production and architectural staging of all kinds had taken place in Berlin. Did that mean that those activities were deemed to have failed? That they had become irrelevant? Or that they needed a new, fresh orientation? Why did it still matter for Berlin’s political leaders to search for a new image, a new slogan, a new ‘brand’ nearly twenty years after the Fall of the Wall and the reunification of the city? A glimpse at the local newspapers on the following day revealed that the then Mayor of Berlin had decided to launch a call for ideas for a new city marketing campaign.

Why has so much organized effort been put into the representation, visualization, communication, staging and marketing of urban change in post-Wall Berlin? By whom, for what audiences, and with what types of messages? Why do specific urban actors have ‘a collective interest in constructing meaning’ for particular localities (Le Galès, 1998, p. 502)? These initial questions formed the starting point of a decade of investigation into the urban transformation of Berlin after the Fall of the Wall, analyzed through the prism of place marketing practices and what I refer to as the politics of ‘reimaging’ the city. Place marketing refers to

the various ways in which public and private agencies – local authorities and local entrepreneurs, often working collaboratively – strive to ‘sell’ the image of a particular geographically-defined

place, usually a town or city, so as to make it attractive to economic enterprises, to tourists and even to inhabitants of that place. (Philo and Kearns, 1993, p. 3)

Over the past thirty years urban governments around the world have increasingly invested in place marketing strategies as a response to the perceived heightened inter-city competition in a globalized economy, as discussed in Chapter 2. Practices of 'imaging' form a central component of such strategies. Urban policy-makers, in cooperation with other actors, have produced an increasing amount of public discourse about their city, largely based on urban images and representations of urban development conveyed through various media. This is influenced in part by the spread of new information and communication technologies and by the increasing importance of visual representation strategies in our image-saturated societies.

While cities as 'collective actors' have been producing more public discourse and imagery about themselves, urban researchers (e.g. human geographers, architectural and cultural theorists, urban sociologists and planning scholars) have increasingly focused their attention on 'discourses' and 'representations' as part of a discursive and visual turn in urban studies. These two related shifts – in practice and research – form the contextual background of this book. The book aims to contribute to a central issue in urban studies which is discussed in depth in Chapter 2: the relationship between 'symbolic' and 'material' politics in contemporary urban governance and urban planning.

In Berlin, the place marketing practices analyzed in this book are uneasily categorized, oscillating between traditional economic promotion, public relations and political communication. These activities should be read within the wider debates, which took place over more than a decade, on what the urbanism of the new Berlin should be about and what it should look like. Such debates were omnipresent in the city's physical and virtual public sphere: in the numerous planning and architectural exhibitions displayed in public buildings or private art galleries, in the public debates between built environment experts and politicians, in the daily articles of the press reporting planning and architectural controversies... The planning and physical production of a new built environment was shaped and accompanied by an incredible variety of discourses on the city and spatial images of the city, produced by politicians, planners, architects, the media, citizens' groups, academics, city marketers... Alternative visions of the future of Berlin were debated, and communicated, through words, 'maps, models of the city, virtual-reality simulations, newspaper articles, planning codes, architectural sketches, and even tourism practices' (Till, 2003, p. 51) (figure 1.2).

Place marketing activities have thus formed part and parcel of the politics of urban development, i.e. the public debates, controversies, power struggles and political decisions made with regard to what gets built, where, by whom and for which uses and users (Strom, 2001). This politics of urban development has taken place in the context of dramatic changes in the political, economic and



Figure 1.2. Helmut Jahn (architect) and Volker Hassemer (director of the city marketing organization *Partner für Berlin*) explain the architecture, planning and construction of the new Potsdamer Platz at a press conference in the Sony Centre (15 July 1998). (Source: Landesarchiv Berlin/Barbara Esch-Marowski)

social structures of the city post-1989. But in a country undergoing a process of transition between two political regimes, in a city haunted by ghosts and remnants of its troubled past, the politics of urban development is also closely related to the politics of collective identity (re)construction: ‘alongside the new, gleaming corporate headquarters and government centers, Europe’s largest building site [was] also the scene of the post-unification construction of German history and identity – ethically, politically, and ... rhetorically’ (Jarosinski, 2002, p. 62). Within this process of identity construction, the *spatial* expression of conflicting and contested narratives has been highly visible (Neill, 2004, p. 10). Since 1989, intense debates and struggles as to which memories and symbols are to be preserved or destroyed in the urban landscape of the city have been taking place in Berlin (Ladd, 1997; Delanty and Jones, 2002; Till, 2005). Such struggles are not new: in Berlin the desired representations of the German nation have ‘continuously been materialized in space through planning and architecture, staged and performed, and re-shaped as a new political regime would emerge’ (Till, 2005, p. 39). Berlin’s landscape is, in that sense, uniquely politicized:

Each proposal for construction, demolition, preservation or renovation ignites a battle over symbols of Berlin and of Germany. None of the pieces of the new Berlin will present an unambiguous statement about Berlin’s tradition or meaning, but most will nevertheless be attacked for doing so. Berlin faces the impossible task of reconciling the parochial and the cosmopolitan, expressions of pride and humility, the demand to look forward and the appeal never to forget. (Ladd, 1997, p. 235)

Scholars from various disciplines have explored, on the one hand, the use of the built environment in the political agendas of successive German regimes in a historical perspective, and on the other, the links between urban form, collective memory and national identity construction in the context of contemporary Berlin. The city ‘has become something like a prism through which we can focus issues of

contemporary urbanism and architecture, national identity and statehood, historical memory and forgetting' (Huysen, 2003, p. 49). Place marketing practices, through their framing of the city's past, their staging of the present and their projected visualizations of particular urban futures, play a role in the construction process of collective identity and memory. The politics of image production and place marketing is consequently a politics of identity (Broudehoux, 2004, p. 27), because of the specific use (and reconfiguration) of culture and history involved. There is an abundant literature on the urban transformation of Berlin post-1989 in both English and German; yet apart from a number of contributions by historians, little published work has addressed the politics of image making and the staging of the built environment through place marketing. The aim of the book is thus to explore the relationships between place marketing, the politics of urban development and the spatial politics of identity and memory construction in reunified Berlin – 'the interplay between the physical stuff of planners and architects and the social experience and outlooks of image makers and their audiences' (Bass Warner and Vale, 2001, p. xiii).

What Can We Learn from Berlin?

If Berlin was a particularly notable example of the ideal-typical state socialist city, it is now rapidly converting into what many would see as an ideal-typical version of an advanced capitalist city. (Harloe, 1996, p. 20)

Berlin in the early 1990s was too much in flux, too *sui generis* to fit neatly into existing theories of urban political economy, or to offer ready comparison to other cities for the benefit of theory building. (Strom, 2001, p. 1)

The question of the uniqueness or representativeness of Berlin has to be addressed from the outset: is Berlin a unique, atypical or extreme case, or can it be considered representative of urban processes and trends witnessed in other cities in Europe and elsewhere? Can we learn anything from Berlin which may contribute to theoretical developments in urban research? Single case studies are commonly criticized, in social sciences, for not being conducive to the possibility of generalization, despite the fact that formal generalization is only one amongst different methods of scientific enquiry through which people can gain and accumulate knowledge (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Nowhere does it hold truer than in the field of urban studies, where the key challenge for researchers is to 'balance the peculiarities of place with an understanding of the generalizability of the processes observed' (Latham, 2006a, p. 88). If the objective is to achieve the greatest possible amount of information on a given phenomenon – e.g. the role of place marketing and the politics of imaging in contemporary urban governance – then the choice of 'atypical' or 'extreme' cases is appropriate, as they 'they activate more actors and more basic mechanisms in the situation studied' (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 229).

Berlin after reunification can, in some way, be considered an ‘atypical’ or ‘extreme’ case according to Flyvbjerg’s terminology: atypical because of its specific, peculiar history as a divided city in a divided country; extreme because of the intensity of the urban restructuring processes which unfolded over a short period of time post-1989. The acceleration of history represented by the Fall of the Wall and the sudden absorption of East Germany into a capitalist democracy has brutally confronted the city with the economic, social and political challenges faced by other Western cities over several decades. A closer look at Berlin in the 1990s and 2000s is a particularly illuminating exercise for urban scholarship, ‘as it offers an excellent laboratory in which to study the central question of urban political economy: who, or what, determines the course of urban development’ (Strom, 2001, pp. 1–2)?

It is precisely because of the atypical and extreme situation of the city that a flurry of practices of place marketing and urban imaging emerged with a *visibility* and *intensity* rarely witnessed in other (European) cities, as part of the transformation of urban governance in reunified Berlin. In order to support the city’s transformation into an invoked ‘European metropolis’, local policy-makers had to break with the negative images associated with the city’s tormented past, reinvent and transmit a new image of the city to three main target groups: potential tourists, visitors and investors; Germans throughout the Federal Republic; and the Berliners themselves. The atypical and extreme situation of reunified Berlin has consequently acted as a ‘magnifier’ which makes the city a particularly salient case for making a contribution to theoretical debates on the relationship between ‘symbolic’ and ‘material’ politics in contemporary urban governance.

In contrast to the argument which sees Berlin as an ‘extreme’ or ‘atypical’ case, however, many contemporary urban researchers have argued that since the Fall of the Wall, ‘normal history’ has returned to Berlin (Latham, 2006a). Some have talked about the city going through a process of ‘urban Euroconvergence’ (Campbell, 1999, p. 179) or a process of ‘normalization’ characterized by the spread of trends witnessed in other North American and European metropolitan areas, such as gentrification or suburbanization (Cochrane and Passmore, 2001; Brenner, 2002). After the formation of a ‘Grand Coalition’ of Conservatives and Social Democrats in early 1991, Berlin’s urban politics were often characterized as having switched to an entrepreneurial (or more recently, neoliberal) pattern of urban governance (an argument further discussed in Chapter 2) typified by a search for economic competitiveness on the global stage. This raises the question whether from ‘being a curious, if occasionally instructive, singular case, Berlin has again become a place capable of being seen as offering urban theorists useful insights into how all cities might be developing’ (Latham, 2006a, p. 89). Does the Berlin trajectory simply confirm the global diffusion of trends witnessed in other cities? Or can Berlin be conceptualized as one of the ‘paradigmatic cities’ which have shaped the development of urban theory,¹ a city ‘that displays more clearly than other cities the fundamental features and trends of the wider urban system’ and serves as a model and laboratory of analysis (Nijman, 2000, p. 135)? For reasons which

will be discussed further in Chapter 2 and throughout the book, post-Wall Berlin cannot be argued to be a 'paradigmatic city' as defined by Nijman. Even though it exhibits some trends present in other cities, it has too many historical specificities and is not ahead of its time, as it remained relatively isolated from global economic restructuring processes for forty years. This book nonetheless argues that post-Wall Berlin is a fascinating laboratory of urban change which illustrates – albeit not in a paradigmatic way – several (partly interrelated) processes: the transition to a united city after a history of conflict and division; the transition to a capital city in a nation redefining its national identity; the transition from a socialist to a capitalist city; and the transition from an industrial to a post-industrial or post-Fordist metropolis. These transition processes are not unique to Berlin and have exhibited common features across the cities which have experienced them. Yet each process has displayed distinct local variations in particular urban contexts.

Approach and Structure of the Book

This book explores the politics of place marketing and the process of urban reinvention through image production in Berlin between 1989 and 2011. It does not aim to evaluate, or measure, the efficacy and efficiency of Berlin's place marketing measures in attracting firms, visitors or new residents. It is concerned with the role which place marketing and the politics of reimagining have played within the transformation of urban governance in post-1989 Berlin, more specifically their relationship with the politics of urban development and identity construction. The book gives a detailed account of the practices of place marketing, imaging and staging of the city which emerged in Berlin following the Fall of the Wall by investigating the network of actors and institutions involved, their policy agenda, the audiences they target, the variety of instruments through which representations of 'place' have been shaped (e.g. image campaigns and large-scale events or 'urban stagings'), and the evolution of place marketing strategies over time in line with the changing political, economic and social situation of the city. The analysis focuses more specifically on the images of the city and the narrative of urban change which were produced through place marketing practices. The analysis of urban image construction is not performed as an end in itself, but is used 'as a medium through which to understand the deep transformations' (Broudehoux, 2004, p. 18) that are affecting Berlin. Urban image construction is seen 'as an objective and productive social force, with real material effects, playing an integral role in shaping modern forms of production, consumption, and the collective "dreamscape"' (Greenberg, 2008, p. 20), as further discussed in Chapter 2.

The historical period covered in the book runs from 1989 to 2011, and is based on several extended periods of fieldwork conducted by the author in Berlin between 1999 and 2011. The primary data sources comprised *textual sources* (official publications by the Berlin Senate, proceedings of the debates in the Berlin House of Representatives, published brochures and internal documents of Berlin's place

marketing organizations, press articles from the local media, websites from the institutions and organizations under scrutiny²); *visual materials* (images from city marketing advertisements and brochures, author's photographs of specific sites, installations, exhibitions and events); and *oral materials* (semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders involved or expert in the politics of urban development and place marketing in Berlin, listed in Appendix 1). All the quotations from German sources were translated into English by the author. For reasons of accuracy, however, some concepts and expressions were retained in German, in particular the name of specific institutions, programmes or policies and the motto or title of particular marketing campaigns and events (see Glossary on pp. ix–x).

The structure of the book combines a *chronological* narrative of the development of the politics of place marketing in post-1989 Berlin, a *thematic* analysis of the content of the marketing discourse, and a *geographical* focus on the key sites, landmarks and spaces which have been at the core of the marketing imagery. The chronological narrative is broadly structured alongside three main phases which in the politics of place marketing and urban reinvention were identified by the author (table 1.1).

The emergence of place marketing practices in the context of the changing economy and urban governance of North American and European cities over the past 40 years is introduced in Chapter 2. The chapter then discusses the ways in which practices of place marketing have been investigated in urban studies

Table 1.1. Major phases in the politics of place marketing and urban reinvention in Berlin (1989–2011).

<i>Major Phases in the Politics of Place Marketing</i>	<i>Sub-Phases</i>	
<i>1989–1994</i>		
The challenges of the post-unification era: economic boom, metropolitan ambitions and disenchantment. <i>Chapters 4 and 5</i>	1989–1990 1991–1993 1993–1994	The 'era of possible futures'. Marketing Berlin as Olympic City. Constructing the organizational setting for place marketing.
<i>1994–2001</i>		
The golden years of city marketing: constructing and reimagining 'The New Berlin'. <i>Chapters 5, 6 and 7</i>	1993–1996 1996–2001	Experimenting with the first large-scale image campaigns. <i>Das Neue Berlin</i> as meta-narrative: marketing the 'global' service metropolis and the national capital; staging the urbanism of the 'European city'.
<i>2001–2011</i>		
'Poor, but sexy': marketing the 'creative city' in an era of financial crisis. <i>Chapter 8</i>	2000–2004 2004–2011 2008–2011	Dealing with the consequences of an acute financial crisis. Pushing the 'discursive urban frontier': marketing the 'creative city', its spaces and people. ' <i>be Berlin</i> ': involving Berliners in the search for a new 'brand'.

(Source: Author)

(i.e. critical human geography, urban sociology, urban politics and planning studies). Particular emphasis is put on the scholarly works which have combined urban political economy and cultural semiotic approaches. The analytical and methodological framework used in the book is then introduced. Place marketing is conceptualized as a threefold phenomenon: a field of *public policy* producing *discourse* on the city relying on visual representations (*imagery*) of the urban.

Chapter 3 offers a brief historical overview of how Berlin was advertised and promoted to the world throughout the twentieth century until 1989. This historical excursus is crucial to an understanding of post-1989 developments, as continuities and breaks with the past are discussed in subsequent chapters. Chapter 4 analyzes the first phase of the politics of place marketing and urban reinvention in reunified Berlin. Following a discussion of the political, economic, social and cultural challenges which arose from the Fall of the Wall it introduces the debates about the 'possible futures' of the city which unfolded in the years 1989–1990. The arrival into power of a 'Grand Coalition' of Social and Christian Democrats at the beginning of 1991 marked a crucial turning point in Berlin's urban politics and a shift towards the search for attractiveness on the global stage. This was translated into a bid for the hosting of the 2000 Olympic Games which mobilized a large number of actors during the years 1991–1993. Although the bid failed, the organizations and strategies devised during its inception formed the basis for the subsequent formalization of an organizational framework for place marketing in Berlin. Chapter 5 presents the network of public and private actors involved in marketing and reimagining Berlin during the 1990s, a period referred to as the 'golden years of city marketing' characterized by intensive and highly visible activities of image production. The chapter discusses the structure and the role of the organizations specifically set up to market the new Berlin, explores the multiple target audiences of place marketing and analyzes the instruments and media used by marketing organizations to achieve their goals.

Chapters 6 and 7 analyze the dominant narratives which formed the core of the discourse on the new Berlin produced by place marketing actors in the 1990s, and the ways in which such narratives have relied on a small number of key landmarks and sites turned into visual symbols and icons for the new Berlin: the new Potsdamer Platz, the new government quarter, and the heavily redeveloped historical core of the Friedrichstadt (or Neue Mitte). These sites have been discursively and visually constructed as symbolic spaces, meaning that they have been given a prominent role in the external and internal representations of the city in association with a specific set of meanings, messages and urban values construed by city marketers as desirable for the city as a whole. The meaning associated with the representations of each of these sites corresponds to three dimensions of the new Berlin as marketed by Berlin's governing coalition and place marketing agencies: the new service metropolis aspiring to global status; the transparent democracy of the new Berlin Republic; and the retrieved urbanism and urbanity of the traditional 'European city'. Eventually the city as a whole was 'staged' to the

world through a series of events turning construction sites into tourist attractions and the city into a giant open air exhibition. This ‘staging of urbanism’, and its relationship with the debates on the planning of the new Berlin and the symbolic search for communicative planning practices, is analyzed in Chapter 7.

Chapter 8 discusses the third phase in the politics of place marketing in post-1989 Berlin – a phase which started in 2001 with a change of governing coalition following a major political scandal which revealed the acute nature of the financial crisis of the city. The new ‘Red-Red’ coalition continued to prioritize place marketing and reimagining policies but implemented various changes in their organizational framework and orientations. Particular attention is paid, in particular, to the turn towards the marketing of the so-called ‘creative city’, and the ways in which this turn has led to the gradual incorporation of new urban spaces and new types of people into the narrative and imagery of place marketing.

Place marketing activities in post-1989 Berlin have not been unchallenged. There is a potential for conflicts and struggles arising from the process of discursive and visual reconstruction of the city through place marketing practices, because the production of meaning is also power (Marcuse, 1998). Chapter 9 analyzes the critical voices which have contested, questioned and subverted place marketing practices after 1989: voices from within the political institutions (in particular from opposition parties in the Berlin House of Representatives), voices from citizens’ initiatives and local organizations which have explicitly attempted to promote ‘their’ image and vision of Berlin to an external audience, voices from urban social movements which have mobilized against particular forms of urban restructuring, and voices from artists who have copied, mocked or subverted the marketers’ techniques and images.

Chapter 10 returns to the central issue addressed in the book: the relation between symbolic practices of representation and imaging and the material politics of urban development in contemporary urban governance, and the ways in which researchers can investigate the interplay between the two by combining urban political economy and cultural semiotic approaches.

Notes

1. Chicago, for example, was presented as emblematic of the processes of urbanization of the 1920s and 1930s, whilst Los Angeles in the 1980s and 1990s was seen as paradigmatic of the role of the city in contemporary US capitalism.
2. Unless otherwise specified, all the URL links referred to in the book were last accessed on 1 June 2011.

Chapter 2

Understanding the Politics of Place Marketing and Urban Imaging

To a greater extent than ever before, places no longer simply *have images*; they are continually *being imaged* (and reimaged), often in ways that are highly self-conscious and highly contentious. (Bass Warner and Vale, 2001, p. xv)

Changing the image of a locality is ... seen as a central component of entrepreneurial urban governance and, as such, it is perhaps best to consider the entrepreneurial city as an imaginary city, constituted through a plethora of images and representations. (Hubbard and Hall, 1998, p. 7)

Spatial images are the dream of society. Wherever the hieroglyphs of any spatial image are deciphered, there the basis of reality represents itself. (Kracauer quoted in Frisby, 2001, p. 152)

To understand the rationale for the emergence of contemporary place marketing practices, the chapter first outlines the structural economic changes and shifts in urban governance which have characterized North American and West European cities since the 1970s. The so-called new 'entrepreneurial' urban politics has involved the development of strategies of physical and symbolic 'reimaging' of cities. The production of urban images, of advertising and communication about the city has become a field of public policy in its own right, with dedicated budgets, organizations and experts. In parallel, researchers have increasingly focused their analysis on the role of representations, discourses and images of urban change as part of the 'cultural', 'discursive' and 'visual' turns in social sciences. In the second part of the chapter, the ways in which practices of place marketing have been investigated in urban studies (i.e. human geography, urban sociology, urban politics and planning studies) are then analyzed. In the third part of the chapter, I propose an analytical and methodological framework for the study of place marketing which combines urban political economy and cultural semiotic approaches. This framework is based on a three-fold conceptualization of place marketing as 'public policy', 'discourse' and 'imagery'.

From Baltimore to Berlin: Urban Boosterism, City Marketing and Place Branding in the Post-Fordist Era

The Transformation of Urban Governance in an Era of (Perceived) Inter-City Competition

The production of a promotional discourse about the city by specific local actors, and its dissemination to an internal and external audience for political and economic purposes, is not a new phenomenon. Contemporary place marketing echoes historical practices such as the promotion of sites of pilgrimage through the ‘books of praise’ in the Middle Ages (Beinart, 2001). Modern practices of place promotion, however, emerged in the nineteenth century as part of the process of industrialization and capitalist urbanization (Briggs, 1993; Ward, 1998*b*). In the United States, practices of ‘urban’ or ‘civic boosterism’ – the selling of the ‘Western frontier’ by railway companies, entrepreneurs and chambers of commerce – formed an integral part of the history of American urbanization (Ward, 1998*b*; Greenberg, 2008). Such practices intensified in the twentieth century as businesses and investors used relocation strategies from one city (or one state) to another as a way of pressuring for more beneficial tax regimes (Goodman, 1979). By contrast, in Western Europe, early forms of place promotion were initially limited to the promotion of new types of settlement such as seaside resorts or new residential suburbs (Briggs, 1993; Ward, 1998*a*, 1998*b*), or to the advertisement of tourism destinations as a response to the increasing mobility of the industrial bourgeoisie (see Chapter 3).

The structural economic changes which have affected Western industrialized economies since the 1970s have transformed the nature and intensity of place promotion practices. Rapid developments in transport and telecommunication technologies have facilitated instantaneous communication and the cheaper and faster movement of goods and people. Liberalization policies have loosened controls on the mobility of capital; financial markets have become increasingly interconnected and multinational corporations have expanded their activities at the global scale. In the European Union, the process of political and economic integration has led to a weakening of the capacity of nation-states to regulate economic flows. This intensification of globalization processes was accompanied by structural changes in the economies of North American and West European nations, which faced large-scale deindustrialization (in part due to delocalization strategies) and a significant growth of the service and knowledge-based industries.

The combination of these global, European and national processes is argued to have caused an intensification of competition between regions and cities, which are now ‘more directly dependent on firms for jobs, taxes, and development’ (Le Galès, 2002, p. 202). The ‘cities in competition’ hypothesis was criticized by several authors (see, *inter alia*, Cox and Mair, 1991; Cox, 1993, 1995; Lovering, 1995; Budd and Edwards, 1997; Jessop, 1998; McGuirk *et al.*, 1998), who questioned whether cities can be ‘units’ of competition, and if so, which aspects of cities’ economy,

physical and social fabric actually compete with each other. This debate cannot be done justice here: what matters is that the majority of local political and economic decision-makers think that cities do, and have to, compete, and so formulate and orientate their strategies, policies and activities accordingly. Competition has become ‘part of the logic of action of cities and regions’ (Le Galès, 1998, p. 502), and ‘success in competition’ has gradually imposed itself as ‘the legitimizing principle of public policy: it is made to seem a natural, unavoidable constraint’ (Le Galès, 2002, p. 203). The policy narrative of urban competitiveness used by urban decision-makers to justify particular policies (see p. 29) is thus in itself an absolutely central element in the construction of ‘cities’ as units of economic competition and as objects of place marketing (as will be explored in the Berlin case):

Localities, cities and regions are not necessarily objects in their own right (except in the purely administrative sense) but are rather part of spatially-grounded social processes of production and consumption, with meanings which are contested rather than inherent or given. Places are therefore not necessarily competitive: it is only a *specific political packaging of the concept of place* which makes them seen to be so (Sadler, 1993, p. 191, author’s emphasis).

The structural economic changes referred to above, subsumed under the label of a shift to ‘post-Fordism’ (Amin, 1994), have been accompanied by a transformation of the role and politics of sub-national territories, in particular cities (Mayer, 1991, 1994, 1995; Bagnasco and Le Galès, 2000; Le Galès, 1998, 2002). North American and European local governments have, to varying extents, displayed signs of a shift towards more ‘entrepreneurial’ patterns of urban governance. The term ‘urban entrepreneurialism’, which was first coined by Harvey (1989), encompasses two key features. First, local governments have shifted the core focus of their intervention from the provision of public goods and services and the amelioration of local conditions (what Harvey refers to as ‘urban managerialism’) to outward-orientated policies designed to attract mobile investment, tourists or new residents (Hubbard and Hall, 1998). Second, an organizational and institutional shift from ‘urban government’ to ‘urban governance’ has taken place, characterized by (i) new forms of co-operation between the public, private and non-profit sectors for the delivery of urban services and infrastructure, and (ii) the increasingly pervasive influence of private business management practices ‘as a model for the ways in which city governments and other actors should behave’ (Cochrane, 2007, p. 97).

One of the most visible manifestations of the shift towards more entrepreneurial governance patterns in US cities was the transformation of old practices of ‘civic boosterism’ from the 1970s onwards. Baltimore and New York are often regarded as pioneers in a process of urban reconversion via intensive strategies of place marketing associated with flagship redevelopment projects and municipal government restructuring (Harvey, 1990; Greenberg, 2008). As deindustrialization, inner city decline and fiscal crises intensified, coalitions of local politicians, public officials, economic development agencies and business elites turned to coordinated,

capital-intensive campaigns of place marketing, place ‘branding’ (Greenberg, 2000) or ‘strategic image management’ (Kotler *et al.*, 1993) to transform and sell their cities as post-industrial centres for services, leisure and consumption. Greenberg argued, in the New York case, that the rise to prominence of such strategies was explained by the fact that they were ‘cheaper’ for the public purse than more interventionist forms of economic development through public investments in infrastructure: ‘tourism and marketing were ways to make a “fast buck”, requiring little expenditure, political debate, or legislation up front’ (2008, p. 220).

This shift was facilitated by the emergence of new media technologies and by the professionalization of marketing and advertising. In the 1970s the application of marketing principles was gradually extended from private firms to public and non-profit organizations, giving rise to ‘political’, ‘social’, and later ‘place’ marketing. The notion of place marketing is based on the assumption that the ‘city’ (or any other territorial unit) can be compared to an organization in charge of satisfying the needs of particular customers and target groups, and/or to a commodity which can be packaged, marketed and sold (Kotler *et al.*, 1993, 1999; Corsico, 1994; Krantz and Schätzl, 1997). A new breed of ‘business location consultants’, ‘destination branding managers’ or ‘place marketers’ began to advise urban leaders about ‘appropriate’ locational factors and strategies to increase a city’s attractiveness.

By the end of the 1980s, place marketing practices of the kind developed in the US context had been adopted in West European cities, under the impulse of various institutions and organized interests: the public administration, chambers of commerce, business or retailers’ associations, specialized consultants and dedicated city marketing agencies created *ex-novo*. The adoption of such practices has been witnessed irrespective of the political colour of the local government: ‘to the left, the entrepreneurial approach proposes a way of asserting local co-operation, promoting the identity of place and strengthening municipal pride; for the right, it can be seen to support ideas of neo-liberalism, promotion of enterprise and belief in the virtues of the private sector’ (Hubbard and Hall, 1998, p. 6).

In Germany, the economic and fiscal stress faced by municipalities due to rising unemployment and low growth, as well as the deregulation policies imposed by the Federal government (Schmidt, 1994; Heinz, 1994), pushed urban decision-makers to shift the main focus of local policies from regulating towards attracting or creating growth (Häußermann and Siebel, 1994). The notion of *Stadtmarketing* (city marketing) started to enjoy wide popularity amongst municipal governments in the late 1980s. By the mid-1990s, 60 per cent of German cities had explicit strategies of city marketing (Grabow and Hollbach-Grömig, 1998), which were prepared by specialized consultants or dedicated city marketing organizations, as has been the case in Berlin (Chapter 5). This trend was accompanied by an explosion of practice-orientated academic publications and guidelines on city marketing inspired by ‘new public management’ as well as ‘communicative planning’ theory (Helbrecht, 1994; Grabow and Hollbach-Grömig, 1998; Birk *et al.*, 2006).¹

Within urban political economy² the shifts in urban governance referred to

above have been conceptualized in relation to the changing dynamics of advanced capitalism. This was first done within the framework of neo-Marxist regulation theory (e.g. Jessop, 1990, 1994, 1995), and more recently through analyses of the processes of neoliberalization, restructuring and rescaling of the state (Smith, 1996, 2002; Brenner and Theodore, 2002a, 2002b; Brenner, 2004; Jessop, 2002; Peck and Tickell, 2002). Neoliberalization, based on the belief that markets are optimal mechanisms for economic development, combines two processes: ‘the (partial) destruction of extant institutional arrangements and political compromises through market-oriented reform initiatives; and the (tendentious) creation of a new infrastructure for market-oriented economic growth, commodification, and the rule of capital’ (Brenner and Theodore, 2002b, p. 362).³ In this process, cities:

have become increasingly important geographical targets and institutional laboratories for a variety of neoliberal policy experiments, from place-marketing, enterprise and empowerment zones, local tax abatements, urban development corporations, public-private partnerships, and new forms of local boosterism to workfare policies, property-redevelopment schemes, business-incubator projects, new strategies of social control, policing, and surveillance, and a host of other institutional modifications within the local and regional state apparatus (*Ibid.*, p. 368).

The notions of ‘entrepreneurial’ and later, of ‘neoliberal’ urban governance, first coined in the North American context, have been increasingly used to describe the transformation of local politics in European cities.⁴ Yet in the European context, shifts in urban governance have not wiped away the role played by the local state in the provision of welfare, redistributive policies and the search for social cohesion (Le Galès, 1998). There has not been ‘a linear transition from a generic model of the “welfare city” towards a new model of the “neoliberal city”’, rather a ‘contested, trial-and-error searching process in which neoliberal strategies are being mobilized in place-specific forms and combinations in order to confront some of the many regulatory problems that have afflicted advanced capitalist cities during the post-1970s period’ (Brenner and Theodore, 2002b, p. 375). Three particular factors partly limit (but do not invalidate) the application of the concepts of ‘urban entrepreneurialism’ and ‘neoliberalism’ to European cities. First, there exists a diversity of trajectories of transformation of urban governance in Europe, because there are important geographical variations in institutional frameworks, the regulatory and steering capacity of the (local and national) state in relation to urban economic development, the functioning of land and property markets, and the relationships between the local state, business communities and civic society (Pierre, 1999; Hall, 2001; Brenner and Theodore, 2002b). Second, within a particular city, there are always tensions between different agendas for urban development. This has been the case in Berlin, where there were major disagreements within and outside the city’s political institutions about the urban development trajectory to be privileged after 1989 (see Chapters 4 and 9). The city, in that sense, cannot be conceived as ‘a uniformly active and monolithic agent’ (McGuirk *et al.*, 1998, p.

117): it is a site of struggles and contention over what type of urban development model should be prioritized. Third, as Jessop pointed out, urban leaders have often carried out ‘weak’ strategies of urban entrepreneurialism, which may limit the validity of the ‘entrepreneurial’ label to describe the transformation of urban governance in particular locales.⁵

For those reasons, from the mid-1990s onwards a distinctive field of European research on urban governance has developed (Le Galès, 1995, 1998, 2002; Bagnasco and Le Galès, 2000; Newman and Thornley, 1996; Kazepov, 2005), which has emphasized the path-dependent diversity of transformation processes in the governance of European cities. Interestingly, as Berlin became a popular object of attention in urban studies, a debate emerged about the appropriateness of using an ‘Anglo-American meta-narrative of neo-liberal urban governance’ for the analysis of Berlin’s post-1989 transformations (Marcuse, 1998; Campbell, 1999; Häußermann, 1999; Latham, 2006a, 2006b, Cochrane, 2006a). For Latham (2006a, 2006b), work on the urban dynamics of Berlin post-1989 published in English-language journals has been characterized by the uncritical application of an ‘Anglo-American consensus’ about urban restructuring processes. This, in his view, is problematic:

By starting with a set of questions framed in terms of the concerns of Anglo-American urban studies we end up with accounts of Berlin which ... miss many of the more interesting and exceptional phenomena which are shaping Berlin. They fail to convey the distinctiveness of many of the debates around urban development, regulation (of all sorts), and how these debates are often structured through patterns of thinking which are quite alien to Anglo-American urban practice. And they miss – or in fact simply discount – the quite different intellectual and political traditions through which Berlin is shaped (Latham, 2006a, p. 377).

While Latham’s notion of an ‘Anglo-American consensus’ in urban studies may be too generalizing, his argument nonetheless has heuristic value in encouraging researchers to reflect about their use of conceptual and analytical frameworks developed in an Anglo-American context for the study of cities geographically located outside this context (see also Kunzmann, 2004). Describing a city as entrepreneurial can be problematic ‘in that it makes a leap from being a single concept – a transition in urban governance – to a master narrative capable of accounting for the whole set of changes going on in that discursively constructed place’ (McNeil, 1998, p. 242). In Berlin, while there have been patterns in local politics and policies which have signalled a shift towards more entrepreneurial and neoliberal forms of local governance, there are also strong local factors which have hindered the emergence of a stable ‘entrepreneurial urban regime’ on the US model (Strom, 2001; Halpern and Häußermann, 2003). Local politics in Berlin has not been ‘immune from the pressures of neo-liberalism’ (Cochrane, 2006a, p. 371), but not all developments witnessed in the city can be subsumed under this label. Research by German scholars has shown that the urban dynamics of

Berlin are ‘in all sorts of ways distinctive’ (Latham, 2006a, p. 91) and much of the expert and academic debate surrounding Berlin’s urban development remains ‘anchored in distinctively German intellectual traditions’ (*Ibid.*). This is why the research underpinning this book drew extensively from German primary sources, German-language academic research and interviews with local practitioners and scholars.

The book investigates ‘the ways in which the new Berlin has been shaped in practice – in the context of neo-liberalism but not defined by it’ (Cochrane, 2006a, p. 371). It is thus positioned within a stream of European scholarship which puts particular emphasis on the path dependency of urban restructuring processes. While place marketing practices in Berlin were inspired by similar practices elsewhere in the world, these practices were also shaped by, and sought to respond to, very Berlin-specific issues, which will be addressed in depth in subsequent chapters: how to deal with the presence of historical ghosts, with the legacy of a divided city, with the visual impacts of a city centre turned into a giant construction site, with the lingering mental divide between two populations socialized in two opposed political-economic systems.

Place Marketing in Practice

Place marketing activities have taken different forms in different places and have evolved over time (for an overview see Ward, 1998a; Short and Kim, 1998; Kavaratzis, 2007). The most common activities carried out under the broad label of place marketing are those of ‘place selling’, i.e. communicating particular characteristics of a place with the help of logos, slogans, advertising campaigns or public relations exercises. More recently the term ‘place branding’ became increasingly popular in the practice-oriented literature, referring to a process of ‘forging of associations’ between a place and some desirable qualities which resonate with particular target audiences (Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2005). This ‘forging of associations’ can be achieved through physical interventions in the city’s landscape as well as communication measures which select particular aspects of local ‘identity’, ‘history’ and ‘culture’. This is, by essence, ‘a highly selective process that imposes single-stranded images onto urban diversity and reduces place identity to a constricted and easily packaged “urban product”’ (Broudehoux, 2004, p. 26). In the professional and academic literature the two terms of place marketing and branding are often used interchangeably. In Berlin, the terms used by public officials, place marketing professionals and the media after 1989 were *Stadtmarketing* or *Hauptstadtmarketing*, i.e. (capital) city marketing.

The production and diffusion of *images* is an absolutely central component of place marketing, which led Bass Warner and Vale (2001, p. xv) to propose a definition of place marketing centred on ‘imaging’, i.e. ‘the process of constructing visually based narratives about the potential of places ... a process of brokering the best metaphor, in ways that will shift or consolidate public sensibilities and

invent the possibility for new kinds of place attachments'. Practices or 'imaging', or 'reimaging', can be defined as 'the deliberate (re)presentation and (re)configuration of a city's image to accrue economic, cultural and political capital' (Smith, 2005, p. 399). Such practices are based on the assumption that people's attitudes towards a city – be they potential tourists, investors or residents – are influenced by the visual representations, depictions and descriptions of that place conveyed through various media (Short and Kim, 1998), and not solely by their personal experience of a place. Lynch's seminal text *The Image of the City* (1960) analyzed the process of construction of 'mental maps' and 'images' through the direct, individual experience of a city. Lynch's ideas, however, did not address:

the multiple other ways that citizens learn about place, especially – though not exclusively – about places that are more distant from the precincts of their own direct experience. More often than not, evocation of a neighbourhood or city name yields not a mental blank spot but a clearly imaged stereotype about a never-visited place, based entirely on what has been seen and heard through various forms of media. (Bass Warner and Vale, 2001, p. xvi)

The image of the city can thus be defined, in a simple way, as having two components:

the *physical* image of the city – the actual city itself, as it is produced, lived and experienced by people on an everyday basis and represented in a series of visual symbols, physical places, and social characteristics – as well as the *rhetorical* image of the city – the 'idea' or conceptual image of the city as it is imagined and represented in collective consciousness. (Broudehox, 2004, p. 26)

Urban policy-makers (and other actors) seek to 'shape' urban images not only through transformations of the built environment, but also through the production of particular textual and visual representations disseminated via various media (Holcomb, 2001; Broudehox, 2004; Kavartzis and Ashworth, 2005; Kavartzis, 2007). This process is rooted in psychological and sociological assumptions about the influence of *images* and *symbols* on individual or corporate behaviour: a positive image can encourage an individual to travel to a place or a firm to locate in one city rather than another. The sociology of tourism has shown that few visitors come to a place because of its 'unmediated attractions'; rather, tourist attractions need to be socially constructed, packaged and advertised. A place is turned into a 'destination' through the production of 'markers' attached to particular sites (MacCanell, 1999) and their dissemination through a complex 'political economy of showing' (Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, 1998, p. 1). This is even more necessary in a city like Berlin where war destruction, political division and planning policies have 'left the city without many of its historical places, buildings and infrastructures', creating the need for a communicative 'enactment' of 'sights and sites' (Fariás, 2008, p. 26). Conversely, many urban leaders assume that negative representations of a particular place – which may come from the media, advertising, TV series,

film, or even grassroots mobilizations – can ‘in and of themselves’ exacerbate the place’s economic decline by affecting real estate values, visitor attitudes, bond prices or investor confidence (Greenberg, 2008, p. 9). The more a city’s economy depends on ‘image sensitive industries’, like real estate, tourism, media and cultural industries, the greater it appears vulnerable to bad publicity (*Ibid.*).

The production of place images and place myths (Shields, 1991) has thus become the object of deliberate policies and strategies engineered by groups of local actors who mobilize around a specific vision of urban development. The place images purposefully created by ‘destination agents’ and urban elites have been called ‘induced images’ (Smith, 2005, based on Gartner, 1993, 1996), as opposed to ‘autonomous’ place images, i.e. those which stem from the media or the arts (although the boundary between the two has become blurred).⁶ The increasing adoption of strategies of place marketing and reimagining by urban elites has happened in spite of the fact that there is scarce evidence of the effectiveness of such strategies in generating or attracting investment and growth. Measuring and quantifying the impacts of discursive and image-based strategies (e.g. the impact of an image campaign on the attraction of new firms or tourists to a particular place) is a methodologically difficult – some would even argue dubious – task. Place marketing consultants use opinion surveys and market research techniques to investigate the changing perceptions of a place by particular target groups. Yet it is extremely difficult to relate those changing perceptions to changes in behaviour, and to demonstrate that there is a causal link between marketing activities and changes in particular urban economic indicators.

The political production of urban images has been underpinned and made possible by the growth of a professional place marketing industry and distinct field of practice ‘around the deliberate manipulation and promotion of place images’ (Hall, 2001). Rutheiser (1996) has coined the verb ‘to imagineer’ to describe this process of deliberate image design and promotion (see also Short, 1999). Professional ‘urban image workers’ (Scholz, 1989, p. 13) – place marketing and business location consultants, advertising and PR professionals – have relied on increasingly powerful and efficient technologies of visualization and dissemination. Bass Warner and Vale (2001, pp. xvi–xvii) identify three such types of technologies: *visualization technologies*, or technologies of representation, which play a direct role in the image design process (graphic design, drawings, computer simulations); *media* which have become parts of the ‘visual and auditory landscape of cities and roadsides’, such as advertising signage and public art installations; and *media* which depict cities (TV, film, software) and ‘affect city design and development more indirectly’ by helping ‘set the agenda for how broad segments of the public think about cities’. The role of the mass media in the production of new urban images was also stressed by Zukin (1998), Greenberg (2000, 2008) and MacLeod and Ward (2002), who refer to TV programmes, newspaper supplements and lifestyles magazines as elements of a ‘critical infrastructure of consumption’ aimed at generating new residential and cultural consumption practices via the

idyllic depiction of particular forms of urban living. The internet has, additionally, facilitated the global diffusion of both ‘induced’ and ‘autonomous’ place images.

Often the desire to change a city’s image will form the rationale for projects and policies transforming its built environment in order to ‘conform to the idealized image of the brand’ (Greenberg, 2008, p. 34), for example through the construction of ‘spectacular urban landscapes’ (Hubbard, 1996, 1998) or iconic buildings (Sklair, 2006). Such iconic buildings ‘are explicitly positioned relative to a visual consumer – either the visitor in front of the building or more likely the viewer of a mediated image in press, television or film’ (Jones, 2009, p. 2527).⁷ Furthermore, the perceived imperative of ‘inter-city competition’ is often used by urban elites as a justification for making decisions in local policy fields other than place marketing: in the name of the ‘city image’, for example, measures are taken to strengthen ‘safety’ in public spaces through more surveillance and policing, to restructure public administration to make it more ‘business-friendly’, or to attract visitors through large-scale cultural events, as has been the case in Berlin. Some of these policy measures can happen independently of a place marketing strategy, or can serve other objectives than purely promotional ones.

In the German context, Scholz defined ‘urban imaging work’ as ‘the whole complex of representations and marketing of the city inwards and outwards – including the “real” urban development measures taken in the framework of the defined city marketing concept’ (1989, p. 15, author’s emphasis) (see also Grabow and Hollbach-Grömig, 1998). This stretching of the concepts of place marketing and urban imaging potentially includes a large part of the economic and urban development policies carried out by local governments throughout Europe. The frontiers between economic development, urban planning, tourism promotion, environmental, cultural and safety policies thus become very blurred. In the framework of this book, the ways in which Berlin professional and political actors framed and defined what ‘place marketing’ is was used as a starting point to define what to include in the analysis. The place marketing activities investigated in subsequent chapters thus encompass: the practices which were labelled as ‘*Stadtmarketing*’ by local actors; the activities organized or supported by the dedicated city marketing organization *Partner für Berlin* (and to a lesser extent the other actors of place marketing described in Chapter 5); and finally the policies or initiatives (such as the bid for the 2000 Olympic Games) which, according to their inceptors, were set up *primarily* as promotional devices to improve the city’s external and internal image.

Place Marketing through the Prism of Urban Political Economy: Reconciling the Material and the Symbolic

Place marketing became a focus of academic inquiry long after urban actors began to ‘sell’ cities through boosterist activities. A fundamental distinction can be made between two strands of literature. First, a number of authors within the disciplines

of new public management, administrative science and planning have attempted to theorize what efficient place marketing *should be* in a practice-oriented way (e.g. Ashworth and Voogd, 1990; Kotler *et al.*, 1993, 1999). This strand of literature generally does not question the desirability of the application of a concept from business management to the city as a political institution, as a space of citizenship or as a living space. By contrast, a wide-ranging, mostly Anglophone body of literature in human geography, urban sociology, urban politics, planning and urban studies – to which this book belongs – has addressed place marketing as part of a wider agenda of critical inquiry into contemporary processes of urban restructuring (see Brenner, 2009, on the notion of ‘critical’ urban studies).⁸ The main arguments from this strand of scholarship can be summarized as follows:

- ◆ In the process of place marketing, specific local culture(s), history(ies), identity(ies) and aesthetics are selected, sanitized, commodified and marketed to be ‘consumed’ by target groups such as tourists or high-income residents. This process can have negative consequences for the spaces and social groups concerned, as it can lead to a loss of authenticity or to outright displacement, as the gentrification literature has shown (Zukin, 1988, 1995) (see Chapter 9). Additionally it often involves the exclusion, displacement or repression of cultures and histories deemed ‘undesirable’ in the discursive and/or physical public sphere of the city.
- ◆ The definition of a ‘city vision’ (i.e. which aspects of the urban economy and culture should be prioritized) is often done in closed circles by a restricted elite of officials, business leaders and consultants, with little or no public involvement: ‘location branding reduces the democratic process to market research and SWOT-analysis’ (van Ham, 2002, p. 267). The chosen ‘vision’ represents and naturalizes the interests, lifestyle and ‘urban imaginary’ of a narrow segment of the population (Greenberg, 2000). The subsequent implementation of marketing activities is often in the hands of public-private partnerships which lack transparency.
- ◆ Place marketing practices have uneven social and geographical impacts, because ‘the very economic circumstances that are most likely to give rise to place marketing initiatives are also those which make it most difficult to reconcile these initiatives with public interest and welfare objectives’ (Ward, 1998a, p. 6). Geographically, a small number of central sites and areas become the focus of investments in flagship projects, mega-events, iconic architecture and promotional measures, with a high opportunity cost for other areas where disinvestment and neglect may prevail. The focus on flagship projects (Swyngedouw *et al.*, 2002) is, furthermore, often accompanied by a weakening of political concern for, and practices of metropolitan-wide forms of, spatial planning which aim at the balanced territorial development of the city and its surrounding region (Häußermann, 1997a).

- ◆ Place marketing and branding activities are not only geared towards ‘external’ investors, visitors or potential residents. They are often directed at the local population to ‘create a sense of social solidarity, civic pride and loyalty to place and even ... provide a mental refuge in a world that capital treats as more and more place-less’ (Harvey, 1989, p. 14). This ‘mobilization of spectacle’ (Harvey, 1990) is often ‘a subtle form of socialization to convince local people, many of whom will be disadvantaged and potentially disaffected, that they are important cogs in a successful community and that all sorts of “good things” are really being done on their behalf’ (Kearns and Philo, 1993, p. 3).

- ◆ The search for ‘distinctiveness’ in the global marketing race often leads to the serial replication of similar urban development strategies and to the global homogenization of urban landscapes. This, according to Harvey, is one of the inherent contradictions of place marketing and urban entrepreneurialism more widely: it tends to destroy the unique qualities of a place or endanger their very existence, thus erasing the ‘monopoly advantage’ which can be extracted (Harvey, 2001). This makes place marketing a ‘zero-sum game’, a highly inefficient and speculative exercise (Harvey, 1990; Loftman *et al.*, 1994; Leitner and Sheppard, 1998) which pushes cities into a vicious circle of ever-increasing investments in place marketing campaigns, flagship projects and mega-events.

While practices of place marketing and the political production of new urban images have become a popular focus of investigation over the past two decades, what Beauregard (2008) calls ‘the problematic of representation’ in urban political economy and urban studies is a nut hard to crack for scholars, theoretically and empirically. Representation is ‘the process by which members of a culture use language (broadly defined as any system which deploys signs, any signifying system) to produce meaning’ (Hall, 1997, p. 61). In his review of Greenberg’s study (2008) of the politics of place branding in New York, Beauregard argued that investigating the causal relationships between image production/marketing activities and the ‘material’ politics of urban development, that is to answer the question ‘how much does “branding” matter to the development of a city and the crafting of public policy?’, is a challenging task (Beauregard, 2008, p. 301). While we may gain ‘a good understanding of the interaction of marketing, image crises, and government policy’, we often have ‘no way to assess their relative influence’ (*Ibid.*). The production of a specific discourse on and images of the city through place marketing is, in part, a (reactive) component of the material politics of urban development – one which sells and legitimizes particular forms of urban transformation in a post-Fordist era. But place marketing can also shape and influence urban development, in part because the ‘competitiveness’ imperative and the desire to change the city’s image are used as legitimizing arguments for policy decisions in various fields (e.g. urban planning, safety or culture).

In urban political economy, place marketing and reimagining practices were

initially neglected, as they were perceived as ‘mere gloss on the underlying and ostensibly more influential relations of political economy’ (*Ibid.*, p. 300). This is, in part, because the Marxist and neo-Marxist tradition of urban political economy and its materialist-economic outlook did not leave much room for the analysis of ‘culture’ (Le Galès, 1999) and ‘symbols’, which form the core matter of place marketing practices. Traditional urban political approaches to the ‘local politics of business’ have tended to ignore the cultural politics involved (McCann, 2002, p. 388) and gloss over the processes of symbolic image production in urban politics, with little attention paid by researchers to the powerful ways in which culture, history and identity are mobilized.

The pioneering work of Sharon Zukin (1988, 1995) and David Harvey (1990, 2001, 2002) paved the way for an increasing recognition, within urban political economy, of the role of the ‘symbolic economy’, the mobilization of cultural resources and the politics of urban reimagining within contemporary capitalist urbanization processes. The economic prosperity of cities in a post-Fordist era has become increasingly reliant on the ‘symbolic economy’, i.e. the ‘intertwining of cultural symbols and entrepreneurial capital’ (Zukin, 1995, p. 3). The production of *symbols* by ‘place entrepreneurs’, officials and investors (Zukin, 1995, pp. 23–24) and of marks of distinction for a particular place (Harvey, 2001) has become a central activity of contemporary urban policies. These marks of distinction can be found in the fields of historical heritage, cultural practices or the built environment (Harvey, 2001), from which specific elements are selected and constructed to serve claims to ‘uniqueness’. As Harvey recognized, such claims are ‘as much an outcome of discursive constructions and struggles as they are grounded in material fact’, because ‘many rest upon historical narratives, interpretations and meanings of collective memories, significations of cultural practices, and the like’ (Harvey, 2002, np).

This is where the mobilization and marketing of culture comes in. Local authorities and entrepreneurs manipulate cultural resources for capital gain ‘whether by converting them into “commodities” that can be bought or sold in their own right, or by using them as a lure to inward investment from industrialists, tourists and shoppers’ (Kearns and Philo, 1993, p. ix). The mobilization of culture can involve consumption-oriented or production-oriented strategies (Bianchini and Parkinson, 1993) – often a mix of both (see also Evans, 2001; Miles, 2007). Marketing strategies focusing on cultural *consumption* promote cultural, leisure and entertainment facilities as a ‘soft location factor’ in the inter-city competition for mobile investors, firms, skilled workforce and tourists. In that process elements of local heritage and traditions are selectively packaged, commodified and displayed for cultural consumption by residents and visitors, and urban landscapes are reconfigured around the need for ‘conspicuous consumption’ marked by notions of exclusivity, styles and distinctiveness (Hall, 2001, p. 95). Marketing strategies focusing on cultural *production*, on the other hand, encourage the spatial clustering of the ‘cultural’ or ‘creative’ industries, i.e. those industries which ‘combine

cultural expression and creativity with material production, tradable goods and, to a greater or lesser extent, market-based consumption' (Montgomery, 2005, p. 340). Such industries are not only marketed as an economic sector in their own right, but as an attraction factor for other sectors and/or target groups. They are perceived, too, as an instrument of transformation of urban space, because cultural producers add value to particular spaces and create what Harvey calls collective 'cultural' or 'symbolic' capital. This capital can then be traded directly or indirectly (by being turned into real estate value), a process referred to by Zukin (1995) as the 'artistic mode of production'.

But the logic of economic gain is not the only rationale underpinning place marketing: social control, the construction of an internal place 'identity', of 'civic pride' or 'social cohesion' are common objectives too (Harvey, 1990). As urban elites strive to establish the city as a collective (social and political) actor, they need to 'reinforce or create a city's collective identity and consciously promote a local society, the more so since the identity of the nation is losing definition' (Le Galès, 1999, p. 299). In this process 'culture' becomes important, as a tool of local mobilization and negotiation between different social groups (Le Galès, 1999; McCann, 2002) to create a 'pseudo-community of locality' (Cox and Mair, 1988, p. 318) or engineer 'social consent' in a context of urban restructuring (Harvey, 1990).

In Berlin the internal orientation of place marketing practices has been particularly prominent, as will be discussed in subsequent chapters. In cities formerly divided by political conflicts or racial divides, or in cities undergoing transition under new political regimes, the debates about urban development are not only about economic issues but also, crucially, about identity construction, collective memories and how to deal with the legacy of the past. In Berlin, place marketing policies have been part of the contentious politics of national and urban identity construction, as already stated in Chapter 1. Place marketing, consequently, has to be read simultaneously within the context of post-Fordist economic and political urban restructuring, *as well as* within the spatial and cultural politics of identity and memory construction in cities (and societies) in transformation. As will be discussed in Chapters 6 and 7, the reimagining of Berlin as German national capital and the search for the 'lost' identity of the 'traditional European city' were key dimensions of place marketing practices: here 'the most vibrant debates ... have been over the symbolic, cultural terrain that urban political economy has never been able to explicate' (Strom, 2001, p. 7).

Following Harvey's and Zukin's pioneering work, research into the symbolic economies of cities and the role of culture in urban development expanded rapidly in the 1990s and 2000s.⁹ A growing number of urban researchers from various disciplines began to call for 'a cultural perspective on the city that also takes material-economic matters seriously and/or a political economy that recognizes the limits of purely materialistic accounts of urban processes' (Ribera-Fumaz, 2009, p. 7). This 'cultural turn' in urban political economy took various forms (for a concise overview see Ribera-Fumaz, 2009). Some authors began to adopt

approaches and methods from cultural studies, e.g. semiotic analysis (see p. 33), to analyze the transformation of urban landscapes in a post-Fordist era and the images and representations of the city produced within entrepreneurial urban strategies. Yet such semiotic deconstructions often failed to link changing urban landscapes and representations with the underlying socio-economic and political forces transforming a city (McNeil, 1998; Brenner, 2002; Jessop, 2004). For many traditional political economy scholars, 'insofar as semiosis is studied apart from its extra-semiotic context, resulting accounts of social causation will be incomplete, leading to semiotic reductionism and/or imperialism' (Jessop, 2004, p. 171).

Other authors working on the culturalization of cities therefore sought to 'take culture more seriously' (Le Galès, 1999, p. 293) without rejecting the classic tools, concepts and questions offered by sociology, political science and political economy, in order to 'understand how cultural elements are entangled, remobilized in association with the regulation of markets and politics to structure a locality and/or a mode of governance' (Le Galès, 1999, p. 298). McCann (2002) proposed a 'cultural politics of local economic development' which would grasp how 'commonality, whether around notions of community or locality' is constructed by particular actors for political and economic ends (p. 387) and how 'meaning-making and place-making occur simultaneously in struggles over the future of space economies' (p. 385). In planning studies, Jensen and Richardson proposed a 'cultural sociology of space' which uncovers 'the ways in which spaces, places and mobilities are represented strategically in policy discourses in order to bring about certain changes of socio-spatial relations and prevent others' (2004, p. 58; see also Richardson and Jensen, 2003). The 'cultural political economy' (CPE) approach developed by Bob Jessop, Andrew Sayer, Ngai-Ling Sum and Norman Fairclough has attempted to reconcile 'concepts and tools from critical semiotic analysis and from critical political economy' (Jessop, 2004, p. 159) to analyze the role which semiosis (defined as the intersubjective production of meaning) plays in 'construing, constructing, and temporarily stabilizing capitalist social formations' (Jessop, 2004, p. 159; Jessop and Oosterlynck, 2008). The notion of 'economic imaginaries' (further developed on p. 29) is at the heart of CPE, and was applied to the study of entrepreneurial urban governance and policies (Jessop and Sum, 2000; Gonzáles, 2006; Dannestam, 2008; Jones, 2009).

Philo and Kearns suggested early on that place marketing should be investigated through an examination of the 'discourses that sustain the practice of manipulating culture in the selling of places', and of 'the material context (in terms of the national and local economies, politics and societies) that are generating this practice as a key feature of urban governance in the late-twentieth century Western world' (1993, p. ix). A few studies of place marketing in particular cities have combined urban political economy and cultural semiotic approaches, in particular Broudehoux (2004) in her work on the 'remaking and selling' of post-Mao Beijing and Greenberg (2008) in her analysis of the activities of New York's 'branding coalitions'. In the Berlin context, Lehrer (1999, 2000a, 2000b, 2002) studied the

articulation between image production and ‘real material’ processes of global city formation through her investigation of the Potsdamer Platz redevelopment and the role of the built environment in image production, for which she argues that ‘Berlin is a paradigmatic city’ (2002, p. 2). Ward (2004, 2011) investigated ‘how boosterism’s virtual realities for the reunified capital’ have impacted actual urban economic growth (2004, p. 242) and argued that Berlin’s self-stagings and ‘branding in the virtual realm’ have ended up having ‘a concrete effect on Berlin’s ability to progress beyond its backwater status’ (2004, p. 250), in particular by dynamizing image-producing cultural industries.

Place Marketing as Public Policy, Discourse and Imagery. An Analytical and Methodological Framework

Building on the path laid by the scholars who have sought to reconcile political economy and cultural semiotic perspectives to make sense of contemporary urban change, I argue that place marketing and image production are central activities of urban politics, not simply a mere ‘add-on’ to it. They are a key component of post-Fordist economic and political restructuring, as well as an important tool in the spatial-cultural politics of identity and collective memory construction in cities in transformation. I therefore propose a conceptualization of place marketing as a phenomenon with three analytical dimensions: a field of *public policy*, with its associated network of actors, agenda, policy narrative and instruments; which produces a *discourse* on the city and on urban change – a discourse itself made, in part, of visual representations, or *imagery*, of the city and of urban space. These three building blocks are encapsulated in the following definition of place marketing:

Place marketing is the intentional, organized process of construction and dissemination of a discourse on, and images of, a given place (usually a city) and of its development, which involves the mobilization of a set of actors around that particular task (with specific goals and agenda). The goals of place marketing can be manifold, e.g. attracting tourists and investors or generating the support of local residents for a particular urban vision. The process is ‘spatial’ in the sense that it seeks to mediate or construct a defined identity for a particular geographical space, and usually makes use of spatial metaphors and of specific architectural symbols characterizing that place in the process. Place marketing activities thus interact with place making activities (architecture, planning, urban design and urban development) and with the cultural politics of collective identity and memory construction through space.

To analyze each of these three ‘building blocks’ – public policy, discourse, and imagery – several bodies of literature and methodological approaches for data collection and data analysis were used, as presented below. The resulting ‘methodologically hybrid’ framework (figure 2.1) – both ‘materialist and semiotic’ (Jacobs, 1993, p. 839) – combines cognitive and discursive approaches to public policy analysis, cultural urban political economy, critical discourse analysis and visual analysis.