Kitekintő

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The role of city promotion in the regeneration of Manchester

In the last two decades, it has been an increasing interest in using city promotion as a tool for creating city image in order to keep up with the competition for attracting investment to the cities. Therefore, the city promotion became a significant instrument and the increasing use of it has meaningful effects on regeneration. In the case of Manchester as a city region there is still a question of territorial governance coherency which does play an important role in the construction of city brand and identity which could be promoted in the competition with other cities from UK, Europe or the world. Therefore, the aim of this study is to research about and examines those methods and attitudes which influence the process of city promotion and to explore the extent these contribute to the regeneration of Manchester as a city region.

Introduction

In terms of spatial effects the economic restructuring prompted by the recession of the 1970s and 1980s resulted in the decline of manufacturing industry and led to the emergence of new types of economic activities. The process of deindustrialization was more visible in the cities from industrial regions such as Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham or Belfast for example. The local and regional development agencies made huge efforts to regenerate the cities which lost their traditional industries and started to focus on attracting inward investment (*Paddison,* 1992).

As a consequence, the attraction of inward investment became one of the most important aims in the local economic development and was supported by the national government as well. This led to an increased competition between cities not only national but also on international scale and the concept of promoting the place gained high importance in the ambition of creating a positive and attractive image. The process involved the development of new urban facilities, construction of a new environment, spatial development, attraction of tourists and residents.

The competition in attracting inward investment, visitors and retain residents significantly increased throughout the European regions as well. Because of the growing similarity between the regions the importance of image, branding and promotion became critical in their success and city promotion is seen as a necessary tool for cities helping them to stand out from their competitors. The increased urban entrepreneurialism applied to the spatial development highly contributed to the innovation of policies and city promotion gained a significant status in the urban development strategies.

This study is based around the role of city promotion and branding in the regeneration of Manchester as a city region and as a former industrial city.

However, during the interviews several issues were identified with regard to the governance of the city region which reflects a fragmentation of the urban development inadequate collaboration within the promotion agencies. There still exists a sort of rivalry within the boroughs and lack of cooperation with each other.

As a consequence, the conurbation of Manchester did not yet become a coherent territorial governance unit making the creation of a brand and the promotion of the city difficult, as it cannot yet be considered a finalized product. Nevertheless, the interviews and the gathered statistical data do reflect a certain success of city promotion and show regeneration benefits during the last two decades.

Connection between place development and promotion

The contemporary urban management is more about the management of ideas, images and brands as it is about physical space shaping or traditional service delivery.

Nowadays, in the world of information and time shortage the peoples' biggest concerns focus on content, originality, identity or even spirituality rather than on physical shaping. Therefore, architecture has to connect to and reflect a wider field of association, emotions, imagination and personal expression (*Klingmann* 2007). Consequently, important is not as much how the building looks like but more the way it comes to life and creates lasting connections.

According to Klingmann (2007, 319) "the place becomes the fabricated product of consumer-driven economy, customized to cater to the needs of selected groups". As personality plays a major role in comprehending cities and places (*Florida* 2008) the linking element between identity and place becomes the brand.

According to Florida, clustering and concentration of the talented people increases the productivity of the place and raises the quality of life. It is questionable if this works in this way as critics like Michael Dudlay impeach that Florida ignored literature about connections between personalities and places in his research.

These days, the outlook of the cities became a challenging factor but does not consist only in its physical attractiveness but also in the cultural heritage, tradition as well as tourist attractions such as museums, art galleries and also entertainment possibilities. These strengths and assets give high advantage in the competition between cities in attracting visitors, investment and to become an entrepreneurial city. In order to deal with the competition cities must create a convincing brand image and develop a so called distinction strategy (*Quilley* 1993).

Therefore, place marketing and image construction are those instruments by which this distinction is created and by which the image of several "unattractive" industrial cities was changed to a modern, dynamic, welcoming place as for example Manchester. Nevertheless, there is always a question of the fundamental issues about combining the theory and practice in creating a competitive city identity which produces the challenge of applying brand theory to place development (*Anholt* 2010).

Place marketing and its process

Manchester, just as any other industrial city, experienced decline in the reconstruction era but with successive reinvention it renewed itself, changed its outlook and transformed into a modern city. Manchester, has built its image on its historic strengths using its original perception as an industrial city and its physical advantages to become a prosperous, modern, innovative city (*Bramley and Page,* 2009). Marketing was one of the ways it used in order to achieve its aims, to create interest and through that new developments and a better, renowned image.

Marketing is a business tool which, even if it has already a history behind, it is still a challenge even for those economic players which gained experience and expertise in this field. The economic restructuring and uneven development in the 1970's and 1980's led to major changes not only in the variety of produced goods but also in terms of territorial provenance (Paddison, 1993) which features the term of "place" which could mean cities, city-regions, regions, communities, areas as well as states (*Rainisto* 2003) and going through a transformation from places of production to places of play (*Lew* 2001) offering sporting facilities, 24 hour nightlife, shop-

ping districts, conference amenities, museums, hotels and cinemas, all these being essential features of the "new successful urban life".

Subsequently, the towns and cities are places which offer an increasing variety of roles and services (Hardyman, 1996) and huge efforts are made in attracting new investments, attracting visitors, reshaping the environment and generating new developments. Consequently, the competition between towns and cities has thriven (Short et al, 1993) and further evolved at regional, national and sometimes even international scales (den Berg and Braun, 1999). In this way, places need to emphasize on their individuality, to differentiate themselves from each other, to shape a specific place identity and to promote themselves in front of other markets (*Kavaratzis and Ashworth,* 2005).

These places need to be designed in a way which satisfies the needs of the target markets; the successes rely in the satisfaction of the citizens and businesses with the community and high satisfaction given to the investors and visitors expectations, all these reached through place marketing (*Kotler, et al,* 2002a:183). Therefore, each local authority need to have conscious attempts (*Kavaratzis and Ashworth*, 2005) in order to design entrepreneurial, anticipatory policies which are market-oriented and also able to cope with the urban as well as regional competition (*den Berg and Braun,* 1999). Creating a new and positive image, to clearly be aware of city's strengths and weaknesses but also chances and threats, is very important in sustaining attractiveness, differentiation and to analyse its market position (*Page and Hardyman,* 1996).

Hence, in the last couple of years a raising number of cities recognize that place marketing is a potential and robust tool in the creation of economic development, place development (*Rainisto* 2003) and the essential geographical idea of sense of place (*Kavaratzis and Ashworth*, 2005). According to Ashworth and Voogd (1988) the city marketing is defined as particular planning action designed to commence and encourage such methods which improve the city's market position with regard to specific activities and aims in order to raise the city's profile and public awareness between residents and visitors (*Page and Hardyman*, 1996).

Even if European cities apply various marketing techniques in their administration practice and governing attitude (*Kavartzis* 2004), place marketing is not so straight forward as people might think (*van den Berg& Braun*, 1999). The operational environment of cities hardens the so called marketing knowledge transfer mainly because of the weird nature of places and cities as viable assets (*Kavartzi* 2004).

According to an article written by Rainisto, there are several so called "how and ability" factors such as strategic development, organizational capacity, substance existence, competence and fellow up which burden the challenges of place marketing. Even so, the strategic marketing model becomes an important feature of place marketing since it was realised that general marketing practices can be applied not only to products and services but also places even though there is an intricate difference between the products and services offered by a company and the" place as a product " (*Rainisto,* n.a.). Therefore, there is a new instrument used in place marketing, which is the place or city branding.

City branding, place identity and image

City branding, on one part offers the basis for policy development in order to practise economic growth and on the other hand gives direction for the city residents to identify themselves with their city (*Kavartzis*, 2004). In the last 20 years the economic role of branding has changed mainly because of the neoliberal globalization where the concept is more a substantial strategic and core activity of capitalism incorporated in any serious challenge of understanding the contemporary society as well as politics (*Holt*, 2006). It gives an emotional dimension that reflects the identity of the city (*Hospers*, 2006), "personifies" the product by pointing out several economic values such as efficacy, symbolic and cultural significance making possible for consumers to feel a personal relationship to it (*Power and Hague*, 2008) having an impact on con-

sumer's choice through product characteristic evaluation (*Yaprak and Baughn*, 1991 in Phau and Prendergast, 2000).

Besides, branding is a distinctive way of capital accumulation which creates and exploits various sorts of social dependency (*Holt*, 2006) and contributes to the better appreciation of system dynamics within which commodities and their chains are formed (Power and Hague, 2008). On the other hand, the collective practices of branding harden the effective boost of product's perceived value (*Goldman and Papson*, 2006) even if it is more important than ever for places to brand themselves on the competitive markets.

Holt (2006, 355), demonstrates that brands play a distinctive role, quite different from what critics have described "brands act as parasites riding the coat-tails of other more powerful cultural forms, but then use their market power to proselytize these ideological revisions. Through ubiquity and repetition, brands transform emergent culture into dominant norms." Furthermore, Rainisto (2003) highlights that there is a small number of publications appeared in the last couple of years regarding city branding and therefore there is a recognizable gap in the literature about the branding process of cities in general (*Hankinson*, 2001).

However, in contrast with this, there is increasing evidence within the press that branding as a concept is being applied to locations ever more often (*Hankinson* 2001, 129) and is used to increase the attractiveness of a place through a holistic development which has an influence on the place as a whole (*Rainisto*, 2003) and on the territorial competition for investment, jobs, residents and visitors (*Pike*, 2009). In order to achieve a high level of competence, city branding requires the combination of two disciplines' expertise; the managerial and marketing techniques combined with the urban development strategies which include socioeconomic and spatial planning (*Seisdedos and Vaggione*, 2005) serving by this the purpose of city marketing.

Therefore, it is a need for such strategies which promote a specific area or the entire city in order to "sell" parts of it for living, consuming or productive activities (*Smyth*, 1994). Hence, one of the tools used for the realization of this purpose, is city promotion which according to Kui (2009) it is the last part of the city branding process.

City promotion and urban development

Applying the urban entrepreneurialism to the spatial development significantly contributed to the innovation of policies. Therefore, promoting the city as an attractive place has become one of the main objectives set out by several urban regeneration strategies. As at the central part of these several urban policy instruments is the strategic planning (OECD, 2007), the city promotion has become an important tool in creating the identity of place (Unsworth, n.a.) being one element of city marketing as well as a key component of the local economic development strategies (*Young and Kaczmarek* 1999).

Next to this, in another article den Berg and Braun (1999) try to point out that city promotion should not be mistaken with city marketing because it is one part of it and according to Bradley et al. (2002) it is a tangible part of the urban development process and can be seen as a fundamental part of planning and also of place development guidance in an aspiring manner.

In addition to this, Paddison (1993) mentions the more catholic interpretation which associates the city's economic promotion and development with the physical and social planning having the aim of producing the 'harmonious city' which is able to supply not only its citizens but also the investors and visitors. Furthermore, according to Bradley, Hall and Harrison (2002) city promotion is a substantial part of the urban development and a key to understand the capital movement in form of company relocations, jobs and investments. The promotion designed to sell cities is one of the marketing techniques and has to be seen as only one characteristic of a very wide approach to place management (*Ashworth and Voogd in Gold and Ward*, 1994).

As it was mentioned above, the image formulation is an essential variable of the city marketing mix and in several cases its importance is articulated as a sole focus on the promotion

process (*Burgess*, 1982; *Gold and Ward*, 1994; *Ward* 1998; in Kavartzis, 2004), in other cases the importance falls on conventional promotional appraisals and in some other cases as a possibility of city promotion realized through art, festivals and cultural attractions (*Kearns and Philo*, 1993 in Kavartzis, 2004). According to the same article, in a very simple formulation, we can talk about promotion only after the city has something to promote. Therefore, it is dependent on the city's communicative competence. Nevertheless, as these various definitions and ideas about the concept differ, we can conclude that city promotion is like the activity itself, partial and incomplete, it needs to be better understood (*Ward and Gold*, 1994).

Brief history of city promotion in the UK and its connection to urban planning

Already in the early 1900's place selling became a distinctive aspect, a dominant form of attracting visitors to the British and French beach resorts. Therefore, as indicated by its name, place selling is the closest approach to promotion which is based on a variety of advertising forms (*Rainisto*, 2003). Few decades later, in the early post – war Britain (1942-1952) several cities produced rebuilding plans and embedded some nature of the city promotion in these. Of course, after the War the urban competition and rivalry has raise and it was articulated in a variety of slightly ways like city promotion and competition for funding (*Larkham and Lilley*, 2003).

Interestingly, but on the other hand naturally, not only the war-damaged cities but also the ones which were slightly or even undamaged were applying for redevelopment and reconstruction plans. As these post – war plans were not clearly designed with the aim of city promotion, it is suggested by Larkham and Lilley (2003), that these should be seen as 'subverse' place promotion. Even though several of these plans were not published, it is sure that within the published ones evidence of "boosterism" and city promotion can be found.

In contrast, the term of city marketing and within this the city promotion, in the European urban literature became common only in the 1980's even though the notion has been known from a considerably longer time in the US (Paddison, 1993) maybe because the US cities tended to have a more entrepreneurial spirit then the European cities. Perhaps because they had to give away a considerable part of their income and to draw direct profit or loss from their activities (*van den Berg and Braun*, 1999) this mainly due to their taxation system.

In the 1970's and 1980's many cities suffered retrenchment in their industrial base because of the economic restructuring and uneven development. This has happened not only at local but also at national and regional scales. Even so, they managed to overcome the past images and changed these in strong, revitalized ones (*Bradley et al*, 2002) by using culture – related initiatives in various ways in order to change the city's image.

One of the potential models is the so called 'promotional model' mentioned by Griffiths (1995) which emphasises the benefits of the physical changes attracting by this more people to find their workplace in the city. This involves the various effects of office use, shop, restaurants and cultural facilities within mixed-use developments and cultural districts (*Seo*, 2002). Conversely, since the 1990's place promotion receives much higher attention within the practitioners and also the urban planning. As the early studies prepared by Burgess (1982) show, the place promotion was connected with efforts to attract investment rather than giving attention to the need for consumers (*Page and Hardyman* 1996) but these investments served as a catalyst in the urban regeneration. As a consequence, city promotion and urban regeneration work together and go hand in hand having by that a greater contribution and impact on the urban planning and development.

Methods of the analysis

Interviews are "one of the most popular and frequently used methods of gathering information" as they "cover[s] a multitude of techniques, from informal "chats" […] right through to highly structured, formal interviews, taped and transcribed" (*McDonald and Headlam*, 2008, p.39). The interviews were used with the aim of gathering detailed data about opinions and perceptions of the high profile professionals involved in city promotion and regeneration of Manchester. Moreover, this method gave the opportunity to discuss the topic in a flexible and opened way.

A total of ten interviews were undertaken with high profile respondents from agencies, local authority, companies and attractions in order to have representatives from different sectors and administrative levels which address their promotional activities to different target audiences.

First, a scoping study was conducted with the marketing director of "Marketing Manchester"[1] in order to find out more information about city promotion and regeneration activity in Manchester and to assess if there is a need for changes or further design of the interview questions.

With the purpose of assuring fluidity, avoid repetition; allow development of conversation and exploration of subjects with particular interest, a semi-structured conversional style was selected. Nine more elite professionals were then interviewed representing agencies such as Marketing Manchester, MIDAS and the North-West Development Agency; Manchester City Council as a local authority, companies such as Creative Concern, Hemisphere and Pro-Manchester and at last but not least Museum of Science and Industry as an attraction.

Promotion of Greater Manchester as a study area

As it was previously presented, the study area of this research was Greater Manchester as a city region with its ten boroughs. There are a number of reasons for which Manchester was chosen to be the focus of this paper as outlined below.

- Even if the football is a strong association of Manchester, because of its history the city is still largely perceived as an unattractive, deprived industrial place without any interesting offer for the modern world.
- In the last two decades Manchester has evolved on many levels, has reached regeneration successes, managed to improve its physical as well as the attraction and entertainment offer.
- However, its relative proximity to London, Birmingham and Liverpool in many cases turns to be a challenge as the competition is high between these cities.
- The increased use of promotion and image creation in the spatial development and the effect of this on the urban policy formulation and regeneration.

Greater Manchester city region is built up of ten boroughs from which the city of Manchester is situated in the centre of the metropolitan area and are the largest together with Salford and some parts of Trafford and Tameside forming by this the core conurbation (*Peck and Ward*, 2002). As illustrated below.

In 1986 the metropolitan county has lost its administrative power resulting in the existing ten districts nowadays having local unitary authorities. Efforts were made to re-create metropolitan institutions with the aim of generating "Mancunian" awareness and perception and to enlarge the artificial administrative boundaries of the city. As a consequence, the aspirations of Manchester's policy elites to broaden the boundaries were reinforced by the geographical coverage of the City Pride partnership and Marketing Manchester, Midas agencies of which three representatives were interviewed during this research. However, in spite of the efforts there is still an intra-metropolitan rivalry within the boroughs as it will be reflected by several interviewees dur-

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[1] Marketing Manchester is the agency charged with promoting Manchester as a city region on national and international stage

ing the research. Therefore, the core question of the study is how and to what extent does the city promotion contribute to the regeneration of Manchester?

Figure 1: Greater Manchester local government boundaries
Source: GMPF

Assessing the views and experiences of high profile professionals dealing with city promotion and regeneration was a key theme of this research. In order to establish the connection between promotion and regeneration as well as answering the research question the analyses are based on interviews with professionals dealing with urban policy and city promotion.

Challenges and opportunities presented by Manchester proximity to other cities from UK

Challenges of proximity
Within the information gathered from the interviews, there were some references to competition between Liverpool and Manchester based on historic relationship in the sense that it was and still is sometimes believed that the two cities do not get along because Manchester was more an industrial, pragmatic city and Liverpool on the other hand, was almost like a gateway to the world. Nevertheless, in one of the BBC's articles Simon Gregson actor clearly reflected that "The one thing that stops us getting on is football, [...]" (BBC, 10th March 2003) - opinion which was highlighted also by a small number of the interviewees. A high proportion of the elite professionals remarked that there is a huge amount of cooperation between the two cities through several projects like Atlantic Gateway or Core Cities mentioned by a representative of Manchester City Council and one from the NWDA. This issue of good cooperation between the two cities was considered to be an opportunity as well as a challenge to move forward.

On the other hand, one of the interview participants pointed out that even if the opportunity of both cities being in close proximity to each other is beneficial, they both could face the same problem of being viewed industrial. As a consequence, there is a danger of being less visited than other cities which seem to be more attractive then Manchester or Liverpool as pooling agents.

Other element reflecting competition, rivalry and challenge regarding this perception was also laid out by a very small number of the interviewees with referring to the case of Manchester being in competition with Birmingham for the position of 'second city' after London. A research made by MORI North in 2002 shows that a third of people (34%) asked about this matter regarded Manchester as being the second city after London, this followed by Birmingham (29%) and then Liverpool (4%). The figure below illustrates the findings mentioned above:
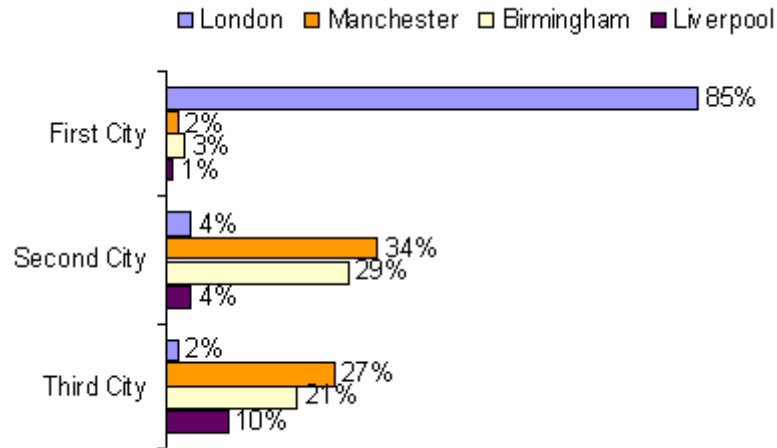

Figure 2: Englands 1st,2nd and 3rd city
Source: Ipsos Mori, 2002

Moreover, five years later, in a survey conducted by BBC in 2007, Manchester toped the second city poll again where 48% of people have seen it behind London compared to 40% of those who chose Birmingham. It has been thought that the factors playing part in the results were the sporting successes and music scene. In addition, in the following year in a survey named "UK Cities Monitor" undertaken by Cushman &Wakefield real estate advisors, Manchester was positioned also on the second place of being the best city to locate a business and forecasting that "Manchester can expect the biggest influx of companies over the next five years followed by Birmingham and Bristol" (*UK Cities Monitor*, 2008). A small number of respondents mentioned as a challenge the attitude and understanding of the fact that Manchester and its surrounding area as a place is the selling product as being the "name of a gateway in a much bigger area with wider opportunities". As a consequence, other challenge is *how to* rather than *need to* work together within the boroughs.

Opportunities of proximity

Despite these concerns, there was a general feeling that in terms of its proximity to London, Manchester has more opportunities in providing a complementary offer. An example mentioned by several interviewees was the Bank of New York which in 2005 has chosen to open an office in Manchester next to the already existing one in London. The reason assigned to this achievement was the good connectivity between the two cities which together with Manchester's central position in the UK in terms of territorial berth was mentioned by all of the participants as a huge opportunity. In addition to this, a large number of interviewees have seen the good connectivity and spatial position as a benefit with regard to not only London but also the other cities from UK in terms of visitors, investment attraction or a good place to hold conferences being identified also as one of the most marketable assets.

At regional level in terms of benefits and opportunities regarding good connectivity Manchester Airport was mentioned as a global gateway in terms of air and Liverpool in terms of sea. The NWDA representative has also pointed out that "they offer massive opportunities because they are both strong brands individually so I do not feel we should think about merging the brands" which means that recognition and understanding that both cities have individual strengths and give a great contribution to the development of the North West region is very important.

From a business perspective, the proximity to London was also positively viewed by a significant number of participants in terms of attracting inward investment by offering competitive land values, cost-effective location, high quality office place and value for money. The fast rail was mentioned by most of the participant as a selling point as well as the central spatial position and Manchester Airport connecting Manchester with UK, Europe and the rest of the world. According to the "European Cities Monitor" survey undertaken in 2009 by Cushman &Wakefield real estate advisors, Manchester was positioned on the 16th place in Europe in terms of best city to locate a business and on the 2nd place in the UK according to the " UK cities Monitor" undertaken in 2008 by the same consultant agency. In terms of value for money and office place ratings according to the same survey, Manchester was ranked on the 5th place together with Newcastle Upon Tyne.

On the other hand, in terms of connectivity, the negative impact mentioned by one of the interviewees was the good spatial position and increasing high speed rail network which could detain companies to open offices in Manchester as this would offer the possibility of servicing the whole UK from London. As a final conclusion, most of the interviewees felt that Manchester's proximity to other cities from the UK is more an opportunity than a challenge. Most of them pointed out that as a challenge are more likely to be identified in particular the second cities from the EU countries rather than the UK cities.

A unique identity of Manchester

All of the interviewed think that Manchester does have a unique identity but they had mixed opinions about in what this relies in. A small part of the respondents thought that Manchester's identity relies in its heritage as a first industrial city which played a major role in the place shaping process over the years. For this group of interviewees, the long way of coming out from the industrial era and turning into the so called knowledge economy has helped the city to be unique.

A smaller number felt that its unique identity relies in football and even associated this with its personality this being a result of its great success over the years achieved in this sport. Further, another small number of the interviewees associated clearly it with the music industry which according to them, gave Manchester a vibrant and playful character, further sustained by the high number of young people, students, transforming it in a "go ahead city" with good night life, lots of sports, diverse cultural offer and lively, great place to be. According to them, these are those characteristics which make the city different and give a unique identity.

A larger number found this unique identity in being truly "mancunian" which according to their explanation means that people have an attitude of risk taking and "can do" being delivery focused, help orientated, looking for opportunities and wanting to do things differently.

As a last imputation of the identity, for a slight number of participants this is captured in the concept of original modern which according to one of the representatives from the NWDA "is still not fully understood what it really is" but "it does have a reputation of being avangard, creative, edge, innovative and exiting place to be" this, being the character that Manchester is trying to build for itself. According to this group of interviewees the original modern incorporates distinctiveness in the architectural style, in the cultural work of the city, knowledge economy as well as in building the role of independence. This, according to one of the examples is

very well done in the Northern Quarter of Manchester due to the high number of independent retailers which create a well articulated uniqueness.

When asked whether it is important for Manchester to have a unique identity, most felt that it is vital and critical. The general consensus was that it is important because that is the way of differentiating itself from the other cities in order to attract people to live, encourage businesses to invest, attract tourism in terms to become more innovative and successful, to create economic development, wealth, become homogeneous and get a bigger share of international investment and domestic activity.

Some felt that Manchester has already gained positive perceptions in a number of areas and found important of being able to build and grow on its strengths and make them its own unique identity. Related to this, it was pointed out that in order to gain growth is important for the city to specialize in certain areas and to try to not be the best in everything.

In addition to this, others felt that in order to have a distinct identity the product, in this case the city needs to give the right impression; the identity "has to feel consistent" and "it's got to be bedded in absolute reality" because at the end it is " about what people experience".

Melbourne was given as an example of a city which created itself a consistent and unique image as being seen across the world as a fun, vibrant, useful city with a wide range of sporting facilities as the Grand Prix, tennis, and cricket. Therefore, what the interviewee tried to point out was that Melbourne has managed to create itself a broader base which is sport but not focusing only on football. As a result, it managed to attract a massive audience coming in the city but also broad, worldwide audience consisting in those who follow the F1, cricket games or the other sporting events of the city through television.

As an issue of Manchester in creating a unique identity for itself, some of the participants rose the issue that Manchester sometimes does not necessarily measures itself properly; it has a self congratulatory attitude thinking that it is better than it is in reality. Therefore, a part of the interviewees felt that Manchester should measure itself more objectively against other cities around the world and by that it could improve its results in this field.

Manchester as a product
Promotable assets
In order to find out the elements which could be promoted and the possible accompanying difficulties which could rise in this process, the promotable assets and the challenges of Manchester as a product were researched.

Those interviewed have seen the city centre, the mixture of theatres, museums, art galleries, restaurants, hotels, football clubs but also other sporting facilities, music heritage, John Rylands library, the high variety of events and festivals, shopping possibilities, the infrastructure in terms of connectivity, young and diverse population and shopping opportunities as the important promotable assets of the city and also the residents as best ambassadors. Nevertheless, next to all these there was a belief that much more things can be offered than people know about which are in a way hidden. The table below shows the most visited attractions from Manchester (2004-2008).

Although, in terms of football clubs many felt that even if they are important assets of the city the problem is that they are not elements which differentiate the city in the way of being different then other cities with recognized football clubs. As a supporting example, several times were mentioned Madrid and Barcelona. In a very similar situation to football clubs was mentioned also the shopping which gives opportunities but does not have a unique supply.

The University of Manchester and Manchester Airport were also highlighted as key assets of the city and there was a feeling that even though Manchester has a rich industrial heritage it is less easy to somehow persuade it to the public. Manchester's several intangible assets were also featured such as nice and welcoming city with dynamic, creative mix of ideas and different cul-

tures. In the Saffron European City Brand Barometer, Manchester occupies the 24th position out of 72 European cities in terms of asset strength measurement.

Table 1: Top ten Attractions in Manchester

Top Ten Visitor Attractions in Greater Manchester						
Attraction	Charge	2008	2007	2006	2005	2004
MOSI (The Museum of Science & Industry)	Free*	852,262	704,975 (2)	392,361 (2)	430,794 (2)	469,399 (1)
The Lowry	Free	841,496	800,000 (1)	850,000 (1)	850,000 (1)	330,000 (2)
Manchester Art Gallery	Free	394,205	393,650 (3)	345,850 (3)	262,961 (4)	291,066 (3)
Manchester United FC Museum	Entry charge	326,654	263,325 (5)	219,496 (9)	219,332 (7)	232,831 (6)
Bolton Museum, Aquarium & Archive	Free	309,865	267,483 (4)	257,343 (4)	271,462 (3)	227,289 (7)
Urbis	Free	262,114	251,540 (6)	256,240 (5)	173,905 (10)	193,798 (8)
Manchester Museum	Free	244,265	234,648 (7)	224,952 (8)	196,200 (8)	166,525 (9)
Imperial War Museum North	Free	238,794	222,791 (9)	235,991 (7)	229,968 (6)	249,875 (5)
Manchester Airport Viewing Park	Entry charge	228,000**	226,087 (8)	250,000 (6)	248,514 (5)	264,743 (4)
Manchester Cathedral	Free	209,250	162,000 (10)	138,050 (10)	Not Collected	Not Collected

Source: Marketing Manchester, 2009

A representative from the NWDA explained how the original modern concept is a strong asset of Manchester meaning that "Manchester has got a reputation as a city which is at the fore-front; is fast moving, it has got elements of originality, generating ideas, a history of industrial revolution and lot of innovation going on in the city and in terms of Manchester as a whole this is one of its key assets." On the other hand, the representative of the Museum of Science and Industry felt that the biggest asset in terms of various interests is its spatial position of being an access point to several other places; it provides facilities like any other bigger city but it can also be used as a base to Chester, Lake District, Peak District and "sometimes it can end up like a corridor, something you pass through in order to get somewhere else".

According to a Perception survey on quality of life in European cities realized in 2009 more than half of the respondents felt very satisfied with the cultural facilities and rather satisfied with the public spaces in Manchester, 21% were very satisfied with the beauty of streets and buildings in their neighbourhoods and 45% rather satisfied. Most of the respondents were satisfied with the green spaces and sporting facilities in the city and 20% believed that the public transport is very good and 44% were rather satisfied with it (The Gallup Organization, 2009).

From investment perspective some of the representatives mentioned how Manchester has the opportunity to profit from its proximity to London as being a place which offers cheap office space, good commute options, skilled and cheaper workforce and higher value for money.

According to an article published by NESTA in 2009, the report 'Original Modern: Manchester's journey to innovation and growth' says that Manchester has 3% of the UK's businesses, 7% of advertising firms, 6% of radio and television firms, 4% of software and video games companies and 4% of architecture firms (*Nesta,* 2009).

Challenges of promoting Manchester

When asked about challenges, one of the most mentioned one was to overcome some perceptions and stereotypical image of Manchester as being an old, grey, industrial Northern middle town with mills, factories, and terraced houses not very progressive and modern. Related to this, some mentioned particularly London and Liverpool as being viewed more cultural cities than Manchester and by that creating a challenge for Manchester to compete with these cities. Part of this was felt to be a consequence of Liverpool being chosen already as a City of Culture and London having those strong historical assets known by everyone like Buckingham palace and British Museum.

Some also mentioned as a challenge the competition with other cities in terms of finding distinctiveness and promoting the city because as one of the representatives from MIDAS explained "Manchester is a small fish in a big tank […] it is a challenge to ensure that we speak louder than some other cities, to raise awareness" and as the director of Museum of Science and Industry supported the same challenge "to stand out in a very specific way".

Although the football was revealed as an asset by most of the interviewees at this section, some considered it also as a challenge in terms of changing people's perceptions that Manchester is just about football and limiting by that the interest of those possible visitors who are not football fans.

The representative of Creative Concern set out as a challenge the reflection of reality through communication which according to him "less you are reflecting reality more harm you do" by creating disappointment in the case when people do not experience the same things which were presented to them. Close to this, some felt as a challenge to maintain a certain level of quality and also thought that there is no point of promotion until the product, in this case the city is not good enough.

Further, others said that creating partnerships of the public and private sector, establishing a common message within the ten boroughs, fight back the traditional rivalry and make it accepted while is in use could be a real provocation. In addition, others commented that sometimes people believe in their PR and therefore is important to be more critical in assessing and making the difference between the real performance and the less strong one.

There was a strong belief that positive perceptions are very hard to be build, difficult to change but easy to spoil. The representative of the Creative Concern pointed out that even if the deprivation cycles are not mentioned in the promotional activity "the image we are trying to promote is quite truthful because it is all founded on reality and it goes back to the point that your brand is what you are known for; none of these are hidden as otherwise it would not work because the most powerful tool is the word of mouth."

Promotion practice of Manchester

Organizations and agencies involved

When asked who are responsible for promoting Manchester, the interviewees enumerated Marketing Manchester as an agency which promotes Manchester on a national and international scale, Visit Manchester-the division of Marketing Manchester-servicing visitors, tourists, working with attractions, servicing the leisure tourism and business tourism. Further, MIDAS was mentioned as an agency acting on the behalf of the ten Local Authorities of Greater Manchester and promoting the city to attract inward investment from UK or abroad, the North West Regional Development Agency, the Chamber of Commerce, the ten City Councils, New East Manchester, Central Salford, Homes and Communities Agency, British Council, Visit England, Visit Britain, several private property development agencies, business membership organizations, universities.

Target audiences

When asked about who they think are the most important groups to promote the city, those interviewed did not emphasized any group in particular and in general they all said that all groups are important. Nevertheless, they suggested the local residents naming them the best ambassadors of the city, the potential residents, inward investors, businesses, tourists, visitors, students, location consultants, advisors, organizations and institutions.

The strategic audiences were also seen as important target group and some interviewees enumerated as examples of this target audience category the government advisors and media commentators. One of the representatives from Marketing Manchester specifically pointed out the importance of having journalists in Manchester giving the reason that they have the potential of creating positive reviews about the city nationally or even internationally. It was also featured that is important to create a good impression for them as they also have the modality to worsen Manchester's image through negative referral.

Tools used

When asked about the way of promoting Manchester, most of the interviewees felt important to remark that they have an audience and sector specific approach and is essential first to understand the needs of the audience and then position Manchester in order to meet those requirements. In general the interviewed elite professionals mentioned the online promotion through the websites, events like the Manchester International Festival, exhibition stands, video casting, broadcasting, and promotional campaigns in the cities which have a cheap flight link with Manchester as short brake destination, PR, media, regeneration campaigns and e-bulletins. Next to these, most of the interviewees pointed out the word of mouth being the strongest and fastest tool.

One of the representatives from Marketing Manchester mentioned as an example of different kind of online self-promotion developed by Visit Manchester since 4 months now and called real time tourism. The aim of it is to show what is going on in the city at the moment therefore messages are sent by residents about things are happening in the city and give information to the visitors navigating on the website about actualities in Manchester. According to the interviewee until now this proved to be a successful self-promotion tool.

On the other hand, through the comments regarding the Manchester International Festival, one of the interviewees felt that even if it is a huge opportunity to deliver promotion, the fact of being organized every two years has a risk of giving less awareness to the visitors as the brake is too large between the events.

Manchester as a brand

At the question of "Is Manchester a brand?" most of the interviewees tried to define the concept of brand. As an overall, the brand was defined as being about identity, associations, values, vibration, reputation impact, image, personality and a way of talking about the city.

Most of the interviewees agreed on Manchester being a brand and having all those elements which were mentioned above but others felt that Manchester is only a brand if it is associated with the Manchester United football club because it is more about sports. A suggestion was to decide on what personality should the city have as at the moment it was thought to be confusing for people and does not reflect what the city would like to be, what kind of personality it has. In order to explain its meaning, one of the interviewees compared the brand with a piece of rock which wherever is broke still the picture of Manchester will be with its values and beliefs.

Other representative felt that people use the term too easily and apply it as a repairing tool but when it comes to the cities they are not able to reflect. The representative from Creative Concern had the opinion that "the language of branding and world of branding is inadequate to capture the reputation of cities; is not good enough".

According to analysis realized by Saffron Brand Consultants (2009) in terms of brand strength Manchester occupied the 25th place and in terms of brand utilisation place 17th from 75 European cities.

In terms of brand competition, it is known that London is the strongest from UK but according to an article published by Monocle, recently in August 2010, named Rebrand Britain, the UK has lost in its position regarding branding and within the suggestions given as a solution for this issues is mentioned the creation of a greater competition to London and the best real competition mentioned is the Manchester Liverpool axes.

External perceptions and image

External perceptions
When asked about how they thought that Manchester is perceived externally, most of the interviewed professionals felt that it is changing, and that Manchester is seen as impressive, growing, successful and vibrant city which reinvented itself and still has a long way to go. This improved image was seen by the result of the regeneration and branding of the place which started after the IRA bomb explosion in 1996. The Commonwealth Games organized in 2002 and nowadays the Manchester International Festival but also the museums, galleries, variety of restaurants, inspiring architectural developments and great success achieved in football were mentioned as factors which improved the city's image as a dynamic, prosperous place.

Some felt that Manchester in some people's perception is still seen as an industrial city with factories and chimneys in North of London, felt down in culture, with crime, slums, derelict land and terraced housing as seen in the soap opera named "Coronation Street". Other negative factor mentioned by all of the interviewees was the rainy weather which was also attributed as a contributing element to the unique image.

Many of those interviewed pointed out the difficulty of changing the negative image and gave as an example the incident happened and photographed in Wythenshawe during a visit of David Cameroon where a hooded teenager made a gun gesture behind the back of the Tory leader which appeared in press and created a wrong impression about the place.

Other example related back to the Commonwealth Games when the first day was a sunny day and one of the BBC's reporters made an inadvertent comment saying that surprisingly is not raining in Manchester and by that creating a negative image which pictured the city as a generally cloudy, rainy place. By these examples the interviewees supported their thoughts that the press and media significantly can influence the people's perception about a place. As a consequence, most of them thought that Manchester will benefit from the relocation of the BBC to Salford Quays and seen it as a third party endorsement in changing the negative perspectives and in promoting the city.

On the other hand, there was a very small number of the participants who were not convinced that having the BBC based in Salford Quays will necessarily help to improve the image of Manchester assigned this to the tendency of the local channels to more frequently broadcast bad news rather than good reports.

It was felt by most of the interviewees that different audiences have different perception depending on what was broadcasted through the TV, what they read or what was told them about Manchester. Some felt that people from the UK think about Manchester as an impressive and growing city but others felt that for example those who read the article mentioned above or saw the bad news in the TV have a negative image about the city. Generally, the interviewees thought that internationally the football is the element which created a good image as well as the Commonwealth Games and the Manchester International Festival. On the other hand, most of them pointed out that the "Coronation Street" soap opera broadcasted also abroad, some of the historical writings from 1800s, 1900s or even later 1980's 1990's where even if in some per-

spectives the city was successful its image was still of a smoky, dirty, deprived city create a negative image of Manchester.

According to a survey called International Perceptions Evaluation from 2008, the USA, Spain and Germany were identified as key international markets and when asked about the awareness of the city, Manchester has scored for prompted awareness 97% in Spain, 95% in Germany and 91% in USA. Further, in the same survey the associations with Manchester were also researched and the football was the dominating one followed by industry related references especially to the textile industry and further were mentioned culture, universities, music, major events, innovation and creativity (*Visit Manchester*, 2008). The figure below shows how the international visitors' number between 2002-2007.
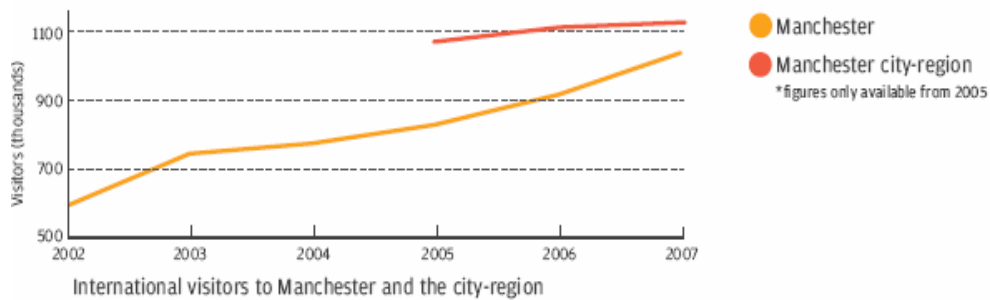

Figure 3: International visitors in Manchester
Source: Marketing Manchester, 2008

Reality differing from perception

When asked about how Manchester differs in reality from its image, very few interviewees said that it does not really differ, it is almost the same and most of the participants were of the opinion that the negative perceptions can be faced up to the better reality but there are also a number of difficulties and weaknesses. In terms of better reality than perception most of the interviewees mentioned that in contrast with the image of an industrial city with factories, mills and awful weather Manchester became a vibrant, modern city with increasing number of population, decent number of festivals and events even on the streets, nice city centre, cultural offer, entertainment possibilities, creative media, digital industry and strong knowledge economy.

On the other hand, a large part of the interviewees recognized that in some parts of the city and specifically not in the city centre deprivation is one of the biggest worries in terms of huge social deprivation, poor environmental quality, high unemployment rate, increased crime rate and educational issues. Regarding the unemployment one of the representatives from the Manchester City Council pointed out that even though there is no shortage of job offer the unemployment rate is still high due to the fact that the skills do not correspond with the jobs and found it hard to connect people with the job offers.

In a survey made by Ipsos Mori in 2009 called People Perception and Place, also the "Area Challenge Index" was measured which is based on seven domains such as IMD, ethnic diversity, young people, population churn, physical living conditions, urbanity and region. From these domains scores were created for each local authority area on the difficulty level to achieve high ratings on these satisfaction measures and accordingly how challenging is to do well on these perception measures. The index scores run from 1-100 where 1 is the least challenged area and 100 the most challenged one (*Ipsos Mori* 2009). The Figure below shows that Manchester is on the second place from the five most challenged metropolitan authorities in facing tough challenges in achieving high levels of satisfaction.

Table 2: Five most challenged metropolitan authorities

Five most challenged metropolitan/unitary authorities	
Name of authority	Index
Manchester	72
Blackburn with Darwen	72
Birmingham	72
Leicester	71
Luton	70

Source: Ipsos Mori, 2009

Regarding the education, one of the representatives from Manchester City Council has mentioned issues with the performance outcomes this being a consequence of mixed cultural environment with different languages in schools but also issues with the parents who do not feel important for their children to develop their skills and achieve higher performance.

There was a general thought that the city's image depends very much on people's experiences because it is entirely built around the performance of the place and felt vital to attract more visitors through events, innovative ideas and by that to give people the reason to rethink their perceptions.

Importance of promotion to regeneration

In general the interviewed professionals felt that promotion is very important to regeneration but many commented that as a first step the product, the city has to be developed arguing that it is the only way of giving a reason for people to reassess and that can be only achieved through good experiences. This was illustrated by a comment of the representative from Hemisphere who said that" The regeneration has to be of quality, it can not be fake or thin and there is a benefit of promoting that but first you need to give people the reason to reassess". Further, it was emphasised that creating a kind of sense of place, develop the product and communicate that through promotion are vital for achieving regeneration goals.

To emphasise on the importance of promotion in regeneration an example of currently ongoing regeneration activity in New East Manchester was given where new housing will replace the old terraced residences. It was explained that as New East Manchester has a long history of dealing with deprivation issues there is important to promote the new regeneration activities and convince people to reassess the area and communicate the possibilities which will be created there. In order to create a stronger image of the place the promotion of extension of the metro link was suggested in terms of reflecting the physical improvements in the area which are going to improve the quality of life.

Promotion was seen to have different, essential and wider roles in regeneration like promotion of actual regeneration attainments, attracting people to experience those achievements and change their perceptions, changing the resident's behaviour, communicate the aspirations and ambitions of the city as well attracting private and public investment or people to settle. Several interviewees gave the two bids for the Olympic Games as an example in order to point out that both had promotional activities and through that raised the awareness and brought support to develop facilities. As a second example were mentioned the Commonwealth Games from 2002 as a sporting event which had to be promoted in order to sell the tickets and fill in the stadium as well as the Manchester International Festival.

On the other hand, some of the interviewees mentioned as an issue of promotion the easiness of losing the focus point and as a consequence loosing the instant reaction of the audience

which leads to low results. Therefore, as a connecting idea the interviewees mentioned the BBC's relocation to Salford Quays as an opportunity and reducing the promotional investment in terms of an image and awareness of Manchester being created by the BBC.

According to the UK Cities Monitor from 2008, when companies asked about which UK cities are perceived to be doing the most to improve themselves, Manchester was classified on the first place regarding this matter. The Figure below illustrates the findings from 15 UK cities.
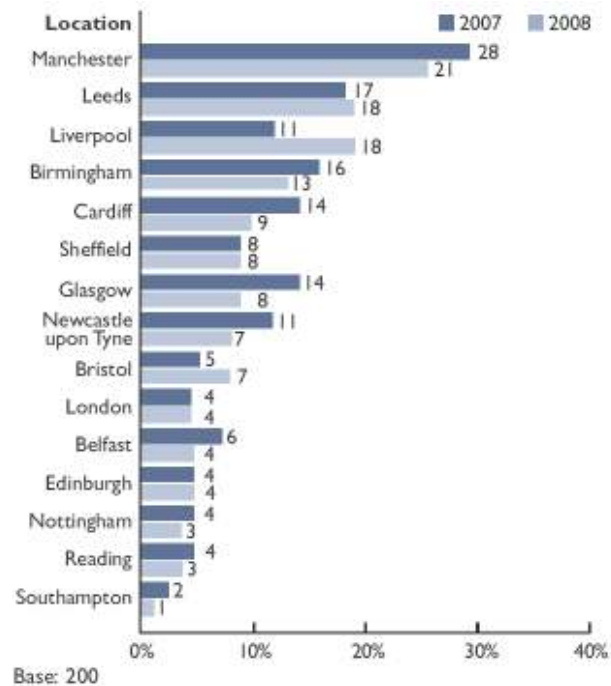

Figure 4: Cities working the most on improving themselves
Source: Cushman Wakefield, 2008

Regeneration benefits gained from promotion

According to some of the interviewees Manchester has started to promote itself when it first went to the first Olympic bid and as a consequence it got funds to develop the Bridgewater concert hall, the Manchester Evening News Arena and the Manchester Velodrome cycling centre. Most of those consulted mentioned the Commonwealth Games as a sporting event which increased the profile of the city and as a consequence it raised the investment in the area producing large amount of physical benefits.

Also as a benefit of promoting the Commonwealth games was pointed out the creation of awareness and this according to one of the Manchester City Council's representatives "has put Manchester on the map". The Manchester City Football Club moved to the Commonwealth stadium after the games fact, which was mentioned by some of the interviewees with the aim of explaining that after investors from Abu Dhabi bought the Football Club, they invested in creation of training facilities as well as in providing sport facilities to the local residents therefore contributed to the regeneration as a consequence of promotion.

Others were on the opinion that the promotion of football, shopping and various attractions has enhanced the need and delivery of hotels having an effect on the local economy. Table 3. outlines the bed stock occupancy between 2000-2008 which in 2000 was the lowest and 2005

the highest and the second part. comprises the economic impact of visitors between the same time interval where in 2000 was the lowest and in 2007 was the highest.

Table 1: Bed stock and Economic impact of visitors
Source: Marketing Manchester, 2008

Bed Stock (number of beds)		Economic Impact of Visitors	
2000	37,023	2000	£4.20 billion
2001	38,377	2001	£4.21 billion
2002	39,930	2002	£4.83 billion
2003	41,415	2003	£5.01 billion
2004	42,549	2004	£5.16 billion
2005	43,447	2005	£5.39 billion
2006	42,130	2006	£5.41 billion
2007	40,853*	2007	£5.60 billion
2008	41,413	2008	£5.52 billion

According to most of the elite professionals interviewed one of the biggest regeneration catalyst was the IRA bomb in 1996 which destroyed a very large area and led to huge efforts on rebuilding and regenerating the city centre area and creating a better infrastructure and shopping centre which furthers the promotion of it and changes the people's perceptions about Manchester from a post industrial to a modern city.

In terms of business tourism most of the interviewees pointed out the investments made in conference facilities with building the G-MEX conference centre and by that improving and promoting the business sector with the aim of bringing more visitors and investors. Further,-the interviewees explained- as a consequence, the number of visitors has risen and led to growing hotel industry which had a greater economic impact.

Many felt that the new office opened by the Bank of New York in Manchester was due to the good promotion of the city's image and good trading abilities. One view expressed by one of the representatives of the Manchester City Council was that "Regeneration is what you get, facilitate or deliver yourself […] changing the place is important but bringing communities into it is also very important and promotion does that."

According to one of the researches made in 2008 by Cushman &Wakefield real estate consultants several companies chose to locate their businesses in the next five years (from 2009) in cities like London in the first place, followed by Manchester, Cardiff and Edinburgh. The findings of the research are visualised in the figure below:

Figure 5: Best places to locate a business
Source: Cushman&Wakefield,2008

Conclusions

The research was conducted based on interviews conducted with high profile representatives from several agencies, local authority, consultancies and companies. The participants were all of executive director status dealing with urban policy, promotion and management. Over the course of literature examination, primary research, gathering and analysing results and furthermore discussing their relevance the research fulfilled its aims providing answer to the research question.

The purpose of the research was to examine the methods and attitudes which influence the promotion of Manchester and to explore the extent to which this can contribute to the regeneration of the city. The study has a wide range of implications of how organizations, local authorities, agencies operate in implementing promotion in their activity for creating contribution to the regeneration of Manchester on a city regional scale.

As a consequence of the industrial decline there were and are serious attempts to achieve economic regeneration by promoting the city. In this current world of knowledge economy the competition got very strong within the regions. (*Dolfsma and Soete*, 2006) Therefore, the cities

need to make themselves attractive to the residents, location for businesses and investments, a place where the visitors would like to spend some time. This was pointed out by all representatives interviewed throughout the research.

However, the urban management is about leading a harmonious development throughout the city or city region. The goal of the local authorities, agencies, city institutions just as Marketing Manchester, MIDAS or Manchester City Council is to promote the wealth of the urban community. Nevertheless, is important to realise that this is not possible to practise without paying attention to the living conditions and life quality in the disadvantaged neighbourhoods of the city region. As one of the interviewees pointed out, the product what you sell, in this case Manchester, needs to be of a good quality and another interviewee supported this arguing that the image and identity of the city needs to have substance behind, needs to be bedded in reality. Therefore, without the improvement and achievement of all these aspects the brand of Manchester is quite fragmented and even if Manchester has successes in its promotion which is done very well by the creative and purposive professionals, its identity, as few of the interviewees mentioned, is not yet articulated. However, as it was mentioned above, the urban management will not work properly until in reality the "doughnut ring" exists so that there is still social deprivation and unemployment in some of the neighbourhoods of Manchester city region. Further, as emphasized by one of the participants the regeneration needs to be of a quality, it cannot be fake as in terms of promotion there needs to be a reason created for the audience in order for them to reassess their options.

However, as the NWDA representative pointed out, it is important to get the right strategies for regenerating the deprived neighbourhood areas and then use promotion to attract people in there because as it was emphasized before, the promotion needs a strong, realistic, integral brand.

Ever since until now, the regeneration and investment focused on the city centre area. This was made attractive for companies; the inward investment put its base there and as a consequence the doughnut ring did not disappear because the investments established in the city centre did not crawl down in to the neighbourhood areas. Therefore, several neighbouring authorities like Bolton, Salford and other districts started to generate their own identities and brands in order to attract investment, visitors and companies as well.

As a consequence, the territorial boundaries which for the professionals working with city promotion do not exist in their activity, in this case had even strengthen. It was pointed that Manchester is promoted as being Greater Manchester because external people do not see local authority boundaries, they are only aware of the place itself. Next to this, it was also emphasised that this is the efficient way of promoting the city because the product is stronger and its image and brand is stronger and helps in the competition with other cities. In terms of brand there is not supposed to be fragmentation. Therefore, the question is about what is the right model through which the investment gets in the peripheral areas and contributes to their regeneration as so far this did not successfully happen.

Overall, the findings showed that promotion and branding have a significant role to play in the contemporary urban regeneration but the promotion attempts need to be coherent and part of a model which works as a machine in the regeneration of the city region as a whole.

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List of Abbreviations

EU	–	European Union
F1	–	Formula One
GMEX	–	Greater Manchester Exhibition centre
IRA	–	Irish Republican Army
MIDAS	–	Manchester Investment Development Agency Service
MIPIM	–	Market for international property trade
MORI	–	Market & Opinion Research International
MOSI	–	Museum of Science and Industry
NWDA	–	North West Development Agency
USA	–	United States of America