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**Reconceptualizing city branding to account for talent attraction:**

**Cities as a place to work *and* live**

By

**Lauren Robinet**

An Internship Paper  
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies  
through the Department of Political Science  
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Windsor, Ontario, Canada

2018

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**Reconceptualizing city branding to account for talent attraction: Cities as a place to  
live and work**

by

**Lauren Robinet**

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December 6, 2018

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## **Abstract**

With thousands of local governments implementing city branding since the late 1990s, the leading question has become how to brand in the competitive 21<sup>st</sup> century environment. The growth in the global labour pool and increased freedom of movement has led to increased competition for talent. The increased competition for talent, coupled with a global scale of inter-city competition, has pushed local governments to seek initiatives that will sustain and enhance economic development. Globalization has indeed marked a change in employment trends, wherein a competitive employment environment continues to increase due to a shortage of appropriate applicants and high turnover. City branding and employer branding then hold similar purposes: talent attraction. The under-researched area of talent attraction is of increasing importance for the recruitment of the highest calibre candidates. A literature review was conducted with the purpose of examining how city branding can adopt tenets of employer branding to account for talent attraction. The review aimed to summarize and identify the main tenets of city branding and employer branding. As research has yet to identify a connection between the two, the literatures on city branding and employer branding are examined to understand how city branding inclusive of talent attraction can be implemented as strategic policy. The results support the synergistic relationship between the city branding and employer branding literatures, with similar main themes across the literature accounting for talent attraction in the competitive 21<sup>st</sup> century environment.

## **Dedication**

I would like to dedicate my work to everyone that has dedicated their time to guide and support me throughout my educational journey.

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## **Introduction**

City branding is not a new phenomenon, in practice or academia. With thousands of local governments implementing city branding since the late 1990s, the leading question has become not whether to brand, but how to brand in the competitive environment of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The global scale of inter-city competition has led local governments to seek initiatives that will sustain and enhance economic development. City branding is one such strategic initiative. Based on traditional product branding, city branding is a policy tool used to market the unique city identity to generate a competitive advantage for economic development. The growth in the global labour pool and increased freedom of movement has led to increased competition for talent. Globalization has indeed marked a change in employment trends, wherein a competitive employment environment continues to increase due to a shortage of appropriate applicants and high turnover. The prevalence of hard-to-fill positions can impact both the employer and local economy. This is identified in the case of Windsor where surveyed employers identified a skills shortage as the top barrier to growth. City branding and employer branding then hold similar purposes: attracting talent. Within the city branding literature, talent attraction is an under-researched area. However, it is of increasing importance for the recruitment of the highest calibre candidates. A literature review was conducted with the purpose of examining how the city branding literature can adopt tenets of employer branding to account for talent attraction. A detailed review permitted the summary and identification of both city branding and employer branding. As research has yet to identify a connection between the two, the literatures on city branding and employer branding are examined to understand how city branding inclusive of talent attraction can be implemented as strategic policy at the local level.

## **Importance**

Globalization, coupled with internal decline cycles and external shocks, has led to great practitioner and academic interest in the city branding discipline. A withdrawal of central governments has increased, with more responsibility for the future of social and economic development devolved to the local level (Boisen et al., 2018). The pressure and responsibility at the local level is then heightened with the projected increase of inter-city global competition (Henninger et al., 2016). The global competition is applicable to cities and towns governed by local governments, whereby cities are confronted with competitors through technological advances and market deregulations (Dalimunthe & Nurunnisha, 2017). The competition is intensified through “the mobility of the population and the development of economy” (Melović et al., 2017, p. 51). These factors are again applicable at the local level, wherein an “optimum work-life balance” is sought out by the in-demand labour force (Thite, 2011, p. 623). Thite (2011), for instance, stated the “economy increasingly revolves around knowledge or creative workers that are seen as a key sustainable competitive advantage” (Thite, 2011, p. 623). This importance is further developed by Thite (2011).

Florida (2002a) asserts that access to talented and creative people is to modern business what access to coal and iron was to steel making and it determines where companies will choose to locate and grow, and this in turn changes the way cities can compete. Increasingly, successful national and regional economies are measured by their capacity to generate wealth through innovation and to attract and retain a skilled workforce to support the economy. (Thite, 2011, p. 624)

Accordingly, a talented workforce is a distinct competitive advantage for sustained economic growth, which is an influential factor in company decision-making. Local governments are then faced with this modern problem of talent attraction, whether to be a distinct competitive advantage or fill vacant positions at newly-attracted businesses. In the face of this urban problem, city branding is a strategic policy tool available to be implemented by local governments for their economic development.

Current city brands can attract new investment, such as companies opening their doors within the community. It follows that a successful brand can create job opportunities in the sought out high-skill and in-demand sectors. While accounting for business attraction in the increasingly competitive market, city branding has yet to account for talent attraction to effectively market a distinct competitive advantage and/or fill the positions generated by successful branding. Additionally, through the national promotion of city images city branding is even foreseen to rise. Boisen et al. (2018), for example, found 79.5 percent of Dutch municipalities identified place branding as a policy issue (p. 5). Further, Giovanardi (2012) noted that “cities around the world have invested in strategies of place marketing and branding aimed at attracting [a] skilled workforce [and] talented creative workers” (p. 31). The current city branding practices and positive outcomes of place branding sub-brands (nation branding, destination branding, higher education branding, and employer branding) then support municipal expenditure on city branding initiatives. Further, agencies and local governments have started to allocate resources to data collection for the identification of barriers to local economic growth. This is identified in the case of Windsor, Ontario. This paper advances a conceptual framework of city branding initiatives for talent attraction.

### **Practical implications.**

The health of the Windsor, Ontario, labour force continues to improve with an increased employment rate. However, skills shortage is identified as the top barrier to growth and the supply of workers remains a challenge. In 2017, 59 percent of the employers surveyed by Workforce WindsorEssex (2018) identified that they had hard-to-fill positions. The difficulty was primarily due to a lack of qualified candidates and limited response to postings, with an existing gap between the skills held by applicants and the skills sought by employers. The surveyed employers also found candidates to not be qualified for the available positions, with 45 percent of surveyed employers requiring a formal education above a high school diploma while only 52 percent of 25 to 64-year old's hold a college or university level education (Workforce WindsorEssex, 2018). Accordingly, 78 percent of employers complained of recruitment challenges (Workforce WindsorEssex, 2018). This recruitment challenge is met with one of the lowest participation rates in Canada. The Windsor-Essex region also faces a large out-migration of the working aged population. These statistics are supported by McQuillan (2013). While questioning Canada's labour shortage, McQuillan (2013) stated there to be a certain "decline in the rate of labour-force growth as the baby boom generation retires" (p. 7). Two resulting labour market challenges were marked, particularly that "Canada will need to compete for top talent, especially in management, science and technology" (McQuillan, 2013, p. 7). In all, the skills gaps and low participation rates mean a given business may not be operating at full capacity as positions go unfilled or are filled by individuals who are not fully qualified for a given position. Talent attraction is indeed an urban problem facing municipalities (and beyond) and requires strategic action.

In response to these challenges, local governments have started to implement strategies to attract and recruit residents. Ranked 46<sup>th</sup> of the 85 Canadian cities ranked in Point2Homes Top Millennial Hot Spots in 2018, Windsor holds great potential. Chatham-Kent, respectively ranked 67<sup>th</sup>, has focused on resident attraction and retention (RAR) since 2011. The 4.2 percent decline in population from 2006-2011 is similar to the Windsor case, with notable decline across the 15-44 age cohorts and increase in the median age (Municipality of Chatham-Kent Community Human Services, 2018, p. 1). Following RAR in 2011, the 2016 census reported a significant reduction in the total population decline. The reduction held notable improvements in the targeted age cohorts of young people and immigrant population (Municipality of Chatham-Kent Community Human Services, 2018, p. 2). In a similar initiative, Wellington County implemented the Talent Attraction Initiative to meet labour market needs and support strategic economic growth. The move towards resident and talent attraction by local government advances the case for city branding initiatives inclusive of talent attraction. Further, the Chatham-Kent and Wellington County case examples are relevant to the Windsor-Essex region and identify the benefits these initiatives hold for the Corporation of the City of Windsor, business community, and residents of Windsor. These initiatives are largely isolated from the social and economic policies. Therefore, the integration of similar goals to existing city branding is a policy tool within the means of local governments and, arguably, merits academic research on this topic.

For its success, city branding is a strategic policy tool that requires an integrated approach. The 20-Year Strategic Vision (Vision) advanced by the City of Windsor allows for the integration of local vision and goals aligned with policy for city branding inclusive



of talent attraction. The attraction of businesses of all sizes and sectors is identified within the Vision. This, in turn, requires talent attraction initiatives to work in tandem to fill these positions. To be a dynamic hub for innovation that will be attractive to people of all ages, talent attraction marketing will leverage existing City strengths. The “Our Strengths to BUILD on” of the Vision includes possible campaign pillars, identifying the strategic location, people, fiscal sustainability, and quality of life the City of Windsor has to offer. With the decline of Ontario’s manufacturing sector and changing operating decisions of automotive industry, talent attraction is integral to the regional economic development as forecasts for population growth and future development are modest. Therefore, providing a competitive advantage, city branding initiatives inclusive of talent attraction offer practical implications for local governments.

### **Terminology**

The multidisciplinary nature of city branding makes for a complex study. In a literature review of place branding and place marketing, Vuignier (2017) found “59% of the articles were classified in the public management category (462 items), 18% in geography (142), 11% in classic marketing (90), 10% in political science (82) and 2% in the other category” (p. 14). The lack of a universally accepted definition, coupled with its multidisciplinary nature, has led to the use of concepts interchangeably. For conceptual clarity, the main research concepts are defined and discussed.

#### **Product branding.**

Product branding is the external communication that, based on values, builds an external image for name recognition and positive perception to effectively differentiate the product from market competitors. The purpose of product branding is then to “simplify

consumer purchase decisions” (Iglesias, 2017, p. 671). The definition is congruent with the American Marketing Association that defines ‘brand’ as “a name, term, sign, symbol, design or the combination of all of them in order to define, describe and differentiate one product or service apart from other similar ones” (Pirnar et al, 2017, p. 25).

### **Employer branding.**

In 1996, the concepts of human resource management and brand marketing were brought together to coin the term ‘employer branding’ (Aboul-Ela, 2016; Sengupta et al., 2015; Tanwar & Prasad, 2016). The new concept was defined as “a package of functional, economic and psychological benefits provided by employment and identified with the employing company” (Tanwar & Prasad, 2016, p. 1885). However, with increased competition among employers to adopt talent management processes, globalization marked a change in employer trends. The employer brand strategy is now characterized by two marketing processes: internal branding helps motivate and retain employees, while external branding enables the organization to attract a talented workforce (Sengupta et al., 2015; Tanwar & Prasad, 2016). Employer branding is a long-term human resource strategy to attract and retain qualified talent. This marketing process establishes the organization as an ‘employer of choice’ within the given industry. This motto (‘employer of choice’) refers to the choice of a preferred employer within the market that, in return, increases loyalty towards the desired employer (Aboul-Ela, 2016). For research purposes, employer branding is defined as “the process of building an identifiable and unique employer identity, and the employer brand as a concept of the form that differentiates it from its competitors” (Näppä et al., 2014, p.133).

### **Place branding.**

Place branding is an integrated initiative implemented to market values and narratives for a sustained and/or improved reputation (Boisen et al., 2018). The aim is to “influence the perception and association held by people, with the goal of gaining favourable reputation” (Boisen et al., 2018, p. 7). This is exemplified in the case of Dubai. Place branding was implemented for the tourism sector with the aim of increasing airline traffic to support an expansion of destinations. In addition, the place branding also improved Dubai’s market brand image as one “conducive for commercial buyers” (Hafeez et al., 2016, p. 396). It was found that “greater trade helped the logistics sector which increased the number of visitors which assisted the tourism industry and all supported the trading activities of the emirate” (Hafeez et al., 2016, p. 396). Hence, the place branding initiative was an integrated approach to improve reputation for economical gain.

In response to the limited conceptual clarity within the place branding literature, the distinction of place promotion, place marketing, and place branding is marked by Boisen et al. (2018).

[...] place promotion is mainly about generating favourable communication; place marketing is mainly about balancing supply and demand; and place branding is mainly about creating, sustaining, and shaping a favourable place identity. (p. 5)

The research scope emphasizes city branding as a strategic policy tool for the marketing of city assets with the purpose of talent attraction and is congruent with Boisen et al.’s (2018) definition of place marketing.

### **City branding.**

For research purposes, based on traditional product branding, city branding is defined as an integrative and strategic policy tool used to market the unique city identity to generate a competitive advantage for economic development. City branding is indeed characterized to be a valuable source to differentiate cities, a strategic tool to account for and promote the economic, political, and cultural values as well as a marketing tool focused on the competitive advantage of city assets (Pirnar et al., 2017, p. 26). Pirnar et al. (2017) also noted that it is naive to limit a brand to a logo/name due to the fact that the competition between brands is based on available differences, that an important common success element is appropriate employment potential, and that globalization is a megatrend impacting the strategic decision-making of cities. Indeed, globalization has led to the increased use of Internet and mobile technologies as well as branding through sustainable activities. These defining characteristics of city branding as a strategic and integrated marketing tool to advance the competitive advance of city assets is compatible with the research.

Metaphors are common within the place branding literature to understand the relation between concepts. Works examine, for example, the idea of a ‘family tree’ (Braun, 2008) and the function of an all-encompassing ‘umbrella brand’ (Braun & Zenker, 2010; Jones & Kubacki, 2014). The family tree metaphor explains how place branding and city branding are related, wherein “place branding is the family tree, with family members such as city branding [...] acting as the branches” (Braun, 2008, p. 258). In other words, “city branding is a subfield of place branding” (Merrilees et al., 2013, p. 38). The umbrella brand then examines how the encompassing brand image influences the sub-brands to allow

specific communications to the target groups (Ahonen et al., 2016; Milewicz et al., 2017). City branding then derives from the general research discipline of place branding with the ability to target a specific group or groups, which is applied to talent attraction.

Grown through the “new ‘entrepreneurial’ style of local governance,” the urban governance setting causes city branding to be inherently more complicated (Sadler et al., 2016, p. 20). This, in turn, limits its comparison to product branding and makes it imperative to discuss city branding within its context. The identified “need for creative development strategies” has nonetheless emphasized the use of city branding initiatives for the positive promotion of municipalities for talent attraction (Sadler et al., 2016, p. 21). As a communication strategy, city branding provides local government the ability to control their image for such attraction (Crombie, 2011). Additionally, the visions and goals advanced by local governments are compatible with the long-term vision and strategic approach of city branding initiatives (Maheshwari et al., 2011; Oliveira, 2015; Yang et al., 2018; Vuignier, 2017). Hence, the research is focused on the local government application of city branding initiatives for talent attraction.

### **Talent.**

Nijs et al. (2014) conducted a multidisciplinary literature review on the concept of ‘talent,’ which included examining the definition of talent.

Talent refers to systematically developed innate abilities of individuals that are deployed in activities they like, find important, and in which they want to invest energy. It enables individuals to perform excellently in one or more domains of human functioning, operationalized as performing better than other individuals of

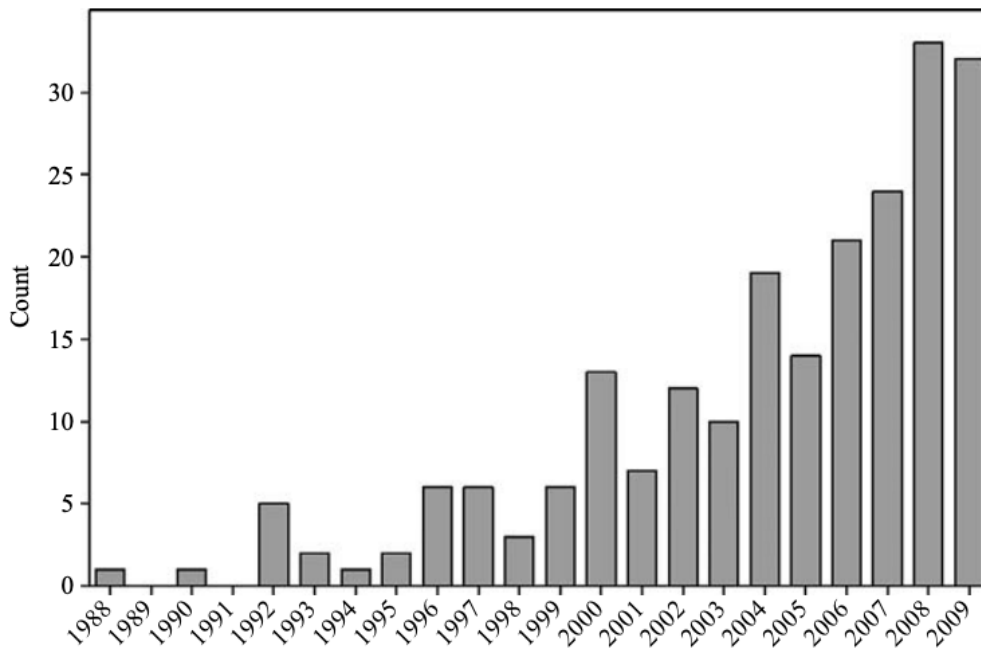
the same age or experience, or as performing consistently at their personal best.  
(Nijs et al., 2014, p. 182)

The definition advanced by Nijs et al. (2014) is adapted to emphasize the labour needs of city branding and employer branding. For research purposes, ‘talent’ is defined as the ability of an individual to perform the tasks required by skilled labour and professional positions at a greater degree of proficiency than their counterparts (i.e., fellow applicants). To this end, ‘talent attraction’ is the capacity to attract the targeted audience with the sought skillset. These skillsets will vary from employer to employer and from city to city.

## Review of the literature

The practice of branding places is not a new phenomenon, nor the distinct field of academic study. The expansion of the literature over three decades has produced consensus that “cities can be marketed and branded like products and/or corporations” (Yang et al., 2018, p. 161). Largely comprised of qualitative methods and single case studies, the literature provides rich empirical detail on “the process and main factors of city branding” (Yang et al., 2018, p. 161; Vuignier, 2017). A common approach in the study of city branding is the examination of its development and evolutionary path. Green et al. (2016) examined the evolutionary path of city branding within five waves, with the most recent wave characterized to be “an essential component of twenty-first century urban place management” (p. 259). Lucarelli & Olof Berg (2011) also examined the history of city branding through a review of articles between 1988-2009. A steady increase is identified in the number of articles focused on city branding (Figure 1).

Figure 1: The number of articles dealing with city branding (1988-2009)



The review of the literature is divided into three parts. First, place branding research is discussed in terms of nation branding, destination branding, and higher education branding. Second, critiques of the city branding literature are identified. Third, employer branding is reviewed.

### **Nation branding**

Nation branding is a dominant research area within the place branding literature. Articles cover a variety of topics with a general emphasis placed on nation brand image, spanning the role of media and democracy (Harengel & Gbadamosi, 2014; Jain & Winner, 2013; Kemming & Humborg, 2010; Yousaf, 2017) as well as the implications for stateless nations (Vela & Xifra, 2015). While the reduction of an entire nation into a “singular narrative” can be problematic (oversimplifying the narrative and propagating stereotypes), quantifying the nation image provides opportunity to identify the problem for resolution (Harengel & Gbadamosi, 2014, p. 36; Yousaf, 2017). To this end, Harengel and Gbadamosi (2014) examined South Sudan after it joined the United Nations as a new state in 2011. This provided an opportunity for researchers to understand how the brand came into existence. The article identified how the international media branded South Sudan and how the challenge is to “overcome the conflict theme and replace it with more positive narratives” (Harengel & Gbadamosi, 2014, p. 50). Accordingly, while challenging, the branding provided South Sudan an approach to advance a favourable narrative. Moreover, the literature has also found a positive link between nation image and product image (Nadeau & Olafsen, 2015). For instance, in a comparison between country-of-origin and country images, Souiden et al. (2011) found “country’s image [to be] a more effective tool in reducing consumers’ uncertainty and increasing their aspiration to purchase high



technology products” (p. 356). Through nation branding, the image is then influential on trade. Another positive link was identified between nation image and city image, with a particular benefit of a strong nation brand being talent attraction (Herrero et al., 2015; Roozen et al., 2017). Therefore, holding a positive influence on city brand image and benefitting from talent attraction, the study of nation branding is an important element within the place branding literature.

### **Destination branding**

Studied for decades, destination branding is defined as “the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that people have of a place or destination” to ease the attraction of “visitors, new residents and investors” (Mak, 2011, p. 440; Westerbeek & Linley, 2012, p. 139). This may include cultural heritage or sports as branding opportunities, among multiple other potential sources. Destination branding is advanced to improve the tourism industry, as in the study conducted by Foroudi et al. (2016) in terms of the indigenous tourist industry. Case studies have identified the benefits of destination branding. The Tourism Victoria Jigsaw Campaign of the state of Victoria, Australia, is one case studied by Rinaldi and Beeton (2015). The study framed public policy changes stemming from the 1992 election within destination branding success factors. Compared to years prior to the Jigsaw Campaign, it was found the following year’s expenditures were “higher than for any other city” (p. 623). The concept of destination branding advances a positive place brand to encourage resource attraction, including talent (Mak, 2011). However, common barriers to destination branding are lack of synergy, clear vision, and direction. These barriers result in limited brand focus, due to the weak relationship between stakeholders and/or the poorly managed partnership (Lubowiecki-Vikuk & Basińska-Zych, 2011; Mak,

2011). Due to their respective targeted audiences, destination branding holds a narrower scope than city branding. While destination branding is tourist-oriented, city branding targets “the city’s users, potential users and other stakeholders that are important for the functioning of cities” (Braun, 2012, p. 258). Positive case studies continue to support municipal expenditure on city branding initiatives, with an acknowledgement of the common barriers, as the narrower scope of destination branding is capable of encouraging talent attraction.

### **Higher education branding**

The branding literature extends to the higher education market. In the competition for students and funding, substantial funds are allocated to initiatives specifically geared towards the attraction of international students (Suomi et al., 2013; Herrero et al., 2015). Suomi and Go (2013), for example, examined branding within a competitive master’s degree program environment. The purpose was to identify “which particular characteristics of the university’s identity could be used to create and sustain a differential advantage in the global marketplace and how this is affected by location choices” (p. 203). The article found unique characteristics and competitive advantages stemmed from the identity. Within the research area, Herrero et al. (2015) also found “a hierarchy among the images of the places” that affirms a chain of positive impact from nation image, to city image, and then to higher education image (p. 198). Herrero et al. (2015) argued these conclusions to be generalizable to “marketing strategies aimed at attracting other relevant resources,” like talent (p. 198). Again, while a narrower scope, higher education branding is a capable strategy for the recruitment of an in-demand target group through a branded identity that promotes a distinct competitive advantage.

## **Critiques of city branding**

The place branding literature is implemented in various areas for resource attraction and, more specifically, talent attraction. However, the city branding literature is not without critique. Moilanen (2015), for instance, expanded on Pike (2005) to advance eight challenges of place marketing. The limitation of funding is one such challenge. This challenge is of particular interest, as governmental or semi-governmental organizations are often prominent stakeholders, if not administrators, of city branding initiatives. Consequently, the funding to implement the initiative “is likely to be dependent on politics” (Moilanen, 2015, p. 219). Vuignier (2017) further critiqued city branding.

Critical articles shine a light on processes that legitimize social elites and neo-liberalism (Stigel and Frimann 2006; Eisenschitz 2010; Kaneva 2011) and the phenomenon of imitation (Babey and Giauque 2009; Riza 2015), in which places paradoxically try to differentiate themselves by using similar tools and launching comparable projects. (p. 466)

Moreover, through the adoption of attractive terminology and media of successful initiatives, city branding initiatives can be “superficial” – negating the organic process in favour of “dangerous place propaganda” (Cleave et al., 2017, p. 2; Oliveira, 2015, p. 19; Yang et al., 2018). This critique extends to the use of city branding for problems the initiative was not strategically designed to solve (Cleave et al., 2017). Additional negative and unintentional effects of city branding are expanded through ‘bad examples,’ such as “lock-in effects in the local economy” (Andersson, 2014, p. 150). Stern and Hall (2010) further elaborate, stating “[b]randing is also a limiting activity that locks places in time and class relations” (p. 209). For instance, Cleave et al. (2017) characterize city branding for

tourism (i.e., destination branding) to be “inherently flawed,” because the initiative seeks to brand only one sole function (Cleave et al., 2017, p. 3). Furthermore, the targeting of a selective audience is inherently a partial representation of the city and places the city at risk of losing its “natural distinctiveness” (Green et al., 2016, p. 262).

The academic discipline is also critiqued, wherein a silo mentality is argued to be prevalent. For instance, “there seems to be little interchange of ideas between the different parts of the research field [...] and between conceptual frameworks” (Lucarelli & Berg, 2011, p. 9-10). As “people may continue to reside in cities despite their dissatisfaction [due to] risks and complexities in moving elsewhere,” it is also difficult to measure the success of the particular city branding initiative (Merrilees et al, 2013, p. 38). Overall, city branding is an emerging interdisciplinary area of research that, while long practiced, has only received scholarly attention relatively recently. In one view, scholars have applied marketing perspective to produce three decades of works with “limited ‘theoretical refinement’” (Green et al., 2016, p. 253; Moilanen, 2015).

In response to such critiques, this paper aims to conceptualize city branding as an integrated and comprehensive solution to the urban challenge of talent attraction facing modern local governments. Boisen et al. (2011) assert attention should be placed on “[t]he ends to which place branding is used” (p. 135). This notion is supported by Cleave et al. (2017) who state city branding must be integrated within a broader development policy, “as integration with all other forms of policy avoid a silo effect” (p. 3). To this end, the reconceptualization of city branding to account for talent attraction will enable municipalities to strategize brand formulation as a means to solve a specific urban problem: talent attraction.

## **The intersect of place branding, city branding, and talent attraction**

The literature studies place branding, city branding, employer branding, and talent attraction. However, the research is generally focused on one concept and, so, there is a limited consideration of how these studies overlap. In response to skilled workers and professionals being actively sought by developed countries and emerging economies, Nadeau and Olafsen (2015) studied the influence of country image on international talent recruitment. Talent is characterized as “scarce, expensive and hard to retain,” and the competition is intensified through the growth in the global labour pool and increase in freedom of movement (Nadeau & Olafsen, 2015, p. 294). The study concluded national governments should coordinate branding efforts to attract human resource talent, an exercise already done for investment and tourism purposes. While conducted at the national level, with similar strategies currently in place for economic development and tourism, the findings support the examination of coordinated city branding efforts for talent attraction. Indeed, in a 2009 study, Richard Florida’s ‘three Ts’ of economic development (technology; talent; and tolerance) were applied to examine how place marketing and branding can attract talent (Table 1). The study conducted by Zenker (2009) found the ability to attract talent as an influential factor in companies’ decisions. Therefore, branding practices applied at the local level provide the opportunity for talent attraction.

Table 1: The “three Ts” of economic development	
Technology	The concentration of innovation and high technology in a region
Talent	The creative professions and higher education
Tolerance	The openness, inclusiveness, and diversity to all ethnicities, races, and ways of life

Source: Zenker, 2009, p. 26

In terms of talent attraction, the concept ‘war for talent’ was coined by McKinsey & Company in 1997. Michaels et al. (2001) renewed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, naming talent as “a critical driver of corporate performance [and] a major competitive advantage” (p. 2). Indeed, compared to 17 percent in 1900, over 60 percent of jobs now require knowledge workers (Michaels et al., 2001, p. 3). This increase is coupled with three fundamental forces: “differential value created by the most talented knowledge workers”; “the intensifying demand for high-caliber managerial talent”; and “the growing propensity for people to switch from one company to another” (Michaels et al., 2001, p. 3-5). In the global arena, skills and knowledge are dominant competitive advantages. For example, it is assumed that the creative class advanced by Richard Florida’s social and economic theory “[represents] nearly 30 per cent of the American workforce, and is worth US\$ 1,993 billion in wages, which represents 47 per cent of the total wages earned in the USA” (Zenker, 2009, p. 25). Talent management then offers a competitive advantage, with the needs of talent shifting the power to the individual as compared to the corporation. Indeed, the study conducted by Michaels et al. (2001) found that “companies that scored in the top quintile of [the] talent management index earned, on average, twenty-two percentage points higher return to shareholders than their industry peers” (p. 7). Research has accordingly begun to identify influential factors on the attraction and retention of talent. This research will broaden current understanding of city branding by accounting for talent attraction in the competitive 21<sup>st</sup> century environment.

### **Employer branding**

In the increasingly competitive employment environment, limited research identifies the dimensions of employer branding. This environment is coupled with a high

rate of employee turnover and a shortage of appropriate applicants. Named one of the largest costs to employers, employee turnover is of great importance. As a result, there is an increased need to recruit qualified employees. The overarching purpose of employer branding is then to communicate to a targeted audience that the organization is a 'great place to work' (Aboul-Ela, 2016; Sengupta et al., 2015; Tanwar & Prasad, 2016). Through this, employer branding is an important talent management strategy that assists organizations in recruiting the best of available talent to contribute towards its competitive edge and productivity in the talent war (Sengupta et al., 2015; Tanwar & Prasad, 2016). This is done through the creation of a distinct advantage. In support, Näppä et al. (2014) found "companies with a strong corporate identity have a strong competitive advantage through lower employee turnover and positive work attitudes" (p. 134). The beneficial outcomes of employer branding include: job satisfaction, psychological contract, productivity, organizational commitment, and brand advocacy. The perceived benefits of particular importance to the research scope are, among others, the enhanced recruitment, retention and employee engagement as well as the increase in quantity and quality of job applicants (Aboul-Ela, 2016; Tanwar & Prasad, 2016). While the retention of employees is beyond the research scope of this paper, Tanwar and Prasad (2016) found that the outcomes of employer branding to be antecedents of employee retention. Thus, developing a strong employer brand helps attract and retain a talented workforce. The new multidisciplinary research area of employer branding has applied branding principles from product brands to human resource management, with a focus placed on the culture and values of the company. These are all similar attributes of the emergent field of city branding.





## **Methodology**

In the face of competing interests, municipalities must implement employer branding principles for an integrated and comprehensive city branding initiative for talent attraction. The employer branding literature will benefit the city branding literature by effectively targeting the in-demand groups for talent attraction. The research proposes, that even though the literature has yet to identify a connection, city branding and employer branding are complementary branding strategies.

The aim of the literature review was to identify the main themes within the respective city branding and employer branding literatures. As prominent interdisciplinary research fields for over a decade, it was impractical to read all available materials on the topics of city branding and employer branding. The paper only covered qualitative articles identifying main themes or conceptual frameworks published in peer-reviewed academic journals, with a research agenda focused on a conceptual review, to ensure quality research. Further, based on purposeful sampling, articles relating directly to the research purpose were prioritized.

Research was conducted to uncover peer-reviewed journal articles on the subjects of city branding and employer branding. Due to the interdisciplinary nature of the disciplines, peer-reviewed journals beyond a political science focus were accepted. The University of Windsor Leddy Library search engine was used to complete a structured keyword search, whereby key terms were searched both independently and together. The key terms were: city branding, employer branding, framework, and literature review. To ensure adequate sourcing, synonyms were searched to broaden the search results (Table 2). The search terms for city branding were congruent with the labels identified by Lucarelli

and Olof Berg (2011) to be the top four used to describe the literature. These labels were then applied to employer branding. The search was then refined to articles published since 2010 (i.e., articles were excluded if they were written prior to 2010).

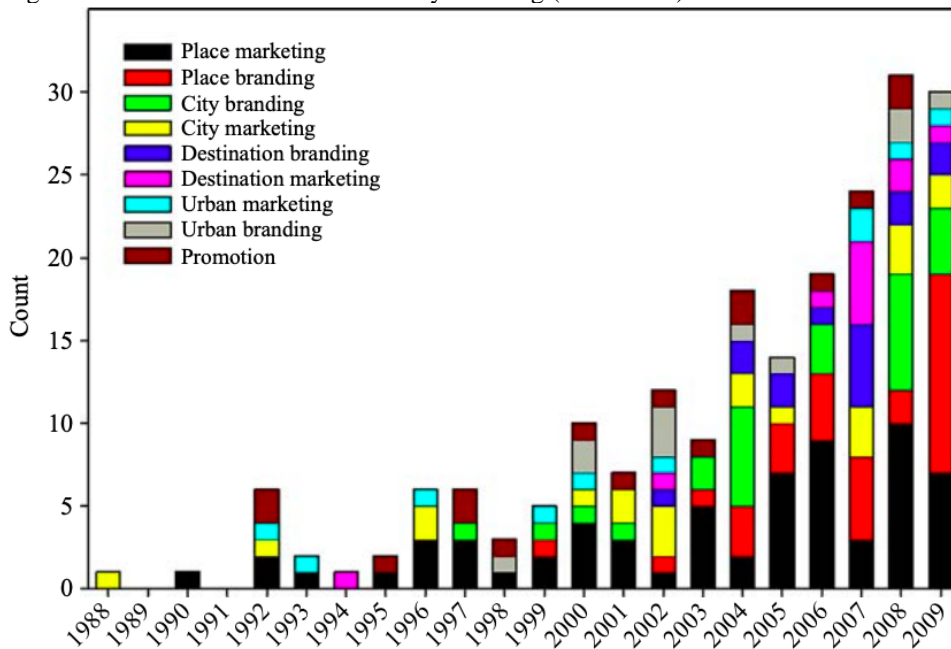
Table 2: Structured keyword search terms			
1	City branding	Framework	Literature review
2	City branding	Index	Literature review
3	City marketing	Framework	Literature review
4	City marketing	Index	Literature review
5	Place branding	Framework	Literature review
6	Place branding	Index	Literature review
7	Place marketing	Framework	Literature review
8	Place marketing	Index	Literature review
9	Employer branding	Framework	Literature review
10	Employer branding	Index	Literature review
11	Employer marketing	Framework	Literature review
12	Employer marketing	Index	Literature review

The limited date range is acknowledged. The findings were contextualized through general research and review of the literature, which was not limited by a date range. Taking into account the nature of both research areas, it was not practical to rely on the seminal works spanning several disciplines over the last decade. In the fast-paced 21<sup>st</sup> century, the date range ensured the review of modern themes advanced with support of the existing literature.

The populated articles were then subject to four article inclusion criteria. The article titles and summaries were read to confirm the articles were available in English, peer-reviewed, relevant to the research question, and identified either main themes or a general conceptual framework. To determine the relevance, the following question was asked:

Does the article identify a city branding framework, which provides the main tenets/themes of city branding? The articles that did not meet the inclusion criteria were excluded from the analysis. The initial search yielded a total of 179 articles, of which city branding returned 158 and employer branding 21. A total of eight articles remained following the inclusion criteria. This resulted in four articles to review city branding and four articles to review employer branding (Table 3). The keyword search terms provided overlap. The duplicate articles were eliminated, with limited differentiation between the ‘branding’ and ‘marketing’ search terms. Through combining the city branding and employer branding literatures the research limits the prevalent silo mentality in the literatures.

Figure 2: The labels used to describe city branding (1988-2009)



Source: Lucarelli & Olof Berg, 2011, p. 20

A summary of the articles identified the main conceptual frameworks in the city branding and employer branding literatures, respectively. Complementary themes across the city branding and employer branding literatures and conceptual frameworks were then discussed to advance a city branding conceptual framework inclusive of talent attraction.

This permitted the expansion and diversification of the developing knowledge base on approaches to city branding.

Table 3: Keyword search term results		
City branding		
Keyword search terms	Search results	Inclusion
City branding; framework; literature review	21	1
City branding; index; literature review	13	0
City marketing; framework; literature review	3	0
City marketing; index; literature review	1	0
Place branding; framework; literature review	78	3
Place branding; index; literature review	23	0
Place marketing; framework; literature review	13	0
Place marketing; index; literature review	6	0
Total	158	4
Employer branding		
Keyword search terms	Search results	Inclusion
Employer branding; framework; literature review	20	4
Employer branding; index; literature review	1	0
Employer marketing; framework; literature review	0	0
Employer marketing; index; literature review	0	0
Total	21	4

## Results

The results are presented for city branding and employer branding to review the inclusion and summary of articles.

### City branding

A total of 158 articles were generated by the city branding keyword searches. The records duplicated between searches were immediately removed, excluding 44 articles. The remaining 114 articles were subject to the inclusion criteria, with the result that 110 were excluded. This resulted in four articles, 3.5 percent of the populated articles, to review for the identification of main themes underlying the components of city branding (Appendix B).

The date range limited data collection to articles published from 2010 to 2018, with the included articles published in 2011 (Maheshwari et al., 2011) and 2017 (Pirnar et al., 2017; Vuignier, 2017; Warren & Dinnie, 2017). The largely recent publications justify the date range selection, with the modern articles including prior works within their literature reviews to propose the main themes and conceptual frameworks. Publication in four separate journals is consistent with the multi-discipline research area. However, the journals shared a focus on branding and marketing (*Marketing and Branding Research*, *Journal of Place Management and Development*, *International Review on Public and Nonprofit Marketing*, and *International Journal of Tourism Cities*). The articles all conducted qualitative research with the shared purpose of identifying the main themes of city branding. This was conducted through literature reviews (Pirnar et al., 2017; Vuignier, 2017) and exploratory qualitative research (Maheshwari et al., 2011; Warren & Dinnie,

2017). These methodological choices permitted a strong reliance on the literature (i.e., prior to 2010) to advance main themes and conceptual frameworks (Appendix C).

The varying methods and scopes of the four articles advanced similar notations of city branding. The literature review conducted by Pirnar et al. (2017) analyzed the global trends, new application types, and successful experiences of city branding. Several works are cited, ranging in date from 2008 to 2014, to identify nine common points of success in city branding: clarity, organization, diversity, opportunity, attractions, activities, unique story, citizen brand positioning, and local government. Vuignier (2017) also reviewed the literature to outline the trends and developments of the literature, namely through a broad and systematic multi-disciplinary literature review. While broad in its approach, reference was made to local place branding. Through a review of 790 articles, six primary themes were identified: image, identity, effects, stakeholders, internet and social networks, and events. The review also identified additional topics that were noted to be particular to disciplinary approaches and anecdotal themes. The noted particular and anecdotal nature excluded these notations. In a change of methodology, Maheshwari et al. (2011) conducted exploratory qualitative research to better understand the concept and component parts of place branding, as there is little agreement on what constitutes the generally-accepted multifaceted concept that is city branding. Their research also sought to examine the relationship between place branding and sustainable development, an important component with regards to the strategic policy implemented by local governments for economic development. While similar to Vuignier's (2017) broad approach, key terms (city marketing, locality, and city) identified city initiatives within the examination of the general marketing, brand, and branding concepts. The research conceptualized eight facets,

related to sustainable development: preserving assets, capability, consistent governance, improved lifestyle standards, regeneration, social reforms, ambassadors, tourism, and optimistic media involvement. Warren and Dinnie (2017) also conducted exploratory qualitative research to promote the practical application of the ICON model and to understand the practices that characterize effective city branding. The ICON model is a framework proposed for the development and implementation of a place brand strategy that can be applied at the local level, proposing good practices to be “characterized by adopting an approach that is integrated, contextualized, organic and new” (Warren & Dinnie, 2017, p. 58). The City of Toronto’ branding efforts were coded with regards to the ICON model to broaden understanding of “the collaborative and innovate practices that characterize effective city branding” (Warren & Dinnie, 2017, p. 56).

### **Employer branding**

The keyword searches for employer branding generated a total of 21 articles. With no duplicated records, all of the articles were subject to the inclusion criteria. This resulted in the exclusion of 17 articles. A total of four articles (19%) remained, which were summarized to better understand the main themes of employer branding (Appendix B).

The publication dates of the articles ranged from 2014 to 2017, again supporting the date range selection for the analysis of modern works that synthesize publications prior to 2010. Published in separate journals, the shared marketing and business focus exemplified how the research area is multidisciplinary (*Journal of Business and Retail Management Research, Decision, Global Business Review, and Journal of Financial Services Marketing*). The articles were all qualitative studies with a shared purpose of identifying components of employer branding within a proposed conceptual framework.

The methodologies differed, however, with three advancing qualitative single-case studies (Näppä et al., 2014; Sengupta et al., 2015; Tanwar & Prasad, 2016) and one explorative qualitative research (Aboul-Ela, 2016).

Similar themes were present across the four articles, with particular attention given to talent attraction, despite varying scopes and methodologies (Appendix C). The literature review conducted by Näppä et al. (2014) advanced a framework to better understand employer branding and, particularly, how it is used to attract and retain talent. The framework demonstrated a connection between employer branding, corporate branding, and internal branding. As internal branding is beyond the research scope, the emphasis is placed on the conceptualization of the relationship between corporate branding and employer branding. Citing several works, two main themes emerged: instrumental attributes and symbolic meanings. Tanwar and Prasad (2016) also conducted a literature review to understand the dimensions of employer branding through the conceptualization of a framework that held four main themes: work environment, corporate social responsibility, work-life balance, and training and development. To identify internal and external employer branding models, Sengupta et al. (2015) conducted a qualitative single case study. The study conceptualized a five-point external model: image and fundamental values, job structure values, work culture values, reference values, and pride values. Finally, investigating the factors that constitute employer branding and what defines an employer of choice, qualitative interviews supplemented the literature review conducted by Aboul-Ela (2016). Factors were revealed by statistical analysis, wherein the items were grouped based on their relatedness into a proposed framework. The BLCG Employer Branding Framework consisted of four dimensions: bloom, live, connect, and grow.





## **Discussion**

The themes and frameworks raised in the select articles were reviewed to identify the main themes of city branding and employer branding, respectively. The main themes were illustrated in city branding and employer branding conceptual frameworks. The review of the literature, main themes, and conceptual frameworks were then grouped across city branding and employer branding to advance the complementary connection between the literature for the development of a conceptual framework for city branding inclusive of talent attraction.

### **City branding**

The themes independently raised in the four articles, through reviewed literature and proposed conceptual frameworks, were grouped into seven main themes: activities and attractions, diversity, identity, image, opportunity, regeneration, and stakeholder engagement.

#### **Activities and attractions.**

Maheshwari et al. (2011), Pirnar et al. (2017), and Vuignier (2017) identified activities and attractions as a prevalent theme. Leisure venues, night life, and other attractions (namely tourist attractions) are important to the city brand. Attractions, particularly those generating tourism, provide opportunities for income and employment as well as provide an interest or, at a minimum, awareness of the city brand to a wider audience. Activities are also noted, particularly those that are “high, popular, local, and cultural” (Pirnar et al., 2017, p. 27). Events and the use of event strategies by local governments was also examined within the literature, with events ranging from mega-events such as the Olympic Games to small series of events.

### **Diversity.**

Diversity is identified as a main theme by Maheshwari et al. (2011) and Pirnar et al. (2017). A richness in ethnicities and diversity in cultures can be achieved through heritage reservation (e.g., artistic, cultural, or architectural). Diversity is also linked to the identity of place, whereby diversity is attributed to be an element of a strong brand identity.

### **Identity.**

The distinctive feature of the city, such as its unique story, is identified as an important theme within the city branding by Pirnar et al. (2017), Vuignier (2017), and Warren & Dinnie (2017). Accounting for its hard and soft assets, city branding must be an organic blend of planned and unplanned activities to remain rooted within the identity and culture of the city.

### **Image.**

The brand image is a common theme identified by Maheshwari et al. (2011), Pirnar et al. (2017), and Vuignier (2017). Clarity of the brand is an important aspect of image. An area of research within the city branding literature is dedicated in its entirety to the aspect of image, wherein it is often examined in terms of “longevity, sustained attention, unforgettable experience, and professionalism” (Pirnar et al., 2017, p. 27). Through image, brand value and its effects are also examined through several measures (e.g., brand equity). Image is an integral theme, because it is essential that the city is capable of revitalizing the brand image so that it may hold the competitive edge by increasing its prospects for opportunities and growth.

### **Opportunity.**

Maheshwari et al. (2011) and Pirnar et al. (2017) identify opportunity as a main theme within the city branding literature. Opportunity includes, for example, “qualified education opportunities for professionals and young students” and are improved through social reforms such as education and skills development (Pirnar et al., 2017, p. 27). These measures are coupled with improved lifestyle standards (e.g., housing facilities) that are said to “attract and retain skilled workers and graduates in the area” (Maheshwari et al., 2011, p. 208).

### **Regeneration.**

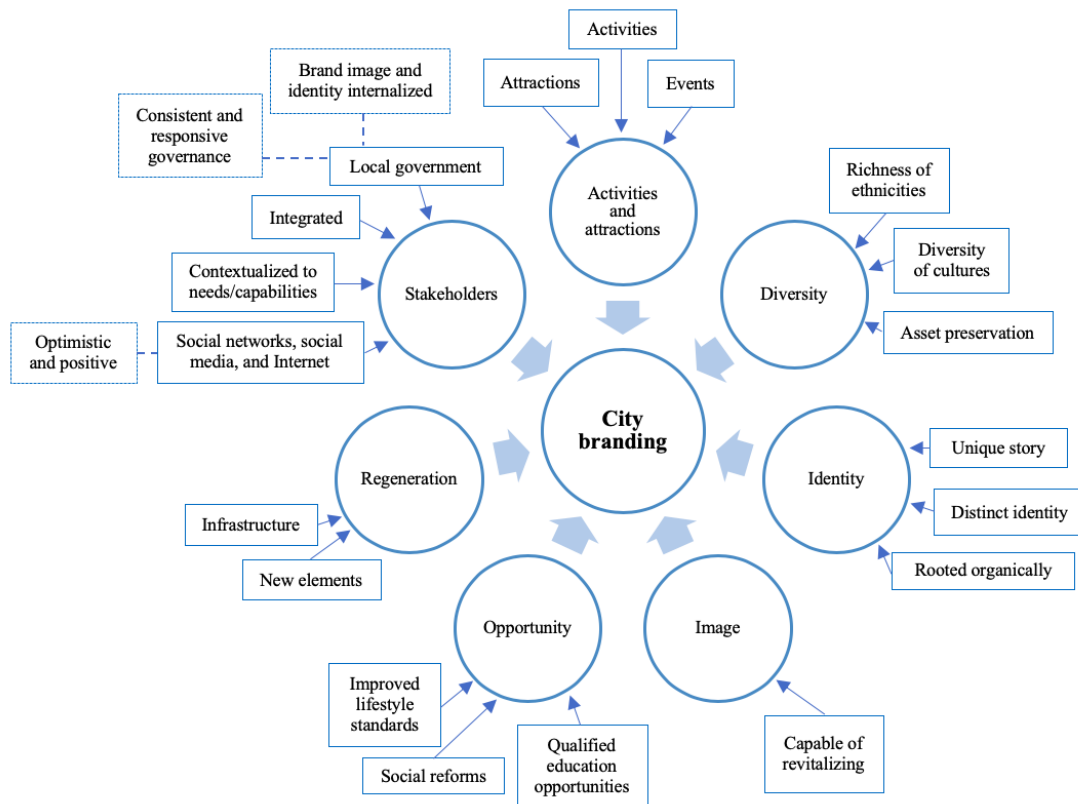
In addition to opportunity, regeneration is identified as a main theme by Maheshwari et al. (2011) and Warren and Dinnie (2017). Regeneration is discussed in terms of continuous improvement to infrastructure, such as high-tech and contemporary business facilities. It is essential for cities to continuously seek innovation that will create new narratives. Innovation will, in turn, attract events (e.g., business conventions and corporate conferences) that will contribute to the local economy.

### **Stakeholder engagement.**

Stakeholders are commonly researched in the literature and can be grouped by stakeholder engagement, local government, media involvement, and brand ambassadors (Maheshwari et al., 2011; Pirnar et al., 2017; Vuignier, 2017; Warren & Dinnie, 2017). The complexity of the city brand means a single entity is unable to advance the city brand and, so, a successful integrated approach requires the engagement of multiple stakeholders. The engagement then requires an understanding of the stakeholders’ needs and capabilities (Warren & Dinnie, 2017). Pirnar et al. (2017) and Maheshwari et al. (2011) acknowledge

local government and the importance for the governance to remain consistent and responsive. It is equally important that the local government internalize the brand image and identity. These aspects allow trust, stability, effective leadership and mutual cooperation to encourage a broad range of stakeholders to become involved (Maheshwari et al., 2011). The interest in information and communication technologies has created popular research topics surrounding social networks, social media and the Internet (Vuignier, 2017, p. 462). Media involvement, namely when it is optimistic and positive, allows wide and regular brand exposure that can confirm the experienced economic well-being and growth (Maheshwari et al., 2011). Citizen inclusion is the final integral element, allowing public brand ambassadors to increase loyalty and exposure to the brand.

Figure 3: City branding conceptual framework



## **Employer branding**

The conceptual frameworks and themes presented across the four articles identified five main themes composing employer branding: image, job, organization, opportunity, and work environment.

### **Image.**

Image is a theme identified across Näppä et al. (2014), Sengupta et al. (2015), and Tanwar and Prasad (2016). The brand image is created with regards to core employer values. Based on external factors, the image is then subject to perception. This includes the person-organization fit, meaning the self-image of the employee and how they would fit within the organization. Employer reference (the reference by current/past employees or trusted persons) is also influenced, but not controlled, by the brand image. Finally, while it can motivate and retain internally, corporate social responsibility can enhance the brand image and reputation to attract the best talent and to be viewed as an employer of choice.

### **Job.**

Job characteristics, namely the scope and nature of the job itself, is a main theme in the literature identified by Näppä et al. (2014), Sengupta et al. (2015) and Tanwar and Prasad (2016). While compensation for performance is accredited to be a large element in the literature, excluding salary and prestige, work-life balance is named one of the most important elements impacting employer attractiveness and an essential talent management issue. Additionally, the physical place of work is noted by Näppä et al. (2014) and supported by Sengupta et al. (2015) that acknowledged location of posting to be an external factor impacting the employer brand.

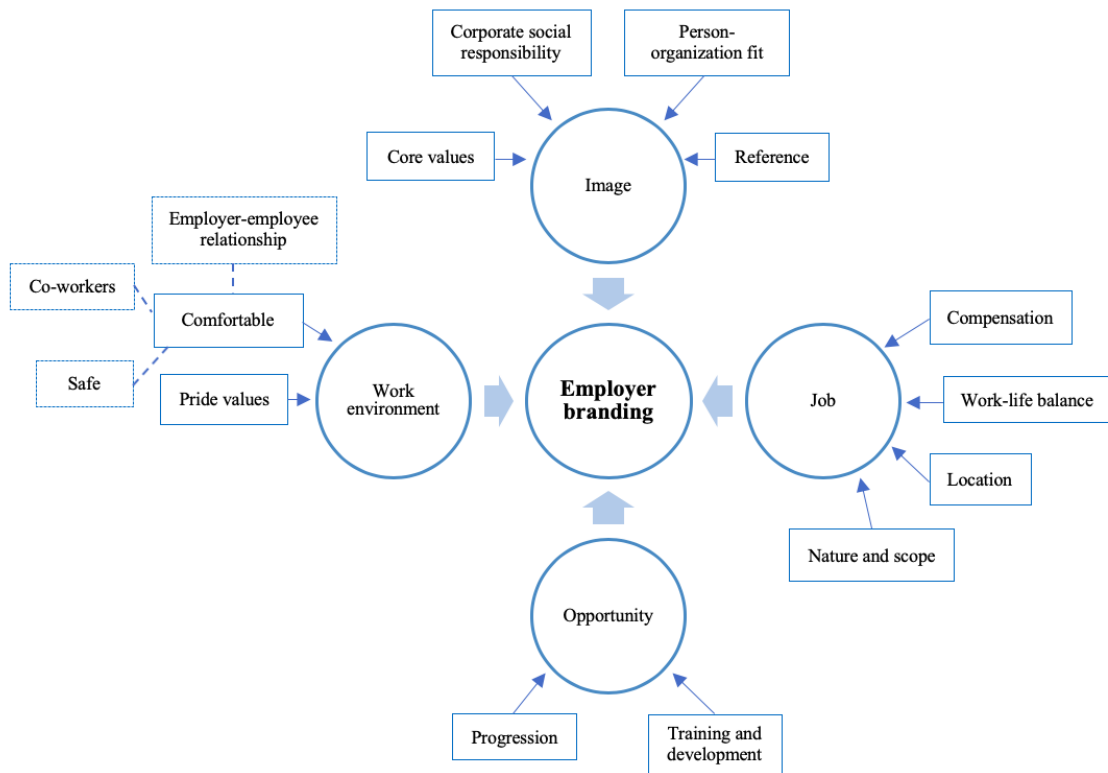
### **Opportunity.**

About-Ela (2016), Näppä et al. (2014), and Tanwar and Prasad (2016) identify that, in terms of recruitment, opportunities for training and development receive great attention and demonstrate a strong relation with employer brand. These opportunities include the potential growth, self-development, and progression of the employee (About-Ela, 2016). An additional aspect is the sense of pride developed through recognition programming and hierarchical positioning.

### **Work environment.**

The work environment is identified as a main theme of employer branding by About-Ela (2016), Näppä et al. (2014), and Tanwar and Prasad (2016). Workplace culture is inclusive of co-worker relationships, employer-employee relationships, growth possibilities, employee comfort, and the hygiene of working conditions. Additional factors may also include the salary scheme, supportive corporate culture, and the work-life balance. While integral aspects of the work environment, these may also extend to external factors.

Figure 4: Employer branding conceptual framework



### **Complementary themes between city branding and employer branding**

The city branding and employer branding literature both originate from traditional product branding and offer strategic policies to combat prevalent issues in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The articles identify themes, through review of the literature or framework conceptualization, of city branding and employer branding. These themes, in turn, identify the complementary themes between the city branding and employer branding initiatives that are often implemented within the same city limits. Based on the eight articles examining city branding and employer branding, four main themes are identified: integrated stakeholder engagement, opportunity for personal and professional development, unique local identity, and work-life balance.



### **Integrated stakeholder engagement.**

Talent attraction is an essential component for the economic development of cities and employers. However, while stakeholder engagement is a main theme within city branding, it is excluded from employer branding. Local governments view city branding as strategic policy but require an integrated approach through stakeholder engagement for its advancement. This requires an understanding of the needs and capabilities of the relevant stakeholders. In this case the needs are talent and the capabilities are existing employer branding. The additional engagement with optimistic and positive media involvement then allows a wide and regular brand exposure that is integrated with employer branding. The city brand exposure is then able to coincide with existing employer branding initiatives for integrated talent attraction. The city branding targets a specified talent pool to attract qualified candidates employable within their city limits.

### **Opportunity for personal and professional development.**

Opportunity is identified as a main theme within the city branding and employer branding literatures. City branding discusses opportunity in terms of education and profession, which can be improved through social reforms (e.g., education and skills development). Within employer branding, training and development are identified for the potential growth, self-development, and progression of the employee. The opportunity is then complementary, wherein city branding encompasses educational and professional avenues for the self-development and potential growth of the employee beyond employer branding. In this case, potential growth and self-development are emphasized through city branding and employer branding.

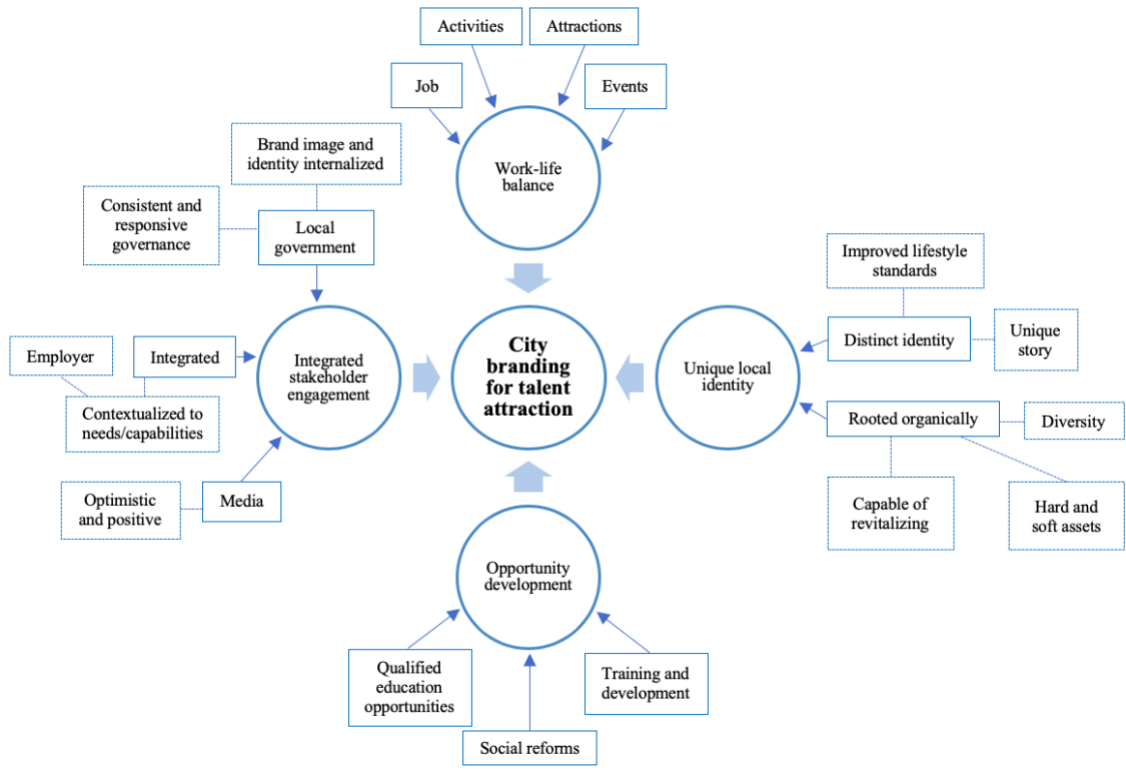
### **Unique local identity.**

Identity, a prevalent theme across city branding and employer branding, encompasses complementary facets. In terms of city branding, the hard and soft assets must be taken into account to remain rooted within the distinctive features and cultures of the city. Indeed, diversity is linked to city identity and attributed as an element of a strong brand identity. The clarity of the brand image is also raised, wherein the city must remain capable of revitalizing its image for competitive advantage. A unique local identity is then advanced by a brand image rooted within distinctive features and diversity, while maintaining a competitive advantage for opportunities and growth through revitalization. In turn, the unique local identity contributes to employer branding in terms of the physical place/location of work. These aspects are coupled with improved lifestyle standards, such as housing facilities. Through integrated efforts, city branding and employer branding posit the ability to attract talent to the employer within the city.

### **Work-life balance.**

Work-life balance is a reoccurring concept within employer branding and requires factors beyond its control for success. Activities and attractions are identified within city branding as a means to generate employment opportunities, such as the case of tourism, heritage reservation, and event strategy. These also provide a source of income and brand awareness. However, beyond the city branding framework, these activities and attractions provide fun recreational and leisure activities for entertainment. Together, city branding and employer branding are capable of marketing cities as a place to work and live.

Figure 5: City branding for talent attraction



## **Conclusion**

For over three decades city branding has earned academic interest, with thousands of local governments implementing initiatives around the world since the late 1990s. The competitive nature of the 21<sup>st</sup> century has since intensified through the growth in the global labour pool and increase in the freedom of movement. In this environment, the question has become not whether to brand but how to brand. The competitive environment is coupled with the increased responsibility placed on cities for their economic well-being. In this context, city branding is a strategic policy tool available to local governments to promote sustained economic development. Through business attraction, talent and its attraction then becomes a competitive advantage to cities. While employer branding literature identifies the attraction of a talented workforce as a main proponent of its conceptual framework, the city branding literature has yet to formally account for talent attraction. The large successes of other sub-brands of place branding (nation branding, destination branding, and higher education branding) justify the local expenditure on city branding initiatives. These successes are coupled with practical implications of city branding as well as informal resident attraction initiatives. For, while limited, an intersect is acknowledged between place branding, city branding, and talent attraction that supports the ability for attracting talent through branding efforts. Derived from traditional product branding, city branding and employer branding then share a similar purpose: to attract talent in the competitive employment market. As branding efforts completed within the same city limits, city branding and employer branding inevitably share a complementary relationship. The review of the literature outlined overarching themes between the city branding and employer branding literatures: integrated stakeholder engagement,

opportunity for personal and professional development, unique local identity, and work-life balance. With the foundational capability of attracting a target group, the adoption of employer branding tenets broadens the ability of city branding to attract talent in the era of globalization.

The research is a conceptual paper that is not based on case studies of city policy and is not tested empirically. Regardless of the strategic direction taken by local governments, the ability to measure the impression and effectiveness of city branding initiatives for talent attraction is limited in nature. The ability to empirically measure the impact of implementing employer branding principles is consequently limited. However, as a vast majority of the city branding literature is based on case studies, these limitations provide future research opportunities. A case study empirically testing the ability of local governments to attract a talented workforce or the ability of local governments working alongside prominent employers would provide additional insight to this research. Further research into empirically-tested practical means of effective success measurements would also broaden current understanding of the city branding literature. This area of research will continue to grow in importance with the competition for resources in the global market only increasing, particularly for talent. With thousands of local governments implementing city branding initiatives to attract new investment, a large focus is placed on the attraction of companies for economic development. However, the competitive employment environment leaves hard-to-fill positions. Talent attraction is then a significant urban problem facing municipalities and requires action. Derived from traditional product branding, city branding and employer branding have complementary themes that can be aligned for a common purpose: to attract talent in the competitive employment market. A

city branding initiative for talent attraction provides the local governments with a practical means to market the city as a place to work and live.

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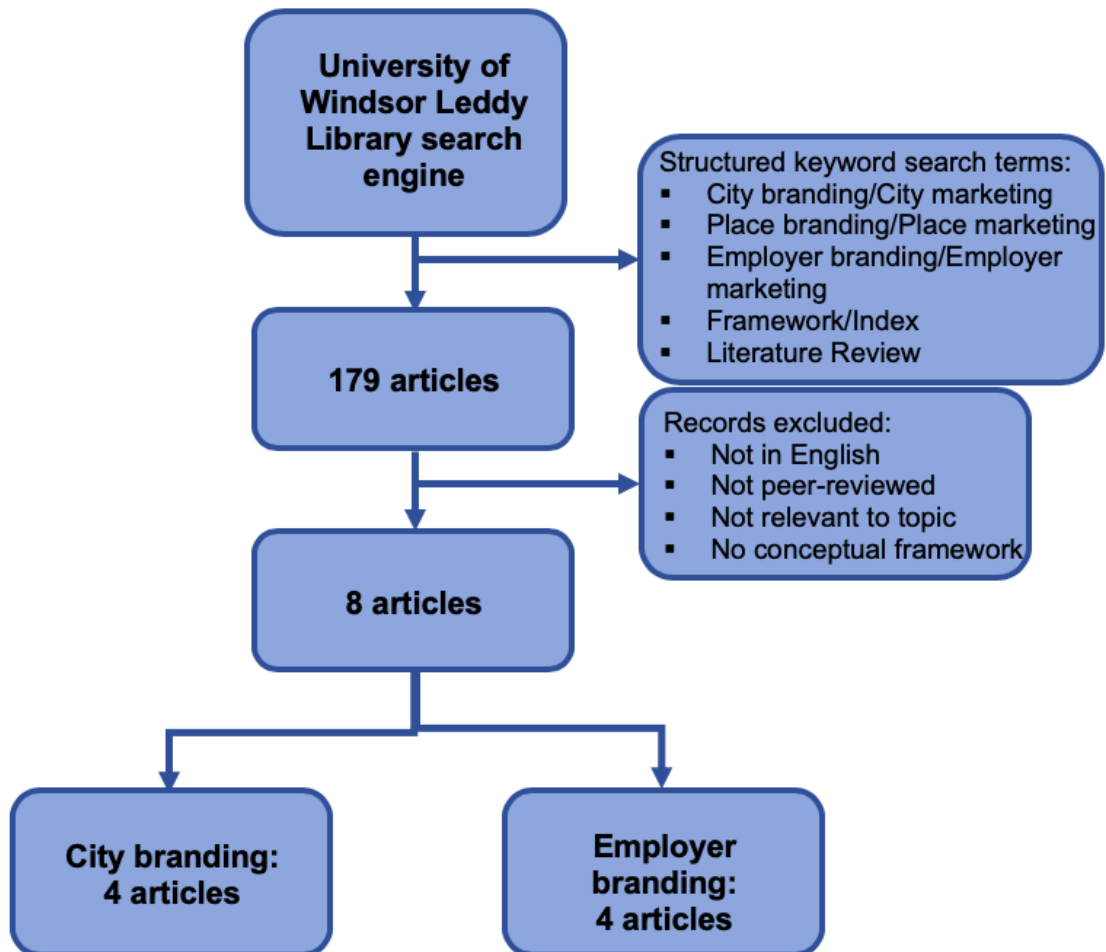
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## Appendices

### Appendix A: Data collection process



Appendix B: Overview of search results

Overview of search results					
City branding					
Article	Author(s)	Year	Journal	Methodology	Key words
Exploring the dimensions of place branding: an application of the ICON model to the branding of Toronto	Warren, G., & Dinnie, K.	2017	International Journal of Tourism Cities	Exploratory qualitative research	Toronto, place branding, city branding, creative city, ICON model
Place branding & place marketing 1976-2016: A multidisciplinary literature review	Vuignier, R.	2017	International Review on Public and Nonprofit Marketing	Literature review	Place marketing, place branding, literature review, state of the art, public management
Place branding's role in sustainable development	Maheshwari, V., Vandewalle, I., & Bamber, D.	2011	Journal of Place Management and Development	Exploratory qualitative research	Sustainable development, place branding, United Kingdom, place marketing
Trends and applications in city branding: A case study in Izmir	Pirnar, I., Igneci, M., & Tutuncuoglu, M.	2017	Marketing and Branding Research	Literature review	City branding, branding trends, global cities, Izmir

Employer branding					
Article	Author(s)	Year	Journal	Methodology	Key words
Employer branding: Attracting and retaining talent in financial services	Näppä, A., Farshid, M., & Foster, T.	2014	Journal of Financial Services Marketing	Qualitative single-case study	Employer branding, corporate branding, internal branding, interactive marketing, word-of-mouth, corporate value
Exploring the relationship between employer branding and employee retention	Tanwar, K., & Prasad, A.	2016	Global Business Review	Qualitative single-case study	Employer branding, employee retention, qualitative pilot study, antecedents and outcomes
Value proposition framework: implications for employer branding	Sengupta, A., Bamel, U., & Singh, P.	2015	Decision	Qualitative single-case study	Employer branding, internal employer branding, external employer branding, value proposition framework
Employer branding: What constitutes “An Employer of choice?”	Aboul-Ela, G. M. B. E.	2016	Journal of Business and Retail Management Research	Exploratory qualitative research	Employer branding, employer of choice, employer image, desired employer



Appendix C: Overview of frameworks

Overview of frameworks	
City branding	
Pirnar et al. (2017)	
Clarity	The clarity of branding
Organization	The longevity, sustained attention, unforgettable experience, and professionalism of the organization
Diversity	The richness of ethnicities and diversity of cultures
Opportunity	The qualified education opportunities for professionals and young students
Attractions	The existence of attractions, such as different leisure venues and possibilities including nightlife
Activities	The availability of high, popular, local, and cultural activities
Unique story	The unique story of the city
Citizen brand positioning	The recommendation of brand positioning to citizens
Local government	The internalization of brand image and identity by the local government
Vuignier (2017)	
Image	The examination of image, awareness, and reputation (i.e., perception)
Identity	The distinctive identity of place
Effects	The brand value and effects (i.e., brand equity)
Stakeholders	The involvement of stakeholders in developing place marketing strategies and the use of participatory processes (e.g., perception of residents)
Internet and social networks	The role of social networks, social media, and the Internet (i.e., information and communication technologies)
Events	The use of event strategies and specific events, ranging from mega-events (i.e., Olympic Games) to series of events
Maheshwari et al. (2011)	
Preserve assets	The preservation of traditional artistic, cultural, and architectural heritage for functional association
Capability	The capability of revitalised brand image increases the prospects for opportunity and growth, providing the competitive edge for the attraction of investment to contribute to economic development
Consistent governance	The consistent and responsive governance encourages stakeholder involvement, as it fosters trust, stability, and engenders effective leadership and mutual cooperation
Improve lifestyle standards	The improved lifestyle standards increase the attractiveness of place, a contributing factor to attracting and retaining skilled workers and graduates in the area
Regeneration	The regeneration facilitates improvements to infrastructure (i.e., transportation links or high-tech and contemporary

	business facilities) contributes to the local economy by attracting events
Social reforms	The social reforms lead to increased opportunities through social and community regeneration (i.e., improved education and skills development)
Ambassadors	The creation of public ambassadors will increase place brand loyalty (i.e. word of mouth)
Tourism	The tourist attractions will increase the number of visitors and, in turn, generate income, employment, and interest/awareness
Optimistic media involvement	The optimistic and positive media involvement confirms the economic well-being and growth of place, wherein significant promotional benefits communicate for regular brand exposure
Warren and Dinnie (2017)	
Integrated	The reliance of a wide range of stakeholder groups, through inter-agency and public-private sector program collaboration to identify what the city is and what it offers to audiences
Contextualized	The attention is placed on ensuring relevance to stakeholder needs and capabilities as well as matching the values of target audiences, wherein the brand is customized to the values of the target population (i.e., not imposed as a fixed, pre-determined template)
Organic	The planning is coupled with organic evolution and development to allow the policy to be rooted within identity and culture (i.e., hard and soft assets)
New	The need for encompassing new elements (i.e., innovative products, services and experiences)
Employer branding	
Näppä et al. (2014)	
Instrumental attributes	The tangible job/organizational characteristics includes compensation for performance (i.e. salary), physical place of work (i.e. location), and career-enhancing opportunities (i.e. future development)
Symbolic meanings	The subjective, intangible characteristics of the job includes person-organization fit (i.e. self-image) and the company's stated core values
Tanwar and Prasad (2016)	
Work environment	The work environment comprises the safe environment, helpful and friendly co-workers, and global exposure to projects
Social responsibility*	The stringent code of conduct and initiatives including health, education, and environment
Work-life balance**	The flexibility of working from home and fun events
Training and development	The good training, opportunities, and personal development within the organization (i.e. orientation and training of new

	recruits, learning and development programmes, and online training facility)
Sengupta et al. (2015)	
Image and fundamental values	The values that fulfil the basic requirements of job incumbents and create company image in their minds (i.e., competitive pay and facilities, scope of balancing work and personal lives, the nature of the job advertisement, moral practices of managers, scope of diversified learning, company brand, duty hours)
Job structure values	The values that offer scope and nature of the job itself (i.e., information about continual training and development, job security, challenging and interesting job details)
Work culture values	Values that offer long-term relationships, quick growth and comfortable work environment (i.e., attrition rate, duration of assignment in case, quick growth, office infrastructure)
Reference values	The values that offer reference for the job by known person (i.e., referred by employee of the organization, referred by someone trusted, location of posting)
Pride values	The values that offer a sense of being superior to others (i.e., recognition or reward policy and hierarchical position)
Aboul-Ela (2016)	
Bloom	The factors outside of the organizational boundaries – what appears to the general public and acts as the main attraction for potential applicants
Live	The actual work environment, particularly the hygiene factors with respect to the working conditions
Connect	The interactional relationship between the employee and the organization
Grow	The employee potential for growth, self-development, and progression in the workplace
<p>*Social responsibility is defined as “the social responsibility of business encompassing the economic, legal, discretionary and ethical expectations that society has of the organisation at a given points of time” (Tanwar &amp; Prasad, 2016, p.1895).</p> <p>**Work-life balance is an impacting factor on attractiveness, the most important leaving aside salary and prestige.</p>	

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