Transformative city branding for policy change: The case of Seoul's participatory branding

Yu-Min Joo and Bokyong Seo

National University of Singapore, Singapore

Abstract

City branding has been widely adopted by entrepreneurial local governments to strengthen city identities and to attract global attention amid intensified intercity competition. Asian global cities, in particular, have competitively branded themselves to signal that they belong to the group of advanced global cities. This paper illustrates the transformative role of city branding in the making of a global city's local identity, which has been hitherto underexplored in the literature. Specifically, it examines Seoul's branding exercises, focusing on its unconventional projects that reflect the city's recent efforts to become a "human-centered," progressive city. We suggest adding a "transformative-enhancing" dimension to the existing "external–internal" city-branding framework, and argue that Seoul's transformative city branding is, in fact, communicating the mayor's new signature policies with citizens. When combined with a strong mayor's efforts to cater to changing societal pressures, city branding is no longer solely a neoliberal marketing exercise, but a political project of policy change.

Keywords

Asian global city, city branding, policy change, public participation, Seoul

Introduction

Branding has emerged as an important strategy in the public sector, particularly at the city level. Intercity competition has intensified in today's globalization with highly mobile capital, and local governments have become increasingly entrepreneurial (Hall and Hubbard, 1996; Harvey, 1989). In their quest to attract new investment, tourists, and residents, local governments are turning to city branding to increase their cities' share of attention and reputation in the global marketplace (Anholt, 2005; Anttiroiko, 2015; Kotler et al., 1999). Common city branding practices involve catchy slogans, logos, and ad campaigns, as well as building flagship landmarks and hosting international mega-events

Corresponding author:

Yu-Min Joo, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore, 469C Bukit Timah Road, Singapore 259772.
Email: sppjym@nus.edu.sg

(Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2005). In the process, places often become commodified, and urban landscapes begin to mimic global city imageries (Chang and Huang, 2008; Zukin, 2009). It is not a surprise then that the term "city branding" is largely seen as a neoliberal concept that prioritizes the market-oriented growth ideologies employed in late capitalist societies.

While the city branding literature first emerged in the West, its practice has expanded globally. Asian global cities, which have successfully caught up with their peers in economic terms, are now competitively applying city branding to boost their symbolic images as advanced global cities. They often advertise their achievements in rapid economic development, modernity, and technology, and are eager to promote their image as important global players (Björner and Berg, 2014; Karvelyte and Chiu, 2011; Wu and Ma, 2006). Seoul—the capital city of South Korea with a population of 10 million—has been no exception. Its branding efforts to create an attractive image as one of Asia's economic powerhouses peaked when it claimed itself as a "design city" in 2007, hoping to become the design capital of the world. More recently, however, Seoul's branding projects have taken a surprising turn, as indicated by three anomalies.

First, at the end of 2015, Seoul said goodbye to the "Hi Seoul" brand that had served the city for thirteen years and introduced a new brand: "I· Seoul· U." The new brand was much parodied and mocked by Seoul citizens, despite the government's efforts to involve a high degree of public participation in every stage of its development. Second, in 2014, Seoul showcased a 63-minute movie, "Bitter, Sweet, Seoul," that is a significant departure from the typical marketing vignette designed to appeal to wide audiences. "Bitter, Sweet, Seoul" is a combination of 141 video clips, globally crowd-sourced, made into a post-modern film portraying the raw reality of Seoul, both good and bad. Third, in 2012, Seoul borrowed the concept of the sharing economy and began promoting itself as the world's first "Sharing City." Competitive Seoul, the leader of South Korea's growth-first ideology, now seemed to be promoting community values of sharing with one's neighbors.

These cases contrast with the standard approach to city branding that is typically associated with promoting a city's competitive assets and is often dictated by public–private partnerships without much citizen involvement. Their strong bottom-up contributions, allowing for diverse views and pursuit of a more socially progressive path, appear to offer an alternative to mainstream branding practices and reflect the new mayor's push for big policy change. How can we analyze and interpret the unconventional city branding that shifts away from market-oriented branding toward a more participatory approach accompanying a new policy paradigm?

The overall goal of this paper is to *contextually* examine city branding from a government policy perspective and push our understanding of the concept beyond a government's market-mimicry in pursuit of neoliberal agendas. Seoul's recent branding projects serve as an exemplary case to study the connections between city branding exercises and attempts at policy change. It points us to the local government's use of city branding in its effort to bring about a new policy paradigm of citizen-centered governance. We examine how city branding is instrumental in the policy paradigm shift, but only as a process, not an outcome. In other words, we do not seek to evaluate what impact the city branding had on the new policy development—an analysis and measurement that has been noted as a challenging (if at all possible) task (Beuregard, 2008; Colomb, 2012). We limit our paper to examine the relationship between city branding and policy change, primarily to add to the literature on the policy-oriented transformative nature of city branding.

To study Seoul's three branding exercises undertaken as the current mayor's efforts at policy changes, we first analyzed key policy documents of the Seoul Metropolitan

Government (SMG): "Seoul Brand I·Seoul·U Guide ver. 1.0"; "Sharing City Seoul Policy Implementation Plan" for the first phase (2012–2014) and second phase (2015–2018); the "Four-Year Policy Plan 2014–2018" and "Policy Implementation Plans" for the years 2013, 2014, and 2015. We also analyzed secondary materials, such as media reports, mayor's speeches, and public survey results on the branding cases.[1] We conducted nine open-ended in-depth interviews: two with policy advisors to the mayor and seven with civil servants from SMG's International Relations Bureau, Tourism Policy Division, Public Communications Division, and Press Relations Division. We asked the interviewees about the new brand projects and SMG's recent policy paradigm changes, particularly from the viewpoints of their divisions or bureaus. We cross-checked our interview data, and triangulated our three key data sources, in order to gain holistic insights into the new city branding projects and their instrumental role in the process of policy transformation of SMG.

The three cases presented in this paper are not exhaustive, but are highly selective choices of the branding exercises that are in accordance with the SMG's efforts to develop participatory governance under its new policy paradigm. Each represents the primary (landscape, structure, infrastructure, and behavior), secondary communication (campaigns, public relations, etc.), or tertiary communication (residents and visitors themselves becoming "ambassadors" of the city brand) that are identified by Kavaratzis (2004). Kavaratzis (2004) underscored the importance of aligning the three different communication of branding, and we analyze our cases under the three schemes framework to see how they come together to deliver SMG's policy message.

The remaining paper is structured as follows. We first critically discuss the city branding concept and its relevance to policy as developed in the literature, and introduce additional (transformative and enhancing) dimensions to the existing (external and internal) framework. We then briefly introduce the rise of city branding in Seoul under the city's two previous mayors, in order to contextualize our case. In the following section, we examine each of the three unconventional branding projects as the key primary, secondary, and tertiary communication schemes undertaken by the current mayor. In the Discussion section, we interpret the three branding projects, paying special attention to their bottom-up focus. Finally, we conclude by highlighting some key insights and contributions of our paper. We argue that city branding efforts located at the transformative end of the spectrum are not just marketing tools, but in fact serve to communicate and consolidate a mayor's signature policies to citizens.

City branding beyond publicity marketing

City branding, an agent of neoliberalism?

Leveraging on its strong visual and often emotion-based communicative power, city branding is an attractive tool for local governments seeking to convey a city's unique identity, strengths, and competitiveness in an increasingly mediated and pluralistic society (Eshuis and Klijn, 2012). The concept is borrowed from corporate marketing, and unavoidably has strong neoliberal origins. It is about entrepreneurial cities constructing symbolic images as strategies to thrive in a competitive neoliberal global scene (Brenner and Theodore, 2002; Harvey, 1989). As branding has been on the rise in the public sector, public policy scholars have examined city branding as an urban governance process, emphasizing the role of various stakeholders (Eshuis and Klijn, 2012; Klijn et al., 2012), and have raised concerns relating to the democratic legitimacy (Eshuis and Edwards, 2013). City branding is in fact often a political, rather than a technocratic, activity (Bellini et al.,

2010; Therkelsen and Halkier, 2011). Some authors caution that city branding led by local elites focuses too narrowly on the positive aspects of a city and its aspirations, while turning a blind eye to a city's less attractive realities (Greenberg, 2008; Paddison, 1993). The cautionary tale has been that locating city branding practices in the hands of a few selected local elites in the public and private sectors prioritizes a capitalist agenda and overlooks ordinary citizens and local needs (Bennett and Savani, 2003).

These concerns with the market orientation of mainstream city branding are particularly worrisome as city branding in the public sector inherently embodies "policy changes" (Anholt, 2008). City branding is not only about identifying and building a symbolic positive image that represents the city, but also about supporting the image with necessary policy efforts. As local governments devise policies to meet the expectations of the brand, city branding becomes much more than marketing communications (Kavaratzis, 2008). Vice versa, city branding—with its communicative power to shape an image of a place—can be used to *legitimize* policy decisions that narrowly pursue urban competitiveness under the neoliberal vision of entrepreneurialism (Colomb, 2012).

With its policy relevance however, can city branding also alternatively take part as strategies that challenge the mainstream market-oriented discourses? In his book, *Rebel Cities* (2012), Harvey brings to attention a possibility to create an alternative collective symbolic capital based on the social relations opposing multinational capitalism. Heightened inter-city competition necessitates an intricate balance between place commodification and local distinction, and there remain "spaces for transformational politics" (2012: 111) that allow for a progressive transformation seeking "to appropriate and undermine the forces of capital rather than the other way round" (2012: 112). Here, we can consider how a *rebel mayor* with enough political support might be able to attempt the transformation of a place in a way that runs counter to the typical late capitalist ideology.

In fact, as cities increase their stature on the global stage, mayors are coming into the limelight as important agents in today's highly networked and globalized world. This is aptly captured in the title of Benjamin Barber's book, *If Mayors Ruled the World: Dysfunctional Nations, Rising Cities* (2013). The rising expectation for mayors to solve multi-faceted policy challenges that are inadequately tackled by existing growth-driven strategies opens up a window to overcome the old politics and policies of the "urban growth machine." Indeed, new policy visions and solutions require a breaking away from established regimes and creating new forms of governance (Brouwer, 2015; Minstrom and Norman, 2009). City branding is important not only as "policy boosterism" (McCann, 2013) but also as a "governance strategy" to achieve policy goals and to communicate with the public (Eshuis and Klijn, 2012: 150). This is even more vital when legitimizing new forms of governance and new policies that go against a strong pre-existing collective image (Bellini et al., 2010). There is thus an imperative to discuss city branding and its roles in a new way, beyond the commonly associated promoting and selling of a place amid inter-city competition. In order to engage with city branding practices that no longer simply conform to market-oriented ideologies, and to analyze their different positioning and strategies, we need a more holistic and multi-dimensional framework.

The analytical framework of city branding

Conceptually, city branding is not limited solely to targeting external markets to gain a competitive edge over other cities and attract investment and tourism, but also includes an internal dimension (e.g., Andersson, 2014; Colomb, 2012; Kavaratzis, 2004; Therkelsen and Halkier, 2011; Van Ham, 2008; Vanolo, 2015). In the corporate realm, internal branding

surfaced as multinational companies sought to promote identity, cohesion, and unity among globally scattered branches (Olins, 1999). Internal city branding, similarly, is about "achieving community development, reinforcing local identity and identification of the citizens with their city, and activating all social forces to avoid social exclusion and unrest" (Kavaratzis, 2004: 70). In practice, city branding often involves both the internal and external dimensions. We can see the emphasized role of "local ambassadors" in the city branding literature as a recognition that external city branding efforts are bolstered by a simultaneous internal element of building consensus and promoting place identification among local residents. The question is more of where a city's branding intentions and practices lie along the external–internal continuum.

In addition to the existing external–internal dimension in city branding, we suggest that there is also an important transformative-enhancing dimension. The transformative dimension focuses on communicating a local government's urban policy visions and aspirations to transform the city into something new, while the enhancing dimension seeks to positively confirm the city's position and strengthen existing policies or characteristics that are deemed attractive. This dimension, like the internal–external one, exists as a continuum, with a city's branding located somewhere between the two poles. A brand that is closer to the transformative end would involve "place transformation" of both the symbolic and material (economic) changes of a city, often under a new governance regime. Such a concept has been framed as "place reinvention" (Nyseth and Viken, 2009).

Transforming the established symbolic images and economic production of a place, as well as its governance and perhaps even the underlying ideology, is far from straightforward. Transformation—whether of the place (Nyseth and Viken, 2009) or of the brand exercise itself (Lucarelli and Hallin, 2015)—involves continuous and multiple processes of assemblage and construction that are both planned and contingent, and are inherently political. The complexity involved in transformation indicates how a transformative branding is not likely to achieve its goal in one clear deliberate attempt. It also implies more attention for bottom-up interests.

Local residents are particularly important, when legitimizing and facilitating transformative efforts. As the "end consumers" of internal city branding, local residents are those most affected by a city's transformative branding measures that intend to reinvent the place. According to Olsson and Berglund (2009: 142), "sustainable place reinvention" is a "demand-oriented process in which the input from local citizens has a key role." Here, we can also see the link between the transformative and internal dimensions of city branding.

Some recent studies on public participation in city branding go even further, seeing local residents and stakeholders as co-producers of a place rather than as consumers (e.g., Braun et al., 2013; Hankinson, 2004, 2010; Houghton and Stevens, 2011; Klijn et al., 2012; Zenker and Erfgen, 2014). In this view, branding should be a continuous, interactive process that brings together the government and the general public in both decision-making as well as in implementation and re-creation. This implies deeply engaged public participation as opposed to a mere formal procedural participation. In fact, White (1996) analytically divided public participation into four typologies: "nominal" (where participation mainly serves the *display* purposes of legitimizing a project by showcasing inclusion), "instrumental" (where participation is a *means* to achieve cost-effectiveness of a project by bringing in local labor and time), "representative" (where participation is sought after to allow *voices* of local interests, ensuring sustainability of a project), and "transformative" (where participation becomes the *means and ends* of empowerment). The ongoing merging of bottom-up and top-down interests in participatory city branding not only resonates well

with the complex process of brand and place transformation highlighted in the literature, but also identifies closely with the "transformative participation."

Overall, we suggest a multi-dimensional framework, where both bottom-up and top-down interests intersect with the external–internal and transformative-enhancing dimensions of branding. This framework seeks to overcome the limitations imposed by a one-sided preoccupation within city branding as a practice largely undertaken by local elites to sell the place to external audiences. The explicit addition of the transformative-enhancing dimension to the analytical framework enables a more accurate analysis of city brand transformations that have a primary goal of transforming the city, backed by policy efforts. It would set the stage for studying the transformative branding exercise from a more comprehensive lens to see how it connects to the larger policy agenda and how it politically strengthens the government's policy changes.

With global cities on the rise as powerful political and economic units (Sassen, 2001), their branding increasingly becomes involved in actively steering development trajectories and shaping local identities and futures, not just attracting the attention of external audiences. Yet, the literature discussed here, on place reinvention and public participation in branding, is mostly based on small cities in Europe. Seoul's latest branding exercises offer an opportunity to study the empirically under-examined concept and dimensions of city branding as contextualized in an Asian global mega-city.

Setting the scene: Seoul's city branding

For many Asian global cities, often operating with a government-led catch-up mentality, city branding efforts focus on the characteristics and images befitting a global city (see Karvelyte and Chiu, 2011; Kim and Oh, 2006; Stevens, 2014). In other words, they more often than not exercise branding, hoping to restructure and reposition cities as on par with Western global cities. Behind this practice lies a political motive on the part of government leaders, especially the strong mayors of the key Asian megacities, as was in the following case of Seoul.

In the last two decades, as Korea successfully pursued development and emerged out of poverty, Seoul has been in a race to build a globally competitive and attractive identity to attract tourists and global investors.[2] City marketing slowly began to take off following Korea's decentralization reforms in 1995, under which city governments and popularly elected mayors started to compete with other cities to attract mobile capital and people (Kim and Kim, 2011). Seoul's branding practices accelerated under Mayor Lee Myung-bak (2002–2006), a former CEO of Hyundai Engineering and Construction. Mayor Lee sought to apply the private sector's efficient marketing strategies to the public sector (Kang, 2004). In 2002, SMG organized the first city slogan contest and chose "Hi Seoul" to reflect the city's friendliness.

Seoul's ambition to brand itself as a global city peaked under Mayor Oh Se-hoon (2006–2011), whose signature policy was the "design city" policy. Under Mayor Oh's administration, significant financial resources were devoted to "creating the image of a global city through 'design'" (Interview with a civil servant, SMG, August 2015). Mayor Oh declared that the Seoul brand should become one of the 10 most competent ones in the world and aimed to increase the number of tourists to 12 million a year (Lee and Kim, 2010). Accordingly, SMG set up a new department in charge of "global city marketing," which was to work closely with multiple advertising companies (Interview with a civil servant, SMG, August 2015). Seoul's branding strategy also synergized with the Korean Wave—the increasing international popularity of Korean television series and pop music (Kim and

Oh, 2006; Lee and Kim, 2010). The budget earmarked for tourism marketing in 2008 was ten times as that of the previous year, with 80 percent of the budget spent on international advertisements (Kim and Kim, 2011).

The city branding strategies of both Mayor Lee (2002–2006) and Mayor Oh (2006–2011) targeted external audiences and prioritized upgrading and transforming Seoul's image as a competitive Asian global city. The development and implementation of these strategies, as in branding exercises undertaken by other Asian cities, mostly took place behind closed doors. Efforts were led by the government and private-sector experts, and seldom engaged the public (Kim and Oh, 2006). They did not emphasize communications with internal audiences, and relied instead on top-down approaches to bring fast developments (Cho, 2011). For ordinary citizens in Seoul, both mayors' branding projects appeared similar to the "growth-first" strategies that had previously shaped Seoul's development. On the surface, the city branding efforts appeared to have a transformative dimension in that they reflected and pushed the postindustrial transformation of Seoul into an attractive global city, but at the root, the branding exercises were more or less a continuation of the previous regimes' ideologies, strategies, and processes of pursuing economic growth and competitiveness. Perhaps it only makes sense that a city branding that is truly transformative in content and process requires a policy paradigm shift.

The role of city branding in Seoul's new policy paradigm

A major turnaround in Seoul's policy paradigm began when Mayor Park Won-soon came to power in 2011, winning the by-election after Mayor Oh's unexpected resignation. Park is a former lawyer and a longtime human rights and social activist, and does not belong to any political party—an unusual circumstance given Korea's strong political party system. He built his political power and support around the idea of a paradigm shift amidst Seoul's overall fatigue with growth-first ideologies. Park's slogan, "citizens are the mayor," represents an effort to transform Seoul's top-down governance and development-driven policies and instead promote a "human-centered city," with an emphasis on citizen engagement and public participation. Since the beginning of his administration, Mayor Park has been committed to citizen-centered governance and has called on citizens to participate actively in policy making and implementation (SMG, 2013b).

Park's effort to build a citizen centered government continued after he was re-elected in 2014. In a policy debate white paper (SMG, 2014c: 2), Mayor Park underscored how "the voices of ordinary people" are critical in building "Seoul of the people, by the people, for the people." Accordingly, SMG's new "Four-year Policy Implementation Plan 2014–2018" promises to achieve its main policy goals through innovative strategies involving cooperative governance and communication with the public (SMG, 2014b).[3] The government has also placed a greater emphasis on the values of sharing, fostering cooperation, and enhancing mutual communication with local communities (Interview with a mayor's policy advisor, SMG, February 2014).
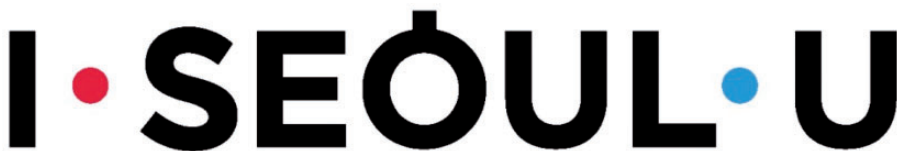
City branding might appear irrelevant to the new policy ideals and the values being promoted. However, Mayor Park turned out to be very keen on city branding, albeit of a different kind. It was necessary and critical to communicate the attempted policy transformation, especially when the new policy agenda heavily emphasized citizen-centered governance. Branding presented an apt opportunity for such communication. We examine three city branding projects, each of which represents a different type of brand communication schemes—primary, secondary, or tertiary—as identified by Kavaratzis (2004). Together, the three projects work toward creating and communicating a

transformed image of Seoul that reflects Mayor Park's new policy paradigm and helps anchor his signature policies.

I·Seoul·U—Secondary communication

Seoul's development of a new city slogan—a key form of secondary communication—is a clear effort to signal the emergence of a different Seoul under Mayor Park. SMG launched the official Seoul brand development project in 2014, together with the mayor's major policy plans. The new slogan was to be made by, and for, citizens, reflecting Seoul's new vision of a citizen-centered city. Focusing on internal audiences, the slogan sought to act as a transformative tool to communicate SMG's intention of citizen empowerment. Therefore, public participation was emphasized at every stage of the slogan development, from the initial idea to promotion. Even the meaning of the slogan is to be continuously shaped by the citizens—the main users. SMG refers to the new slogan as an "open-ended city brand" that relies on users' own interpretations, rather than the predetermined meanings set by experts (SMG, 2015d).

Two main groups led the project: a new Seoul Brand Promotion Committee, which consisted of design companies, NGOs, a city council member, professors and researchers, and 245 citizens serving as Seoul Brand Citizen Ambassadors; and a group of 80 brand marketing experts. SMG also held 11 sessions of the "Our Seoul Story" talk series, where more than 1000 citizens attended and expressed their opinions about the true identity of Seoul (SMG, 2015b). At city hall meetings, a wide range of stakeholders discussed the views that emerged during the talk series, and the discussions were publicized on the official website. Based on the meetings, three key words were chosen to represent the identity of Seoul—"coexisting" (harmonious), "passionate" (enthusiastic), and "relaxed" (balanced). According to SMG, "coexisting" reflects Seoul's philosophy and aligns well with Mayor Park's political philosophy, while "passionate" and "relaxed" represent Seoul's unique identity and its future vision, respectively. From July to September 2015, the Seoul Brand Idea Contest was publicly held to develop a new city brand that represents the chosen three key words. Out of more than 16,000 proposals, 30 were shortlisted for the second round, and the list was then narrowed down by the citizen and expert representatives to three final candidates ("I·Seoul·U,"[4] "Seouling," and "Seoulmate"). The result of an online survey was combined with the votes at the "Meeting of 1000 Citizens" held in October 2015. Although "Seoulmate" won the online vote, all experts and 682 out of 1140 Seoul citizens at the meeting voted for "I·Seoul·U," which ultimately beat "Seoulmate" with 232 votes. One and half years of civic engagement thus culminated in Seoul's new city brand—"I·Seoul·U" (Figure 1). (See Table 1 for a summary of the process.)

Figure 1. Seoul's new brand.
Source: SMG (2015c).

Ironically, the efforts to extensively engage the public through the entire process produced a highly contested outcome. In an opinion poll conducted in Seoul soon after the project, only 15.6% of respondents supported "I·Seoul·U," and almost 40% preferred the old slogan "Hi, Seoul" (Realmeter, 2015). The new brand was ridiculed for making little sense in English (Jung, 2015), especially for its equivocal meaning (Jang, 2015). Seoul residents

Table 1. Road map of the Seoul brand development project.

Subject		Activity	
1. Survey and diagnosis	• Desktop survey		
	• Qualitative survey	• In-depth interviews with stakeholders	
		• Focus-group interviews	
	• Quantitative survey	• Online panel survey	
		• Social media analytics	
2. Branding strategy development	• Brand system diagnosis	• Portfolio workshop	
	• Core-concept development	• Civic mapping	
		• Citizens' meetings	
	• Strategic direction formation	• Target value development	
3. Brand development	• Citizen engagement	• "Idea Wall" event	
		• "Design Open Canvas" event	
		• Instagram contest	
		• Brand idea contest	
	• Experts' involvement	• Slogan development	
		• Design development	
4. Decision-making	• Selection of candidate brands		
	• Brand registration	• Application	
		• Registration	
	• Preference survey	• Domestic online survey	
		• International online survey	
	• Final decision	• "Meeting of 1000 Citizens"	
	• Brand manuals development	• Discussions on the contents	
		• Manuals development	
5. Declaration of the new brand	• Declaration ceremony in Seoul Plaza (a small ceremony to declare a powerful message)		
6. Participatory campaigns and advertisements	• Online communication channels	• Official website	
		• Blogs, Facebook	
	• Online commenting event		
	• "Finding the uniqueness of Seoul" event in association with portal sites		
	• Offline communications and advertisements		
	• Documentary film production		
	• "10 second Video" contests		
	• Media advertisements		

Source: SMG (2015b).

readily came up with parodies, expressing their discontent with the city. Starting with Liam Neeson's scene in the movie "Taken," where he says, "I will find you, and I will kill you" and replacing it with, "I will find you, and I will Seoul you," "I·Seoul·U" has become a symbolic sentence that represents negative aspects of urban life in Seoul. As one of the many examples, "I·Seoul·U" means "I will raise your rent," in the context of Seoul's high rental prices (Suk, 2015). International ridicule is also expected. In *Branding in Asia Magazine*, an article titled "'I·Seoul·U'—the confusing new slogan for Seoul, South Korea" somewhat sarcastically commented, "while the new slogan will likely get a fair share of international ridicule, people will at least be talking about 'I·Seoul·U'—maybe that was the goal all along?" (McGill, 2015).

Faced with parodies and criticisms, SMG outright embraced the negative reactions, and opened an online contest titled "Make 'I·Seoul·U' into your own Seoul Brand!" Citizens were invited to come up with their own words to fill in between "I" and "U." SMG also published several books, such as "Seoul Brand Guide ver. 1.0 (2015d)," "Our Seoul Story (2015b)," and "Seoul Brand Story (2015e)," to explain the public effort that went into creating the new brand and to suggest ways in which the brand can be used by citizens.[5] Undeterred by the initial criticisms, SMG is showing a consistent effort to engage citizens in making the new brand their own.

For sure, "I·Seoul·U" reflects and supports Mayor Park's overall policy agenda to transform the image of Seoul into a human-centered city, not only in the slogan's symbol and meaning, but also in the participatory development and promotion of the brand itself. It is thus a brand transformation working at multiple layers. Attesting to the transformative and internal focus of the exercise, Robert Koehler, one of the foreign members of the Seoul Brand Promotion Committee, wrote for the *Korea Herald* that the success of "I·Seoul·U" "will depend less on whether foreigner tourists understand it and more on whether Seoulites themselves come to accept it" (2015). While the "I·Seoul·U" campaign initially faced difficulties, with the continued government effort to involve citizen engagement in further shaping its meaning and promotion, perceptions are beginning to improve. A poll conducted in October 2016 showed that 63% of the citizens were now aware of "I·Seoul·U," and that 53% had a generally favorable perception of the slogan.[6] What is puzzling is that about 60% of respondents considered the new brand to contribute to Seoul's global advertisement for tourism, and about half of the respondents did not agree that the new brand strengthened their pride for Seoul (Lee, 2016). In other words, Seoul citizens continue to perceive the new brand as being a marketing-oriented external brand.

The "I·Seoul·U" case was challenging because it not only involved changing the brand for place transformation toward socially progressive political concerns—already not an easy task—but also transforming the communication of the brand from external to internal. City slogan is a secondary form of communication that typically serves as an external marketing tool, and our case indicates the difficulty of changing it into an internal brand. In other words, with audiences' rather fixed perception of the city slogan being an external city marketing tool, SMG struggled to narrow the gap between its intentions behind "I·Seoul·U" and the slogan's reception. "I·Seoul·U" thus highlights the important yet difficult official branding exercise in the communication of Seoul's new policy paradigm.

Bitter, Sweet, Seoul—Tertiary communication

"Seoul, Our Movie" was an experimental small branding project that produced a global crowd-sourced film titled "Bitter, Sweet, Seoul." It was part of the "Global Brand Marketing Project," designed and implemented by the Culture, Tourism, and Design

Division of SMG. While the project at first appears to be a form of secondary communication—as an official marketing project—a closer look reveals it is actually a form of tertiary communication. The project relied on the actual representations by residents and visitors of their ordinary lives and experiences in the city, and could be considered a platform that brought together and shared individuals' images of Seoul.

As implied by the title, "Bitter, Sweet, Seoul," the movie's goal was to be truthful and to show the reality of the city, with ordinary citizens and visitors as the main characters. SMG openly invited public submission of video clips of the city, and about 12,000 video clips were submitted. Most were taken by mobile phones, and half were submitted from Chinese, Americans, Canadians, and Singaporeans. A well-known Korean movie director, Park Chan-wook, and his brother selected 141 clips from those submitted and edit them into a 63-minute documentary. The movie was broadcast live in February 2014 on YouTube and in a movie theater. Although the film directors did the final selection and editing work, public participation was the founding block of this collage film, as the core components were crowd-sourced video clips. In the movie preview, Mayor Park said, "The greatest significance of this project is the fact that everyone from all over the world made this movie together. This is what makes this project truly meaningful. [...] by sharing each other's own experience and feeling of Seoul, we were able to create a special movie that illuminates the undiscovered images of Korea. The honesty and truthfulness of Seoul shown in the movie is what actually distinguishes the city" (PR Newswire, 2014).

The quotidian urban life scenes captured through the eyes of the general public were far from the highly selective and beautified images that typically appear in city advertisement films, such as iconic landmarks, spectacular natural environments, rich culture, and historic heritage sites. Instead, there were images of people going to work early in the morning to fish markets, retail shops, and post offices; people busking and attending festivals; students cramming for exams; and religious gatherings and activities. The film also did not shy away from showing the darker side of the city, including violent citizen protests against the government, a bridge collapsing, and the infamous burning down of Korea's first National Treasure Sungnyemun (the historic South Gate of Seoul). Unlike short and attractive vignettes designed for TV commercials or billboards, the film is currently available on YouTube only, and does not communicate itself as the city's official promotional video.

In our view, "Bitter, Sweet, Seoul" was an effort to enhance the tertiary communication of "word of mouth, reinforced by media [...] not controllable by marketers" (Kavaratzis, 2004: 69). Local citizens and foreigners were symbolically brought together to produce a movie that showed the city's raw reality, without any particular perspective imposed, and allowed for viewers' own interpretations (Park, 2014). The movie project appears to be about evoking and reinforcing Seoul's ongoing policy transformation and identity building project. It also closely followed Mayor Park's new cultural policy projects, which promoted public participation in creating media content to advertise Seoul's neighborhoods using common devices (e.g., mobile phones) and sharing the outputs widely via social media (e.g., YouTube) (SMG, 2013b). While the hour-long crowd-sourced film's publicity effect for Seoul has been somewhat limited,[7] the unconventional project is significant not only in communicating but also in exercising one of Mayor Park's participatory cultural policies at the city-wide scale.

Seoul, the sharing city—Primary communication

The "sharing city" vision of Seoul has been SMG's major economic policy since 2012. It is Mayor Park's pet policy project that represents Seoul's new transformative pursuits under

his larger policy agenda, seeking to develop a sharing economy and culture among the public. The branding of Seoul as a sharing city can thereby be construed as a primary form of communication in that it is a concrete action to transform the economic infrastructure of Seoul.

As the first global city to officially label itself as a sharing city, Seoul has received international recognition for publicly disseminating the sharing culture throughout the city. The online magazine, "Shareable," introduced Seoul's sharing city policy and explained how "by putting the city's stamp of approval on select sharing services, the city builds the public's trust in the sharing economy and introduces citizens to proven and trusted sharing services" (Johnson, 2013). In 2014, Seoul was awarded an Honorable Mention at the fifth Metropolis Awards for its "Sharing City" project. In McLaren and Agyeman's book, *Sharing Cities* (2015), Seoul is introduced as the second case study after San Francisco, the largest center for the sharing economy in the United States.

SMG's sharing city agenda focuses on reviving and rebuilding a community spirit and an identity that is inclusive and convivial. This is in contrast to the San Francisco type of sharing city that is motivated by commercial interests. Seoul's sharing city vision aspires to maximize utilization of existing resources, recover trust and relationships among citizens, and revitalize the city's economy (SMG, 2012). Its main strategies involve sharing with each other what people already have, such as idle materials (e.g., toys, clothes, books, cars), spaces (e.g., parking lots, houses, public facilities), knowledge, labor, and information. It also leverages on Seoul's highly networked infrastructure to emphasize tech-enabled sharing (SMG, 2012).

Public participation in Seoul's sharing city initiative manifests itself in two ways. First, in order for the sharing economy to work, citizens must actively participate and be willing to share commodities with others. Second, and more important, SMG relies on cooperation between citizens and the government (Song, 2013), again representing the Mayor's core policy tenet. This distinguishes Seoul's practices from those of other sharing cities.[8] SMG created a Sharing Promotion Committee to make important decisions on the policy and has partnered with grassroots citizen organizations and tech startups. SMG has also focused on developing "super-sectoral social innovation," involving the government, citizens, and the private sector (McLauren and Agyeman, 2015: 77). As a result, the sharing economy has expanded rapidly in Seoul over the past 3 years. The number of social enterprises participating in the sharing economy grew from 37 in 2013 to 63 in 2015; in April 2015, SMG announced a comprehensive plan for the second phase of the sharing city policy. Furthermore, there is a consensus on the value of sharing among the general public (Kang, 2015). A public survey conducted in Seoul in May 2016 showed that most respondents (95%) are roughly or fully aware of Seoul's sharing city projects. Among users of the sharing economy services, 83% were generally satisfied (SMG, 2016).

Simultaneous with these efforts to build social consensus and a local identity of the sharing city within Seoul, SMG has actively publicized the sharing city brand by hosting a number of international conferences and events to introduce its sharing city policy in action. It sponsored the development of the Creative Commons "Share Hub" platform, which provides the latest information and data on Korea's sharing movement in English (english.sharehub.kr). Subsequently, SMG has been invited to various international conferences to introduce Seoul's sharing city policy (Kim, 2016), turning the innovative economic policy into a powerful city brand that can be publicized globally. Seoul received the "Place Marketing Award" in March 2016 at the Place Marketing Forum in recognition of its experimental policy innovations in the sharing economy model. The sharing city agenda thus helps to brand Seoul internationally as an innovative urban hub. Seoul is

gaining attention for a branding approach that is in stark contrast with the competitive agendas that Asian global cities typically emphasize. Mayor Park's transformative economic policy itself is becoming an effective example of primary communication at work, both as internal and external city branding.

Discussion: Seoul's participatory branding for transformation in governance

The three city branding projects examined in this paper illustrate SMG's use of the primary, secondary, and tertiary branding communications as tools to consolidate local identity and to help build political consensus around the mayor's effort to build a "human-centered city." The distinctive characteristics of the three projects are the result of efforts to communicate and support the city's new identity, with an emphasis on residents and their well-being rather than on economic competition. In particular, the projects were participatory, with residents as both the key consumers and producers of the branding.

To further elaborate, each of the branding communication schemes underscores public participation, deliberately showcasing the new policy ideology and governance model. The bottom-up emphasis aligns with the new citizen-centered policy paradigm and signals a transformation away from the growth-driven, top-down governance approach used in the past. However, public participation can take many different forms and serve different interests, as identified by White (1996), mentioned earlier in the paper. Seoul's branding case stands out precisely because of its overarching analysis indicates emphasis on "transformative participation," with both top-down and bottom-up interests ultimately aiming for citizen empowerment.

To further elaborate, public participation in Seoul's new brand campaign was not simply a gesture toward public participation in the development of the city brand: citizens were placed at the center, as critical actors involved in shaping the meaning and use of the "open-ended brand," "I·Seoul·U."[9] Similarly, the "Bitter, Sweet, Seoul" movie project was made, and its outcome was to be freely interpreted, by residents and visitors, thereby being a platform to reinforce Seoul's tertiary brand communication. In these two projects, public participation did not merely seek to legitimize a brand that was predetermined and promoted by the city government and experts. Rather, it was an exercise to communicate that citizens and the public are the true owners of the city, and are themselves capable of developing the brand and creating the image of Seoul. For the primary communication of implementing the specific economic policy (*sharing city*), SMG emphasized the role of citizens in its governance. Seoul's "sharing city," which is centered on reviving and rebuilding a local community spirit, itself embodied the idea of citizen participation as pivotal in transforming a part of city's economic infrastructure from the bottom up. In short, when considering the means and ends of the public participation holistically across the various brand communication schemes, citizen empowerment was at the core of their practices and symbolic goals.

We interpret Seoul's city branding projects that accompany Mayor Park's policy paradigm shift to be about bringing forth "transformative participation." The newly pursued image of Seoul is a city that citizens are able to meaningfully contribute to from the bottom-up, which is in stark contrast to Seoul's past experiences dictated by growth agendas driven by government-corporate collaborations. In a way, Mayor Park acted as a "policy entrepreneur" (Kingdon, 1984), taking advantage of Seoul residents' overall discontent with the long-practiced top-down growth-focused approaches to launch a transformative policy agenda. He pushed his signature agenda by working to shape both

top-down interests (of himself and SMG) and bottom-up interests (of Seoul citizens) toward citizen empowerment, transforming the entrenched power relationship between citizens and the government. This intention to transform governance was visibly conveyed, through the actual practices of the branding projects and their highly communicative nature. By communicating and experimenting with the key intentions for the *transformation in governance,* city branding was instrumental in consolidating the mayor's new policy ideals.

Seoul's case reveals how city branding is able to serve as a policy communication tool that seeks to reinvent the city around internal local identities, as it expresses and applies the new policy paradigm. Its transformative nature is not limited to producing a transformed city image as an outcome decided by elites (including select private and public actors); it goes further to communicate the idea that citizens should develop the changed image and its interpretations (with the assistance of the government and experts). It thus symbolically implies a reallocation of power and a transformation of governance. Overall, we explain Seoul's series of branding activities as coming together to signify the mayor's intentions to facilitate citizen empowerment within a larger goal of governance transformation. The place and brand transformation takes place within a complex mix of dynamic and continuous processes, and we expect Seoul's transformation in governance to involve various communication efforts over time. As Seoul rebrands itself using primary, secondary, and tertiary brand communication schemes, the mayor's new policy agenda becomes loud and clear.

Conclusion

This paper seeks to expand the understanding of city branding by using a multi-dimensional framework that includes both external–internal and transformative-enhancing components. Thus far, the mainstream literature on city branding practices and concepts has revolved around the intensified use of city marketing strategies as part of neoliberal inter-city competition. Our framework adds a transformative dimension and opens up the possibility to analytically examine the diverse intentions and strategies of city branding. Seoul's latest branding projects are a case in point for showcasing how city branding buttresses the mayor's policy intentions to transform the city and encourage citizen empowerment. It indicates an alternative city branding that leverages on and highlights the hitherto underemphasized transformative values of city branding.

What is particularly new about our paper is the introduction of how city branding is able to target other more progressive intentions that widely depart from the assumed and entrenched market-oriented goals as instances of neoliberalization. The transformative nature of city branding has been mentioned elsewhere, for example, in the place reinvention and brand transformation literature. It is also easy to imagine city branding being employed to transform struggling cities' economic structures and identities, with the expectation that the branding will help them to revive and thrive in a changing global economy. Here, we can think about the different layers of transformation that can take place: a city branding exercise may be transformative in its strategies, goals, or its overarching ideology—or a combination of the three. Seoul's case stands out because it involves transformation at all of the different layers, including the ideology.

Last but not least, our paper contributes to the literature on the branding of Asian global cities that has lopsidedly focused on competitiveness and external markets. These growth agendas are no longer as sustainable and are increasingly being challenged (Douglass, 2000; Ho and Douglass, 2008). Asian global cities thus find themselves in a position to transform their identity in a way that resonates better with local residents. While there is a need for

strong internal branding to provide a meaningful identity of a place to its residents, mayors—with huge political leverage and motivation—can act as key agents of policy paradigm shift, which in turn can be reflected and elevated by city branding. As globalization intensifies, these transformative and internal dimensions warrant significantly more attention within the current debates on city branding than they have received so far. We hope our paper acts as a first step to trigger further discussion.

Declaration of conflicting interests

Funding

Notes

1. The analysis of "Bitter, Sweet, Seoul" project was mainly based on the secondary data due to the unavailability of official policy documents.
2. For Seoul, the challenge was made especially difficult by its relatively recent history of utter destruction during the Korean War (1950−1953) and its hasty reconstruction afterwards. As Korea pursued development from the 1960s to 1980s to overcome dire poverty, city branding was not the government's priority: Seoul had more urgent urban problems to address, including providing housing, transportation, and other urban infrastructure for a rapidly growing population.
3. The plan pledged four key policy goals: to make Seoul into a "Safe" (from disasters and crimes), "Heart-warming" (with expanded welfare), "Dreaming" (through creative economy, culture, and tourism), and "Breathing" (with green spaces and clean energy) city (SMG, 2014a).
4. "I.Seoul.U" (with the periods (.) between the words) was the proposed and initially selected slogan. After its selection though, specific concerns were raised over the disconnectivity implied by the periods, and SMG replacing them with middle dots (·) (SMG, 2015d). For both before and after the change, we write "I·Seoul·U" throughout the paper.
5. "I·Seoul·U" is available for both for-profit and nonprofit use by individuals and corporations. The new brand is available for-profit purposes to those who are based in Seoul, and as long as they sign up to become the member of the "Seoul Brand Partners." They can either use the brand in their products, or use the brand by replacing "Seoul" with their product brands (or the name of NGO or an image for nonprofit uses) between "I" and "U." "Seoul" must be added back below the new word or image that replaced it (SMG, 2015d).
6. This is also in line with our Google search that we conducted to grasp the overall response trends of Seoul's new brand in November, 2016. Using the keyword "I·Seoul·U," we analyzed the first 10 webpages (84 websites), categorizing each site into "negative," "neutral," or "positive" response. Among the 30 "negative" responses, 22 were reported between October and December, 2015, when the new brand was just launched; among 25 "positive" responses, 15 were reported in 2016.
7. "Bitter, Sweet, Seoul" today has only been viewed about 52,000 times total. The popular Gangnam Style music video, which was filmed in Seoul and became YouTube's most watched video within just four months of its release, and now has more than 2.5 billion views, probably has had more of a publicity impact on Seoul.
8. The San Francisco model is led by the private sector and the European model is led mainly by the government (Song, 2013).

9. Without including this latter part of open-ended brand to holistically evaluate the project, the slogan development part of the brand development alone could be seen as a mix of nominal and representative participation, instead of transformative. It could be interpreted as the government's desire to develop a well-supported, sustainable brand by allowing citizens a *voice* in the development (representative participation), but seemingly a mere symbolic *display* of nominal public participation. By no means are 1000 citizens a good representation for a mega-city of 10 million.

References

Andersson I (2014) Placing place branding: An analysis of an emerging research field in human geography. *Geografisk Tidsskrift-Danish Journal of Geography* 114(2): 143–155.

Anholt S (2005) Some important distinctions in place branding. *Place Branding* 1(2): 116–121.

Anholt S (2008) Editorial – Place branding: Is it marketing, or isn't it? *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy* 4: 1–6.

Anttiroiko AV (2015) City branding as a response to global intercity competition. *Growth and Change* 46(2): 233–252.

Barber BR (2013) *If Mayors Ruled the World: Dysfunctional Nations, Rising Cities*. London: Yale University Press.

Beauregard RA (2008) Review of branding New York: How a city in crisis was sold to the world, by Miriam Greenberg. *City & Community* 7(3): 300–302.

Bellini N, Loffredo A and Pasquinelli C (2010) Managing otherness: The political economy of place images in the case of Tuscany. In: Ashworth G, Kavaratzis M and Edward Elgar Publishing (eds) *Towards Effective Place Brand Management: Branding European Cities and Regions*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 89–115.

Bennett R and Savani S (2003) The rebranding of city places: An international comparative investigation. *International Public Management Review* 4(2): 70–87.

Björner E and Berg PO (2014) Introduction: Setting the scene. In: Berg PO and Björner E (eds) *Branding Chinese Mega-Cities: Policies, Practices and Positioning*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 1–18.

Braun E, Kavaratzis M and Zenker S (2013) My city – My brand: The different roles of residents in place branding. *Journal of Place Management and Development* 6(1): 18–28.

Brenner N and Theodore N (2002) *Spaces of Neoliberalism: Urban Restructuring in North America and Western Europe*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Brouwer S (2015) Policy entrepreneurs as agents of change. In: Stijn B (ed.) *Policy Entrepreneurs in Water Governance: Strategies for Change*. Cham: Springer International Publishing, pp. 1–22.

Chang TC and Huang S (2008) Geographies of everywhere and nowhere: Place-(un)making in a world city. *International Development Planning Review* 30(3): 227–247.

Cho MR (2011) Evaluation of Lee, Myung-bak and Oh, Se-hoon administrations and the qualifications for the new mayor. *People and Policy* 3: 50–66.

Colomb C (2012) *Staging the New Berlin: Place Marketing and the Politics of Urban Reinvention Post-1989*. Abingdon/New York: Routledge.

Douglass M (2000) Mega-urban regions and world city formation: Globalization, the economic crisis and urban policy issues in Pacific Asia. *Urban Studies* 37(12): 23115–2335.

Eshuis J and Edwards A (2013) Branding the city: The democratic legitimacy of a new mode of governance. *Urban Studies* 50(5): 1066–1082.

Eshuis J and Klijn EH (2012) *Branding in Governance and Public Management*. New York: Routledge.

Greenberg M (2008) *Branding New York: How a City in Crisis Was Sold to the World*. New York: Routledge.

Hall T and Hubbard P (1996) The entrepreneurial city: New urban politics, new urban geographies? *Progress in Human Geography* 20(2): 153–174.

Hankinson G (2004) Relational network brands: Towards a conceptual model of place brands. *Journal of Vacation Marketing* 10(2): 109–121.

Hankinson G (2010) Place branding research: A cross-disciplinary agenda and the views of practitioners. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy* 6(4): 300–315.

Harvey D (1989) From managerialism to entrepreneurialism: The transformation in urban governance in late capitalism. *Geografiska Annaler. Series B, Human Geography* 71(1): 3–17.

Harvey D (2013) *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution*. London: Verso.

Ho K and Douglass M (2008) Globalisation and livable cities: Experiences in place-making in Pacific Asia. *International Development Planning Review* 30(3): 199–213.

Houghton JP and Stevens A (2011) City branding and stakeholder engagement. In: Dinnie K (ed.) *City Branding: Theory and Cases*. Houndmills/Basingstoke/Hampshire/New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 45–53.

Jang HJ (2015) Seoul's new brand in controversy. *Joongang Ilbo*, 30 October. Available at: news.joins.com/article/18970282 (accessed 2 November 2015).

Johnson C (2013) Is Seoul the next great sharing city? *Shareable*, 16 July. Available at: www.shareable.net/blog/is-seoul-the-next-great-sharing-city (accessed 18 October 2015).

Jung MH (2015) 'I·Seoul·U' is new slogan for Seoul. *The Korea Times*, 29 October. Available at: www.koreatimes.co.kr/www/news/nation/2015/10/116_189684.html (accessed 2 November 2015).

Kang SK (2004) Branding strategy for a global city Seoul. Available at: blog.naver.com/hiseoulkang/80004664090 (accessed 2 November 2015).

Kang ST (2015) Diagnosis of Korean sharing economy. *Maeil Kyeongje News*, 13 July. Available at: news.mk.co.kr/newsRead.php?year=2015&no=668169 (accessed 16 October 2015).

Karvelyte K and Chiu JH (2011) Planning process of city brands: A case study of Taipei city. *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy* 7(4): 257–270.

Kavaratzis M (2004) From city marketing to city branding: Towards a theoretical framework for developing city brands. *Place Branding* 1(1): 58–73.

Kavaratzis M (2008) *From city marketing to city branding: An interdisciplinary analysis with reference to Amsterdam, Budapest and Athens*. PhD Thesis, University of Groningen, The Netherlands.

Kavaratzis M and Ashworth GJ (2005) City branding: An effective assertion of identity or a transitory marketing trick? *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie* 96: 506–514.

Kim CD and Oh H (2006) Developing strategies of city marketing in Seoul: Focusing on city brand management. Report, Seoul Development Institute, Seoul, December.

Kim KH (2016) Seoul introduces sharing city policy to US and Europe. *Moneytoday*, 15 May. Available at: www.mt.co.kr/view/mtview.php?type=1&no=2016051111425570513&outlink=1 (accessed 13 September 2016).

Kim YK and Kim EP (2011) Seoul city branding: The case of Seoul's international brand communication. In: Dinnie K (ed.) *City Branding: Theory and Cases*. Houndmills/Basingstoke/Hampshire/New York: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 190–198.

Kingdon JW (1984) *Agendas, Alternatives, and Public Policies*. Boston: Little, Brown.

Klijn EH, Eshuis J and Braun E (2012) The influence of stakeholder involvement on the effectiveness of place branding. *Public Management Review* 14(4): 499–519.

Koehler R (2015) Let's give I.SEOUL.U some time. *The Korea Herald*, 10 November. Available at: http://brand.seoul.go.kr/seoulbrand/media-brand?article=7461 (accessed 6 October 2016).

Kotler P, Asplund C, Rein I, et al. (1999) *Marketing Places Europe: Attracting Investments, Industries, Residents and Visitors to European Cities, Communities, Regions and Nations*. London: Prentice Hall.

Lee KM and Kim CD (2010) Branding Seoul strategy. Report, Seoul Development Institute, Seoul, October.

Lucarelli A and Hallin A (2015) Brand transformation: A performative approach to brand regeneration. *Journal of Marketing Management* 31(1–2): 84–106.

McCann E (2013) Policy boosterism, policy mobilities, and the extrospective city. *Urban Geography* 34(1): 5–29.

McGill B (2015) 'I·Seoul·U' – The confusing new slogan for Seoul, South Korea. *Branding in Asia Magazine*, 28 October. Available at: brandinginasia.com/i-seoul-you-the-confusing-new-slogan-for-seoul/ (accessed 28 January 2016).

McLaren D and Julian A (2015) *Sharing Cities: A Case for Truly Smart and Sustainable Cities*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Mintrom M and Norman P (2009) Policy entrepreneurship and policy change. *The Policy Studies Journal* 37(4): 649–667.

Nyseth T and Viken A (2009) *Place Reinvention: Northern Perspectives*. Burlington/Farnham: Ashgate.

Olins W (1999) *Trading Identities: Why Countries and Companies Are Taking on Each Others' Roles*. London: Foreign Policy Center.

Olsson K and Berglund E (2009) City marketing: The role of the citizens. In: Nyseth T and Viken V (eds) *Place Reinvention: Northern Perspectives*. Burlington/Farnham: Ashgate, pp. 127–144.

Paddison R (1993) City marketing, image reconstruction and urban regeneration. *Urban Studies* 30(2): 339–350.

Park CK (2014) Bitter, Sweet, Seoul. Available at: www.parkchankyong.com/bitter-sweet-seoul_film (accessed 2 November 2016).

PR Newswire (2014) City branding trend: Be truthful and show the reality. *PR Newswire,* 14 February. Available at: www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/city-branding-trend-be-truthful-and-show-the-reality-247792201.html (accessed 18 October 2015).

Realmeter (2015) Public poll on Seoul's new brand 'I·Seoul·U'. *Realmeter*, 4 November. Available at: www.realmeter.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/realmeter_cbs15seoul1104.pdf (accessed 7 November 2016).

Sassen S (2001) *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo*, 2nd ed. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG) (2012) 'Sharing city Seoul' policy implementation plan. Available at: opengov.seoul.go.kr/public/64161 (accessed 7 November 2015).

Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG) (2013a) Speech collection of Seoul mayor Park, Won-soon. Available at: ebook.seoul.go.kr/Viewer/LBSQ88CGWVG4 (accessed 7 November 2015).

Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG) (2013b) *Policy Implementation Plan*. Seoul: Seoul Metropolitan Government.

Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG) (2014a) *Policy Implementation Plan*. Seoul: Seoul Metropolitan Government.

Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG) (2015a) *Policy Implementation Plan*. Seoul: Seoul Metropolitan Government.

Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG) (2014b) Four-year policy implementation plan 2014–2018. Available at: http://ebook.seoul.go.kr/Viewer/HP36H5OYHPLX (accessed 8 September 2016).

Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG) (2014c) 2014 Listening policy debate white paper. Available at: http://opengov.seoul.go.kr/paper/2538501 (accessed 11 October 2016).

Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG) (2015b) *Our Seoul Story*. Seoul: Seoul Metropolitan Government. Available at: http://ebook.seoul.go.kr/Viewer/SJCYDBVTNHM0 (accessed 5 March 2016).

Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG) (2015c) Seoul brand development roadmap. Available at: brand.seoul.go.kr/seoulbrand/introduce/roadmap (accessed 6 October 2015).

Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG) (2015d) *Seoul brand I·Seoul·U guide ver. 1.0*. Seoul: Seoul Metropolitan Government. Available at: http://ebook.seoul.go.kr/Viewer/7RN91ZRKSTOZ (accessed 5 March 2016).

Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG) (2015e) *Seoul Brand Story*. Seoul: Seoul Metropolitan Government. Available at: http://ebook.seoul.go.kr/Viewer/EJI6R1W9ZK5P (accessed 5 March 2016).

Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG) (2015f) *'Sharing City Seoul' Policy Implementation Plan (Second Phase)*. Seoul: Seoul Metropolitan Government.

Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG) (2016) *95.2% of Seoul Citizens Know about Sharing City Projects, 82.7% of the Users Are Satisfied*. Press release. Seoul: Seoul Metropolitan Government.

Song MK (2013) Sharing city Seoul. *World and Cities* 1–2: 44–59.

Stevens A (2014) Tokyo promotes cool image in run-up to 2020 Olympics. Available at: www.citymayors.com/marketing/tokyo-brand.html (accessed 5 February 2016).

Suk GH (2015) Seoul's new slogan ridiculed. *The Korea Herald*, 30 November. Available at: www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20151029001335 (accessed 6 February 2016).

Therkelsen A and Halkier H (2011) Branding provincial cities: The politics of inclusion, strategy and commitment. In: Pike A and Edward Elgar Publishing (eds) *Brands and Branding Geographies*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, pp. 200–212.

Van Ham P (2008) Place branding: The state of the art. *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 616(1): 126–149.

Vanolo A (2015) The image of the creative city, eight years later: Turin, urban branding and the economic crisis taboo. *Cities* 46: 1–7.

White SC (1996) Depoliticising development: The uses and abuses of participation. *Development in Practice* 6(1): 6–15.

Wu F and Ma LJC (2006) Transforming China's globalizing cities. *Habitat International* 30(2): 191–198.

Zenker S and Erfgen C (2014) Let them do the work: A participatory place branding approach. *Journal of Place Management and Development* 7(3): 225–234.

Zukin S (2009) Destination culture: How globalization makes all cities look the same. *Inaugural Working Paper Series*. Center for Urban and Global Studies at Trinity College 1(1): 1–26.

Yu-Min Joo is an assistant professor at the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy, National University of Singapore. She holds a PhD in Urban and Regional Planning from Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She researches and publishes on urban development and policy issues in Asia that is undergoing political, economic, and social transformations. Some of her current research topics include city branding, urban governance, smart cities, megaprojects, and mega-events.

Bokyong Seo is a research associate in the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy at the National University of Singapore. She obtained her MSc in Urbanism from Delft University of Technology and her PhD in Urban planning and design from the University of Hong Kong. Her research has focused on housing and urban policy, urban regeneration, and planning governance in East Asia.