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Rethinking place marketing: A literature review

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Special Session: Planning and Place marketing – theoretical implications

Rethinking place marketing – a literature review

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Rethinking place marketing – a literature review

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1. Introduction

On the official website of Umeå, a medium-sized city in the northern part of Sweden, the city and its relation to the external environment is described as follows:

Umeå is a successful city. We have grown more than most Swedish cities during the 21st century. But we are not in place to make our self comfortable. The competition from other places is harsh. And from a global perspective, we are a small city. Therefore, we must always try a little bit harder to stand out in the market place. Therefore, we are now investing in a long-term branding strategy in order to strengthening our position as an attractive place in northern Europe.
[<http://www.umea.se/mer/omvarumarketumea> 2010-06-10] ¹

The way Umeå is described in relation to the external environment is by no means unique. Similar wordings can be found on many of the official websites of the 290 municipalities in Sweden. Similar wordings are, in fact, used to describe many western places (cities, municipalities and regions) and their relation to the external environment. Thus, the quotation above points at the reality of many western places; an urgent need to stand out in the market place and become an attractive place for new investments, new inhabitants and visitors. Measures undertaken for achieving the latter are generally labelled *place marketing*, and are the central theme of this paper.

During the last three decades, there has been a growing practice of place marketing in large parts of the western world. In practice, place marketing is associated with measures for renewing places and their images and, by that, strengthening their attractiveness and competitiveness. Thus, place marketing is often put on an equal footing with the provision and promotion of amenities with the presumed ability to appeal to external markets. Not infrequently,

¹ The quotation is originally in Swedish and has been translated by the authors.

the objective is to put places on the map. This undertaking generally includes spectacular urban developments, often flagships such as new concert halls, museums, shopping malls, professional sport stadiums and housing facilities. Generally, it also includes upgrading of public space, most often city centre makeovers involving everything from squares to pedestrian walks and green areas. Last but not least, it often entails promotion and a new brand encapsulating the presumed advantages of a place.

Place marketing in previous research

During the last three decades, there has also been a growing interest in place marketing within the academia. Since the mid 1980s, a large number of writings have been published and today, there is an extensive literature on place marketing. This is by no means a uniform body of writings. Place marketing is conceptualized from different angles and there are, evidently, different starting points and approaches in the literature. However, these are more or less implicit and become apparent in the different meanings attached to the place marketing concept. Taken together, it is quite difficult to comprehend the place marketing literature in a systematic way. This is partly due to its interdisciplinary character, partly due to its vague and in our opinion superficial usage of the place marketing concept.

Most scholars in this field of research conceptualize place marketing with reference to current urban developments and use the place marketing concept to denote externally oriented activities undertaken for strengthening the attractiveness and competitiveness of a place. Often, place marketing is used synonymous with concepts such as place selling, place promotion and place branding and it is unclear what each concept mean and how they relate to each other. Most scholars in this field of research are human geographers do not pay much attention (if any) to the meaning of the *marketing* side of the concept. Instead, they are more or less preoccupied with studying or/and critically analysing the driving forces, expressions and effects of spectacular urban developments, including flagship developments and place promotion (see e.g. Gold & Ward 1994, Eisinger 2000 and Ek & Hultman 2007). The few scholars that do consider the meaning of marketing are, unfortunately, neither explicit nor in agreement on what it actually means to market a place. While some have a best practice perspective and see place marketing as a management process (see e.g. Kotler et al. 1999 and Rainisto 2003), others view place marketing as a demand-oriented and communicative planning theory (see e.g. Ashworth & Voogd 1988, 1990, 1990₁, Ashworth & Kavaratzis 2008 and Olsson & Berglund 2009). As it now stands, the literature on place marketing

resembles an obscure and bewildered landscape of diverging starting points, approaches and viewpoints. After more than thirty years of place marketing research, one of the most fundamental questions; what it actually means to market a place; remains largely unanswered.

In addition, most of the literature deals with large and somewhat successful cities in international competition (see e.g. Millington 2002 and Niedomysl 2007 for a similar analysis). Although there are a growing number of case studies dealing with the problems and possibilities of small, remote and not as successful places (see e.g. Nyseth & Viken 2009), there is a lack of general and systematic knowledge on how places (e.g. cities, municipalities and regions) with different preconditions work in order to strengthen their attractiveness and competitiveness (the work of Niedomysl 2004 are an exception). In line with the reasoning above, there is also a lack of an analytical framework for structuring empirical studies and characterising the growing practice generally referred to as place marketing.

Aim and structure of the paper

The overarching aim of this paper is to contribute to a rethinking of the prevalence, nature and meaning of place marketing in practice and in previous research. Through a review of place marketing literature, the paper is expected to contribute to a theoretical framework for structuring future research and better understanding and developing the practice of place marketing. With reference to the problems portrayed above, the objective is twofold: (I) to typologise different starting points, approaches and viewpoints in previous place marketing research and (II) to contribute to an analytical framework of the compound concept of place marketing.

The remaining part of the paper is structured as follows. After this introduction, a typology of previous research literature is presented, in which the literature is characterised as empirical, critical, prescriptive and conceptual research. Based on this literature review, a concluding section includes a proposed analytical framework for future place marketing research.

2. A typology of place marketing research

At present, there are a handful of place marketing literature reviews (see e.g. Millington, Craig & Lever 1997, Ward 1998, Short & Kim 1999 and Barke 1999). These differ on specifics but have a similar understanding of the research field in question. In most of the reviews, two broad strands are identified; research that conceptualizes place marketing with reference to current urban developments, and research with origins in the practice and theory

of marketing. Although these two strands are described and subcategorized in different ways, there seems to be a general agreement that place marketing is more or less the same thing as place selling and place promotion. In a seldom referred literature review, Borchert (1994) challenge this understanding of the place marketing concept. He argues that most studies characterized as place marketing studies do not, in fact, deal with the *marketing* of places but with place selling and place promotion. In his literature review, Borchert points at the necessity of making a better distinction between different types of studies in this field of research. He also points at the necessity of using a more distinctive terminology. Following this line of thought, Borchert differs among studies that deal with place promotion, place selling and urban marketing strategies. However, although Borchert (1994) provides a promising approach, he is not very explicit regarding the differences between different types of studies in this field of research.

The typology suggested below seeks to further develop the onset of Borchert (1994) and uses the concept of place marketing to distinguish among different starting points and approaches in previous research. Drawing on the place marketing concept itself, two divergent starting points touched upon in previous literature reviews emerge: one that derive from the *place* side of the concept and one that derive, respectively, from the *marketing* side of the concept. Whereas studies with place as a starting point conceptualize place marketing with reference to structural change and the ongoing transformation of western cities, studies with marketing as a starting point is based on marketing theory, primarily schools of thought developed in the 1950s to the 1970s. Thus, whereas the former group of studies relate place marketing to urban entrepreneurialism and proactive planning conducive to local and regional economic development, the latter group of studies view place marketing as the comprehensive application of marketing thought and marketing management into public planning and place development.

In the following sections, the differences between the two starting points will be further elaborated on. As portrayed in figure 1, the approaches the two starting points give rise to differ significantly. Whereas studies with place as a starting point tend to be empirical and/or critical in approach, studies with marketing as a starting point tend to be prescriptive and/or conceptual, see figure 1.

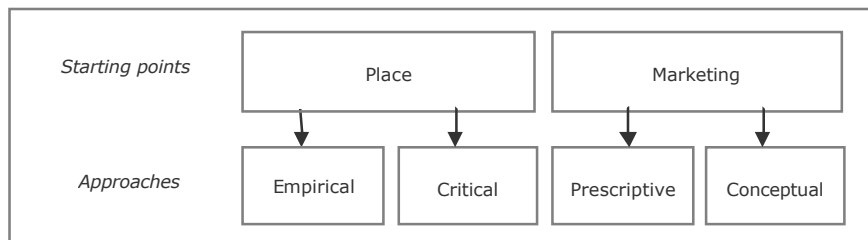


Figure 1: A typology of previous place marketing research.

Before further elaborating on the differences between the two starting points, a word of caution is needed. The typology suggested above portrays the *main* starting points and approaches in previous research and gives, by that, a simplified view of the place marketing literature. There are, of course, many studies that move across the sharply depicted boundaries in figure 1. In fact, most studies in this field of research include some contextual analysis, some empirical observations and some critical assessment. To some extent, they also include some prescriptive and conceptual reasoning. However, as pointed out above, the purpose with the suggested typology is to portray the main starting points, approaches and viewpoints in previous research. Thus, the objective *is* to simplify and to structure the diffuse and bewildered literature on place marketing. Put in other words, the objective is to make an implicit research field more explicit and, by doing so, lay a foundation for an analytical framework of place marketing.

Research with an empirical approach

The empirical research is quite extensive and contributes with knowledge about the origins and characteristics of the practice generally referred to as place marketing. Most of the empirical research sets out in the urban crisis of the 1970s and view place marketing as a result of structural change; foremost de-industrialisation, increased mobility and increased territorial competition. Thus, in most empirical research, place marketing is viewed as a way of coping with the new realities of the late 20th century. A large number of studies in this field of research relate place marketing to entrepreneurial modes of governance. Often, place marketing is associated with proactive planning conducive to local economic development and place attractiveness. Thus, it is placed on an equal footing with the provision and promotion of amenities with the presumed ability to appeal to external markets. Put in other words, place marketing is seen as a way of convincing external populations about the comparative advantages of a certain place. Thus, it is seen as a way of selling, promoting and/or branding a more or less pre-defined and pre-packaged product (see e.g. Gold & Ward 1994, Holcomb 1994,

Hubbard 1996, Griffiths 1998, Oatley 1998, Ward 1998, Short & Kim 1999 and Mukthar-Landgren 2009).

However, many scholars in this field of research argue that the practice of place marketing has a long history and that it, to quote Kavaratzis (2007:2), “...*has developed through discrete phases over time; faces that differ in their general approach towards marketing, as well as their level of refinement*” (see also Haider 1992, Holcomb 1994, Ward 1998, Short & Kim 1999, Griffiths 1998 and Mukthar-Landgren 2009). With reference to a classic study of Bailey (1989), it is often argued that the practice of place marketing has moved beyond attempts to attract companies and manufacturing jobs with subsidies and promises of low production costs (smokestack chasing) to become more and more differentiated (target marketing) and focused on place reinvention (product development) (see e.g. Short & Kim 1999 and Kavaratzis 2007). Holcomb (1994:120) argues that the current practice of place marketing is based on the earlier ones but is “*distinguished both quantitatively and qualitatively from the past*”. Following this line of thought, it is often argued that place marketing has become much more common and considered much more important. It is also argued that the transformation from an industrial society to a post-industrial society has changed the way place marketing activities are organized and financed and the way western places are planned, designed, promoted and portrayed.

Organization and financing

However, the empirical research is sparse on how the practice of place marketing is organised and financed. Nevertheless, it is generally recognized that responsibility of place marketing activities has been transferred from local public authorities to various kinds of partnerships within (see e.g. Ward 1998) and between places (see e.g. Berglund 2006). It is also generally recognized that private stakeholders, e.g. local business communities and PR- and marketing consultants, have a prominent role in these partnerships, especially in the ones within places (see e.g. Short & Kim 1999, Kavaratzis & Ashworth 2006 and Mukthar-Landgren 2009).

Urban planning and design

Furthermore, it is generally recognized that urban planning and design strategies are seen as important features of place marketing. Two types of strategies are often mentioned: (I) the construction of high-profile flag-ship buildings, often museums, concert halls, housing facilities and professional sport stadiums with spectacular architecture, and (II) the repacka-

ging of particular urban areas, often industrial sites transformed into cultural districts or/and festival market places (see e.g. Griffiths 1998, Hall & Hubbard 1998, Ward 1998, Mukthar-Landgren 2005 and Bok 2008).

Place promotion: publicity and advertising

A large part of the empirical research is concerned with place promotion and regards place marketing as a tool for selling places. This understanding of the place marketing concept is made explicit in the following definition in which Gold & Ward (1994:2) describe place promotion as “... *the conscious use of publicity and marketing to communicate selective images of specific geographical localities or areas to a target audience*” (see e.g. Hubbard 1996, Ward 1998, Griffiths 1998, Short & Kim 1999, Bok 2008, Jakobsson 2009 and Mukthar-Landgren 2009 for a similar understanding of the place marketing concept).

In the empirical literature, much attention is devoted to how places are portrayed, i.e., to the content of the selective images put forward by Gold & Ward in their definition of place promotion. Several studies in this field of development come to a similar conclusion regarding these images; that places, in their efforts to differentiate themselves and stand out in the market place, standardize their promotional message and communicate similar images (see e.g. Holcomb 1994, Barke & Harrop 1994, Griffiths 1998 and Berglund 2006). Thus, several studies point at a number of recurrent themes, e.g., “the unique place”, “the reinvented place with the exiting urban culture”, “the successful and future oriented place”, “the dynamic and vibrant place” and “the central place with the advantageous location” (see e.g. Holcomb 1994, Barke & Harrop 1994, Griffiths 1998, Ward 1998, Short & Kim 1999 and Berglund 2006).

Research with a critical approach

The critical research has as similar starting point as the empirical, and thus, a similar understanding of the place marketing concept. However, the critical research is rooted in critical theory and differentiates itself, by that, from other critical analysis in this field of research. In the critical research, place marketing is seen as a true neo-liberal idea (see e.g. Nyseth & Viken 2009). It is also seen as a business practice not applicable to place management and public planning (see e.g. Gold & Ward 1994). The critical research, which is quite extensive, is concerned with power relations and justice in relation to place selling and place promotion. More precise, it is concerned with social justice (see e.g. Eisinger 2000), cultural justice (see

e.g. Mukthar-Landgren 2005) and the inward-looking ideological role place marketing is assumed to play in the late capitalist society (see e.g. Harvey 1989).

Social justice

In the critical research, there is much scepticism towards the in practice prevailing assumption that investments in place marketing increases the prosperity of a place and, in the long run, creates conditions for improving social welfare. Many critical scholars argue, on the contrary, that investments in place marketing are made at the expense of investments in social welfare. It is partly argued that wealthy populations are prioritised on the expense of the poor, partly that external markets are prioritised on the expense of internal markets. In addition, it is assumed that the new urban landscapes planning and design strategies give rise to have an excluding function, and in sum, that the practice referred to as place marketing contributes to polarisation and social injustices (see e.g. Harvey 1989, Crilley 1993, Fainstein & Gladstone 1999, Judd 1999, Eisinger 2000 and Ek 2007).

Cultural justice

In line with the reasoning above, it is argued that place marketing commodifies and thus commercializes places. In many critical studies, it is argued that places are too complex to be treated as products promoted and sold on a market. Thus, many studies question the way places are portrayed and argue that places and their images are sanitised and simplified beyond recognition. In addition, it is argued that the communicated images are selective and represent one of many different ways of portraying reality. Following this line of thought, it is discussed who has the right and the power to define places (see e.g. Barke & Harrop 1994, Gold & Ward 1994, Holcomb 1994, Murray 2001 and Mukthar-Landgren 2005).

The inward-looking ideological role of place marketing

The critical research also calls attention to the inward-looking ideological role the practice of place marketing is assumed to play. At the heart of the critique is that the contemporary fabrication of spectacular urban landscapes and their accompanying images not only give rise to social and cultural injustices but, in fact, serve as a festive veil diverting local citizens from apprehending and protesting against these inequalities. Thus, scholars within this critical field of research point at the dual role of place marketing; reshaping cities and their images in order to attract external markets and, simultaneous convincing local populations about the internal benefits of such undertakings. The approval of local populations is assumed to be produced

through a process of internalisation, creating a false consciousness serving to reproduce social relations as well as to legitimize and naturalize current practices (see e.g. Harvey 1989, Brownill 1994, Hubbard 1996 and Häussemann & Colomb 2003).

Research with a prescriptive approach

The prescriptive research has one thing in common with the empirical and critical research; it deals with the practice of place marketing. However, the starting point and approach in the former are very different from the latter. Being rooted in the normative science of marketing management, the prescriptive research is primarily concerned with “how place marketing ought to be done” rather than “how it is done” or “the injustices it gives rise to”. More precise, the prescriptive research aims to answer the questions of why place marketing is important; which stakeholders that ought to be involved; which groups that ought to be targeted; and how it can be done in the best possible way (see e.g. Kotler et al. 1999 and Rainisto 2003).

What is place marketing and why is it necessary?

Most of the prescriptive research set out in contextual analysis and argues that place marketing is a necessity in the contemporary and constantly changing society. At the heart of the analysis is that western places are facing huge challenges in handling internal periods of growth and decline and, simultaneously, external changes including deindustrialisation, increased mobility and increased territorial competition. The leading authors in this field research, Kotler et al. (1999), argue that all places regardless of their position in the global economy need to be marketed in order to handle internal and external changes. Strengthening the competitiveness and attractiveness of a place is, according to them, a matter of survival and the only long-term sustainable strategy of securing social welfare. Kotler et al. use the concept of place marketing synonymous with strategic market planning and maintain that place marketing implies action, rather than reaction. Whereas the strategic dimensions refers to the necessity of being adaptive to changes and utilize opportunities in the marketing place, the market planning dimension stress the importance of being adaptive to the demand of the consumers.

Which stakeholders ought to be involved?

In the prescriptive research, there seems to be a broad agreement that place marketing is an issue for a large number of public, semi-public and private stakeholders. Kotler et al (1993)

derive from the assumption that no stakeholder alone has the resources and the capabilities to successfully market places and stress, thereby, the importance of solid public-private partnerships including representatives for the public authorities, the local business community and the inhabitants of a place. van den Berg & Braun (1999) come to a similar conclusion and point at the necessity of strategic networks in order to maintain organising capacity. The latter is defined as “*the ability to enlist all actors involved and with their help /.../ generate new ideas and develop and implement a policy designed to respond to fundamental developments and create conditions for sustainable development*” (van den Berg & Braun 1999:995). In this line of thought, Kotler et al (1999) put forward that successful place marketing requires engagement, involvement and consensus, and they argue, accordingly, that “... *a place’s potential depends to a lesser degree on location, climate and natural resources than it does on its human, will, skill, energy, values and organization*” (1999:27-28).

Which groups ought to be targeted?

The prescriptive research is primarily concerned with how to work in order to attract new investments, new inhabitants and visitors and is, by that, primarily concerned with how to satisfy the demand of external markets. The internal markets, i.e., the ones already living, working and doing business in a particular place, are discussed in terms of good ambassadors and are foremost regarded as indirect producers, rather than end consumers (see e.g. Haider 1992, Kotler et al. 1999 and Rainisto 2003).

How can places be marketed in the best possible way?

Moreover, the prescriptive research provides general guidelines for how to work in order to attract external markets. Kotler et al. (1999) propose a linear and comprehensive four-step planning process including (I) a systematic place audit, (II) vision statements and formulation of goals and strategies, (III) the making of an action plan (IV) implementation and evaluation (see Ashworth & Voogd 1990 and Rainisto 2003 for a similar understanding of how place marketing ought to be done in the best possible way). When it comes to implementation, it is explicitly stated that place marketing involves much more than place promotion. In fact, it is argued that a systematic place audit is the most important marketing task and that place promotion is the least important one (see e.g. Ashworth & Voogd 1990, Kotler et al. 1999 and Kavatzis 2007). Furthermore, it is argued that various marketing measures; spatial, organisational, promotional and financial; are interdependent (Ashworth & Voogd 1990) and that

promotion alone, accordingly, is not enough to handle the challenges discussed above (Kotler et al. 1999).

Research with a conceptual approach

The conceptual research is the least extensive compared to other types of place marketing research. It consists of a handful of writings from the late 1980s and early 1990s (see Ashworth & Voogd 1988, 1990, 1990₁, 1994,) and of a number of studies furthering the ideas elaborated on in the former (see e.g. Borchert 1994, Ashworth & Kavaratzis 2008 and Olsson & Berglund 2009).

The conceptual research relates place marketing to public planning and defines it as the comprehensive application of marketing thought and marketing management into planning. Thus, in the conceptual research, place marketing is defined as a way of thinking and working in public planning. The conceptual research is rooted in marketing theory and views place marketing as a social and non-profit activity not to be confused with commercialization and neo-liberal ideas of how to organize society (see e.g. Ashworth & Voogd 1990). The conceptual research is also rooted in planning theory. The early writings implicitly draw on action-oriented planning (Ashworth & Voogd 1990), an onset furthered in contemporary writings that conceptualize place marketing with reference to communicative planning theory (see Ashworth & Kavaratzis 2008, Olsson & Berglund 2009 and Olsson 2010).

Place marketing as a way of thinking in public planning

Ashworth & Voogd (1990) use the concept of place marketing more or less synonymous with market planning and are foremost concerned with how marketing thought and marketing management can be applied into public planning for establishing a new relation between places and their users. They criticise the practice of public planning for being supply and product oriented. Instead, they describe place marketing as a demand-oriented planning process in which places are treated as products, composed by recourses (the supply), according to the needs and wants of targeted consumer groups (the demand) and/or the public interest. In the conceptual research, demand is a central but vaguely defined concept that primarily refers to the needs and wants of the internal markets (Olsson & Berglund 2009) and the citizens (Ashworth & Voogd 1990). Thus, in the conceptual research, place marketing is primarily not seen as a way of attracting external markets as in most research in this field of

development. Rather, it is seen as a market-oriented way of thinking that can be applied into all aspects of public sector undertakings, including public planning.

Place marketing as a way of working in public planning

In the conceptual research, there are two different views on what signifies place marketing as a planning practice. Early writings foremost draw on marketing management and devote much attention to the linear and seemingly rational planning process briefly mentioned in relation to the prescriptive approach above. Even though it is maintained that place marketing draws on action-oriented planning, it is not explained how (see in particular Ashworth & Voogd 1990). Contemporary writings, however, explicitly draw on communicative planning theory and regard place marketing as a way of involving a large number of stakeholders, including citizens, in the planning process. Whereas Ashworth & Kavaratzis (2008) point at the need of inclusive dialogues in which involved stakeholders reach consensus about the e.g. the vision, the goals and the marketing measures, Olsson & Berglund (2009) conceptualize place marketing with reference to citizen participation. The latter are concerned with the issue of how to obtain knowledge about the demand of internal markets and advocate survey techniques as a complement to the direct participation suggested by the former.

3. Towards an analytical framework of place marketing

In previous research, there are different and to some extent conflicting views on what place marketing is, what it aims at and what it means for a place and its development. Whereas the preceding part of this paper aimed at a better understanding of different starting points and approaches in previous research, this part of the paper aims at a better understanding of the place marketing concept and how it relates to place selling and place promotion. Drawing on Borchert's analysis of previous research (1994), one can say that the preceding part of the paper aimed at a better distinction amongst different types of place marketing research, and that this part aims at a more distinctive place marketing terminology. The latter requires an understanding of both sides of the place marketing concept and is seen as important, partly for characterising and better understanding previous research, partly for characterising and better understanding the practice generally referred to as place marketing.

Since most studies in this field of research set out in the *place* side of the place marketing concept, it stand out as important to contribute to a better understanding of the *marketing* side of the concept, which is less elaborated on in previous research. Drawing on the conceptual

place marketing research, which explicitly set out in marketing theory, two schools of marketing thought stand out as important: the managerial school and the social exchange school. These were developed in the 1950s to 1970s and are two of the most influential schools of marketing thought.

Place marketing as a demand-oriented planning process

The managerial school provides a number of widely applied marketing tools commonly known to marketing students, e.g., marketing mix, market segmentation, product differentiation and product positioning. These tools are included as planning techniques in the more comprehensive process of marketing management which, in turn, includes four subsequent managerial functions; analysis, planning, implementation and control (see e.g. Sheth et al. 1988 and Tufvesson 2005).

One of the most important concepts within the managerial school is the *marketing concept*. The latter is often explained on the first pages in marketing textbooks and states that the aim of marketing is to satisfy consumer needs and wants (the demand). The managerial school makes a distinction between *marketing* and *selling* and argues that the former are the opposite of the latter. Whereas selling is described as a supply-oriented process seeking to find the right consumers for the existing products, marketing is described as a demand-oriented process seeking to find the right products for targeted consumers. Thus, whereas selling begins with an analysis of the existing products (the supply) and seeks, through promotion, to create a demand for these products, marketing begins with an analysis of consumer needs and wants (the demand) and seeks, through product development, to satisfy these needs and wants (see e.g. Kotler et al. 2008).

Hence, from a managerial perspective, marketing is *not* the same thing as selling. Neither is it the same thing as promotion, as many scholars in previous place marketing research tend to assume. From a managerial perspective, promotion is one of many different types of planning tools that can be used to market and/or sell a product. Drawing on the reasoning above, place marketing can be described as a demand-oriented processes and place selling as the opposite, i.e., as a supply oriented process, see figure 2.

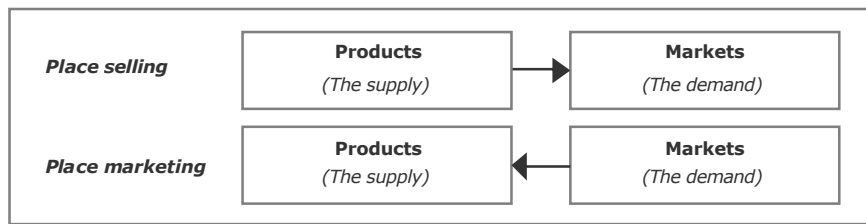


Figure 2: The difference between place marketing and place selling.

Place marketing as a social and non-profit activity

The social exchange school was developed in the mid 1960s and seeks to further the managerial school by (I) developing the marketing concept and (II) broadening the sphere in which it is applied. Basically, in this field of research, it is argued that marketing is a social activity and not, as generally assumed in previous place marketing research, a business- and profit-seeking activity. Thus, it is argued that marketing may be pursued for other reasons than maximizing individual utility, for example, for the well being of society. Accordingly, it is argued that marketing is an issue in the provision of both private and public goods.

In this field of research, marketing is defined as a social exchange, i.e., as a process involving two or more social units in which at least one social unit is seeking a specific response from other units concerning some social object. The latter may, e.g., be a good, a service, a person, an idea or a place. In the process, monetary and/or non-monetary values are offered and exchanged, i.e., proposed and transferred amongst the involved parties (see e.g. Kotler & Levy 1969 and Kotler 1972). In sum, it is basically argued that marketing is a generic activity applicable far beyond the business arena, e.g., in place development and public planning as proposed the prescriptive and conceptual place marketing research.

Concluding remarks

Drawing on the reasoning above, it is evident that most previous place marketing research has misinterpreted the meaning of the marketing concept, and thus do not contribute to a further understanding of what it means to market a place. Being concerned with various attempts in practice to create a demand for existing and more or less pre-defined place products, it is also evident that most empirical and critical research in this field of development are dealing with place selling and place promotion, not with place marketing. With this recognition, the typology suggested in previous sections can be extended with a more distinct terminology of place selling, place promotion and place marketing, see figure 3.

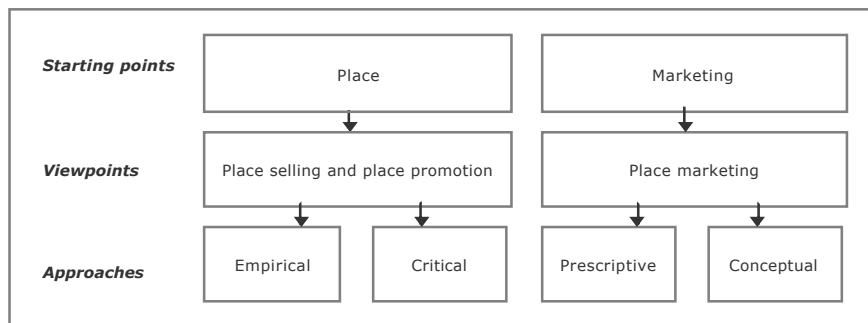


Figure 3: An extended typology of previous place marketing research.

However, before concluding the paper, another word of caution is needed. The recognition that most studies in this field of research are not dealing with place marketing does not mean that they do not provide valuable knowledge about the nature and meaning of the practice referred to as place marketing. However, in order to contribute to a better understanding and development of the practice, a more distinct terminology as well as a better understanding of the place marketing concept is needed. The latter implies the need of a thorough analysis of what it actually means to apply marketing as a demand-oriented way of thinking and working into public planning and place development. In particular, considering the vagueness of the conceptual literature, it stand out as important to furthering the analysis of place marketing as a communicative theory and practice.

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