



Original Article

City branding and film festivals: Re-evaluating stakeholder's relations

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ABSTRACT The stakeholder approach is advocated by many researchers in the place branding literature. In order for a place brand to be successful, it must be supported by the various stakeholders. Although studies have shown how place brands fail because of the lack of consultation with stakeholders, building up consensus among stakeholders is easier said than done. We look at the Copenhagen International Film Festival (CIFF) and the branding of Copenhagen. At the broader level, the film festival increases the vibrancy of the city. Different stakeholders should – ideally – collaborate and cooperate to bring about common good for the community and enhance their own interests. But the organizers of CIFF and brand authorities of the city have different agendas. Eventually, their relationships are loose. This article shows that their relationships are only vaguely complementary, rather than symbiotic. It questions the normative use of the stakeholder approach to place branding. Stakeholders may have different agendas, have different audiences and may not even want to cooperate; a concerted joint effort to promote a place brand would merely increase coordination and governance costs.

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INTRODUCTION

A video clip – *Danish mother seeking* – could be found on YouTube, fall 2009. It shows a young beautiful Dane, Karen, without regret or anger, seeking to find the foreign father of her baby, August (VisitDenmark, 2009). The baby was an outcome of a one-night fling. Karen wants to let her sex partner know that he

has August. The two-and-a-half-minute video was viewed more than 800 000 times before it was revealed that the appeal was staged. It was part of a social media and viral marketing stunt by VisitDenmark, the tourism promotion board of the country (Isherwood, 2009a).

The then-Chief Executive of VisitDenmark, Dorte Kiilerich, said that

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'Karen's story shows that Denmark is a broad-minded country where you can do what you want. The film is a good example of independent, dignified, Danish women who dare to make their own choices' (Politiken, 2009b). Views in Denmark were divided; many were upset and offended that Danish women were portrayed as sluts and loose. The tourism promotion authorities 'removed' the clip soon after.

The images of Denmark in the world, as in all other places, are heterogeneous. The Danish society is at times seen as liberal, open-minded and tolerant (in the sense of 'sex, drugs and rock n roll'). Another set of images points to an old kingdom with many historical churches and castles (Ooi, 2004). The various trade and tourism authorities in Denmark want to promote a modern, trendy and vibrant image for the country. What does a modern, trendy and vibrant image mean? Although Karen's story is not unheard of in the country, the story does not send the right message, according to many Danes. The angry Danes are stakeholders in the tourism business. Their views have to be respected. Eventually, among other things, Chief Executive Dorte Kiilerich took responsibility for the uproar and resigned.

In the place branding literature, many researchers noticed how place branding authorities have often neglected stakeholders in branding processes. There are various stakeholders in a place branding exercise, including residents, industry players, local government, central government and the branding authorities. For example, Ryan and Zahra (2004) examined the political challenges in branding New Zealand as a tourism destination. They observed that tourism is economically important but is politically weak because the industry comprises many small concerns, not all of which are economically motivated. Some local interest groups may want to maintain their idyll, whereas others want more tourism development. Regional and local governments across the country could not agree on a national strategy. Tourist businesses pursue their own interests. The cash strap tourism

promotion authorities could provide a direction but not the resources to draw all parties in the same direction. Such a situation is known in many places, including Australia (Crockett and Wood, 2004), Denmark (Ooi, 2004; Therkelsen and Halkier, 2008) and Slovakia (Ooi *et al.*, 2004).

Studies of place branding have moved beyond treating place branding as merely marketing exercises and into aspects of place management. The branding process requires mobilizing and garnering local support, enhancing public-private collaboration and engaging with audiences around the world (Mossberg and Getz, 2006; Nilsson, 2007; Tatevossian, 2008; Therkelsen and Halkier, 2008; Vasudevan, 2008). Cities, for instance, are not only enhancing their images through advertising, but they are also increasing activities and events for visitors and residents. In addition to beautifying the city through urban planning, city authorities are also enlivening their cities' cultural scenes, nightlife and the celebration of diversity. The enlivening processes would benefit both residents and visitors. Various stakeholders benefit from these strategies (Brown *et al.*, 2002; Florida, 2003; Smith, 2004; Harmaakorpi *et al.*, 2008). From these studies, respecting stakeholders is not only necessary to ensure the success of a branding campaign, it is also ethical. Consultation shows respect and courtesy. Place brands must reflect the different interests of various groups in society. The brand must be developed and promoted from the grassroots.

The *specific* relationships between stakeholders in the place branding literature, however, remain scantily researched. An agreement exists among scholars that various stakeholders – industry, government, local communities, branding agencies – must cooperate and coordinate for the campaign to function. But how should the consensus be reached? With conflicting interests, whose concerns should be considered more primary? The democratic emergence of a consensus can be tedious. In the case of Singapore, while the authorities agree for the need to develop a widely

accepted brand identity for the country, the solution is eventually top-down. The branding authorities develop a brand identity and sell it to the residents while providing incentives for industry to adopt the official brand (Ooi, 2007). In contrast, in observing the messy place branding situation in Denmark, Therkelsen and Halkier (2008) argue for cross-sectoral branding collaboration, such as between the investment and the tourism sectors, for the country. They propose that VisitDenmark and Invest in Denmark (the agency attracting investments into the country) work together, so that their different place branding experiences can complement each other; these agencies can also challenge each other's ideas and assumptions to bring about a more broadly accepted place brand for the country. Just as importantly, these agencies should cooperate to get more political attention and to attract resources.

In this article, we look at the challenges of bringing contrasting stakeholders in the place branding exercise. To stay focused, we examine the relationship between place branding and film festivals. At the outset, it seems that organizers of film festivals are not much interested in branding the city, although the festival can be used to promote the city. The branding of Copenhagen and the Copenhagen International Film Festival (CIFF) will be used as a case to examine the relationships between branding the city and promoting film. Copenhagen as a city and place has not always been well known for its film. But from 1995 to 2005, the Danes introduced a new genre of movies. Dogma movies, in wanting to accentuate the story in the movie, are made without special effects, with only given lightings and in seemingly primitive ways, were introduced to the world.¹ The first movie, *The Celebration* by director Thomas Vinterberg, won the Jury's Special Prize at Cannes 1998 and thereafter attracted huge interest on the international film festival (IFF) circuit. Subsequently, more than 35 certified Dogma movies were made around the world, drawing interests from numerous directors and influencing film production and aesthetics. But

apparently, Danish Dogma films did not generate much place branding capital for the country. Movies with shaky cameras, often with tragic endings, did not build place branding capital. Such films contrast to what *Lord of the Rings* did for New Zealand and *Braveheart* for Scotland in attracting tourists, or even *Borat* for Kazakhstan (Piggott *et al*, 2004; Stock, 2009). Certain contents in movies – particularly beautiful scenery, exotic social practices and exciting cultural life – do promote and brand places. As a result, for example, the Australian government sponsored the production of the epic movie *Australia*, starring Hugh Goodman and Nicole Kidman to promote the continent in 2008. In wanting to repeat the success of *Crocodile Dundee*, *Australia* features beautiful Australian nature and a star-studded cast.

Related to movies, do film festivals brand places? As part of city branding, film festivals are increasingly being used in city promotion. Cannes is the ultimate example of a place being identified with its film festival. Film festivals, like many other events, add to the economic development and vibrancy of the city (for example, see Smith, 2004). But what is the specific relationship between film festivals and place branding?

Film festival research has in the tradition of film and media research first and foremost been concerned with historical accounts on a single film festival (for example, Jacobsen, 2000; Røling and Strandgaard Pedersen, 2010) or comparative studies of selected film festivals (for example, Turan, 2002 in his extensive study of more than 10 film festivals with different purposes and agendas) and their role in the global network of film festivals (for example, de Valck, 2006) while others have studied the connection between art and business (for example, Mezas *et al*, 2011 in their study of IFFs' ability to mediate between and convert artistic recognition in the form of awards into commercial output in the form of admissions). The relationship with place branding is barely discussed, although most film festivals are often promoted in place branding campaigns.

Events and awards ceremonies have become increasingly fashionable and widespread across industries in the form of trade fairs, professional conferences, technology contests and so forth (Anand and Watson, 2004; Moeran and Strandgaard Pedersen, 2011; Lampel and Meyer, 2008). Well-established and broadly publicized events and awards in culture industries, including, for example, the Oscar (motion pictures), Grammy (music), Tony (theatre) and Emmy (television) events and awards, have become global cultural icons, signifying popular and critical success (Caves, 2000; Anand and Watson, 2004). Events and award ceremonies are occasions for the industry to meet and celebrate themselves, their products, building identity and creating distinctions and classifications (DiMaggio, 1987; Strandgaard Pedersen and Dobbin, 1997; Mezias *et al.*, 2011). With these aims in mind, these ceremonies still take place in particular cities – for example, Cannes, Hollywood, Sundance and Berlin. Film festivals are seen as a specific type of events and award ceremonies, operating as a meeting place for art, business and industry identity building. How does the place of the festival contribute to the place branding exercise?

From the perspective of local authorities and city branding officials, film festivals are popular. They attract film businesses to the city, portray the city as a cultural place and conduct film businesses. The city also becomes glamorous when stars come visiting. The city also becomes glamorous when stars come visiting and journalists publicize the city, especially when stories of movies and stars develop in the city. In this context, other events such as the Olympics, World Bank and IMF annual meetings or Formula One races serve similar purposes of attracting tourists, boosting the local economy and enhancing the image of the city (Florida, 2003; Harmaakorpi *et al.*, 2008; Ooi, 2008).

As mentioned above, studies on place branding have highlighted the need for the various stakeholders to cooperate and collaborate, so that all parties can get the most

of the place branding exercise. This article presents the case of Copenhagen, and examines how the film industry and the city branding authorities coexist. It is organized into a few sections. The next section briefly discusses data collection in this study. Subsequently, a review of the purposes of city branding, in relation to film festivals, is offered. To contextualize the institutional framework CIFF is embedded in, a history of film festivals is also presented. The case of branding Copenhagen and CIFF will then be spelt out. The consequent discussion will deal with how stakeholders in Copenhagen, the brand and the film festival work together, and what lessons can be learnt, in relation to the stakeholder perspective to place branding.

DATA AND METHODS

The case of branding Copenhagen and CIFF in this study is based on a business ethnographical approach (Moeran, 2005) and builds on data collected from archival sources and generated through field observations, interviews and conversations with relevant parties.

Data from the festival were collected from 2003 to 2006 from the website <http://www.copenhagenfilmfestival.com> for information on the festival organization, program, rules and regulations, awards, key-figures from previous festivals and so forth. Official publications (festival programs, festival news papers and so on) issued by the festival organization were also gathered and analyzed. Newspaper articles on the festival were collected by an extensive database search on the Info media database including all Danish newspapers. This search resulted in 139 articles covering the years 2002–2007, which provided background information on the founding context, history, changes and critical incidents in the life of the festival. Three interviews were conducted with festival managers, experts and participants on the perceived role and profile of the CIFF film festival. In 2007, Jesper Strandgaard Pedersen visited the festival in order to have a first-hand experience of the festival, its operations and physical presence.

Data for the branding of Copenhagen were collected since 1996 by Can-Seng Ooi. As the branding campaign evolves, documents and articles were collected. Interviews were also conducted over the years with various officials of Wonderful Copenhagen, Visit Denmark and inbound tour operators. Information was also garnered through policy documents, brochures and news stories over the years.

PURPOSES OF CITY BRANDING AND RELATIONS TO FILM FESTIVALS

Wonderful Copenhagen – the city’s tourism promotion agency – and Copenhagen Capacity – the inward investment agency – boasts that Copenhagen is a pleasant, exciting and trendy place to live, and such a claim is validated by the title ‘Most Livable City’ by *Monocle*, an internationally renowned lifestyle magazine, in 2008. Copenhagen also hosted the 2009 World Outgames because the local authorities and Wonderful Copenhagen would like to communicate and indicate that the Danish capital is tolerant, open-minded and socially progressive. Other places also use similar branding strategies. For instance, Berlin accentuated its cultural industry credentials by pointing out that MTV and many media giants have established their regional headquarters in the city. Big and popular events such as the Olympics, MTV music awards, and World Bank and International Monetary Fund annual meetings are much sought after by city authorities because these events attract global attention. By holding these events, a city will not only attract visitors and increase its profile in the global media, but also demonstrate that it is efficient in handling big events, is culturally vibrant and is respected internationally. What mileage do film festivals offer to the city?

We will answer this question by looking at the purposes of place branding. Cities are branded for several reasons, including selling more products, attracting investments, wooing talented workers and drawing in tourists (Jaffe and Nebenzahl, 2001; Olins, 2002). There are at least four interrelated purposes for branding

cities, and film festivals can contribute to these purposes.

One purpose of branding a place is to shape the public image of the location (Richards, 1992; McCleary and Whitney, 1994; Kleppe *et al*, 2002). Explicitly, a branding campaign is part of the ‘image modification process’ (Andersen *et al*, 1997, p. 463). A city brand is not expected to communicate a complete picture but aimed to create positive images in the minds of audiences. A successful and popular film festival can contribute to the place brand by generating awareness of the place and showcasing its ability to successfully stage events. The festival will also give the city a ‘film identity’, for example Sundance is known as the independent film festival. In many countries, a film festival suggests that there is a – fledging or mature – film industry in the city; a celebration of local movies is also a celebration and reminder of the movie industry in the city.

A second related purpose of place branding is to frame the location selectively and aesthetically. As a cohering force, the brand draws people’s attention to positive images of the place – for example, organized crime, unemployment and high cost of living – that are ignored in the brand because they are not considered attractive or interesting by the branding authorities. Branding inadvertently frames and packages the place into a relatively well-defined and commercially attractive product, which focuses on images, attractions and activities that are considered significant and relevant to the brand values (Ashworth and Voogd, 1994). Therefore, highlighting the glamour and excitement of a film festival, gossips about celebrities and the screening of new exciting movies will not only draw attention to the city, but also suggest that it is an (exciting enough) playground for the famous and rich. The active night life and city attractions are backdrops to the stars.

A third and related purpose of branding a place is to create an image of the location that stands out in the global place-product market.

Inherently, the brand asserts the place's uniqueness. Places in wanting to attract investments, talented workers and tourists are becoming more globalized and alike in their offerings and infrastructure (Lanfant, 1995; Teo and Li, 2003; Morgan and Pritchard, 2004; Richards and Wilson, 2007). The assertion of place uniqueness has become an institutionalized global practice for celebrating place identity (Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2005). A brand inevitably becomes a visionary exercise for the place branding authorities to imagine and reflect on how different they are from others. The crystallized public image is also often introduced to the native population for it to recognize itself (Oakes, 1993; Lanfant, 1995; Leonard, 1997). A popular and well-established film festival, like Cannes, can set to define the city. In other words, an accepted brand identity of a place can generate a self-fulfilling prophecy by encouraging, even creating, attractions to support the brand identity. For example, as mentioned earlier, Copenhagen successfully bid for the World Outgames 2009 because such an event would affirm the locally accepted city's open and tolerant brand identity. Therefore, for a film festival, certain types of films would be more warmly welcomed because they are seen to fit well with the city, as portrayed through the city brand identity. The Copenhagen Gay and Lesbian Film Festival, with its homosexual theme, may set yet another example.

The last purpose of place branding is to shape people's experiences of the location by first shaping their preconceptions. The brand story provides a framework for locals and foreigners to imagine. For example, in tourism, studies have shown that people approach a foreign place with their own pre-visit interpretations, and this process enriches their experiences (Moscardo, 1996; Waller and Lea, 1999; Prentice and Andersen, 2007). Accurate or otherwise preconceived ideas and pre-visit images will not only form the bases for outsiders to understand the place, but will also form the bases for a more engaged and experiential consumption of place products. The brand helps

foreigners to develop a coherent, consistent and meaningful sense of place, and offers a 'brand experience' (Olins, 2000). Creativity and Danish design is very much of the Copenhagen brand story. The brand, insidiously or otherwise, encourages people to affirm the creative image of Copenhagen by noticing Danish design, for example, from furniture to traffic lights, gourmet food to Dogma movies. Films and film festivals, in the case of Copenhagen, are part of the creative nation brand story. Promotion and getting people to pay closer attention to experimental and independent movies would affirm the brand story of a creative Copenhagen.

Although film festivals are used in city branding, film festivals are not invented to promote and brand places; they are first and foremost to promote films and the film industry. Such is the institutionalized context behind CIFF's existence. As will be elaborated later, CIFF takes on a particular institutionalized and organizational form. The institutionalization and diffusion of organizational forms and practices has been a significant object of analysis for many institutional theorists (Meyer and Rowan, 1977; DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Tolbert and Zucker, 1983; Powell and DiMaggio, 1991; Scott, 1995; Greenwood *et al.*, 2008). Institutional explanations have been developed to understand why certain forms and practices are diffused and adopted by organizations. For example, why have film festivals become similar in organization and practices as they have spread and grown in numbers? All these theoretical contributions end up emphasizing the role of the external environment and of social norms in enhancing the diffusion and adoption within the organizational fields by means of isomorphic pressures. They also mean that there are certain constraints to introducing new organizational practices, such as giving priority to a city branding agenda in organizing a film festival.

FILM FESTIVALS IN A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

To contextualize CIFF as part of the film festival industry, a short history of film festivals

is provided here.² Europe appears to be the cradle of the film festival phenomenon (Harbord, 2002; de Valck, 2006), born in the context of the particular geopolitical situation in Europe during the 1930s leading up to World War II and the new political order in Europe, during the late 1940s and early 1950s, in the wake of World War II. The world's first major film festival was founded in Italy under the Fascist government and held in Venice in 1932. The way the Venice festival was run soon gave rise to criticism that films from Italy and Germany were favored even though the first editions have hosted films from several countries. According to Turan (2002) and supported by Mazdon (2007):

In 1937, Jean Renoir's 'La Grande Illusion' was denied the top prize because of its pacifist sentiments, and the French decided if you wanted something done right you had to do it yourself. (Turan, 2002, p. 18)

This became the birth of what we today know as the Cannes film festival. Cannes won out as the preferred site for the film festival after a competition with Biarritz on the Atlantic coast (Turan, 2002; Mazdon, 2007). The film festival in Cannes was originally scheduled to take place for the first 3 weeks of September 1939, but the festival was cancelled, because of the German invasion of Poland on 1 September 1939, and did not start up again until 1946 (Turan, 2002, pp. 18–19).

Another early film festival field is the Moscow International film festival. It was founded in 1935, and is thus the second oldest film festival in the world, after Venice. Up to World War II, only three film festivals were established, respectively, Venice (1932), Moscow (1935) and Cannes (1939). The other major IFFs – like Locarno, Karlovy Vary and Berlin and so forth – are a post-war phenomenon dating back to the late 1940s and early 1950s (for an overview of early of film festivals, see Table 1).

Film festivals started out as a European phenomenon, but soon proliferated around the world (India-Asia, 1952; Sydney-Australia,

Table 1: Overview of early of film festivals^a

1932	Venice International Film Festival (Italy)
1935	Moscow International Film Festival (Russia)
1939	Cannes International Film Festival (France)
1946	Karlovy Vary International Film Festival (Czech)
	Locarno International Film Festival (Switzerland)
1951	Berlin International Film Festival – Berlinale (Germany)
1952	The International Film Festival of India (India)
1953	Donostia – San Sebastian International Film Festival (Spain)
1954	International Short Film Festival Oberhausen (Germany), Sydney Film Festival (Australia) Mar del Plata International Film Festival (Argentina)
1956	The Times BFI London Film Festival (England)
1958	Bilbao International Festival of Documentary and Short Films (Spain)

^aThis list is based on film festivals accredited by FIAPF (2008). This means, for example, that The Edinburgh International Film Festival in Scotland, established in 1947 and the longest continually running film festival in the world, is not included as it is not accredited by FIAPF.

1954; Argentina-South America, 1954). With the proliferation to other parts of the world, a specialization into 'Short film', 'Documentary film' and so on began to occur among the film festivals (cf. Table 1). Nobody knows exactly how many IFFs exist today, as the number keeps changing every day, but an estimated figure is around 3500 IFFs on a global scale. In the case of IFFs, Harbord (2002) links the creation of European film festivals (as well as other post-war festivals) to European post-war regeneration and rebuilding. She argues that the origins of such major film festivals are marked by two different discourses. Harbord (2002) formulates it this way:

One is a broad historical project of rebuilding Europe, a rebuilding of the social infrastructure ravaged by the Second World War, and a consolidation of Europe as a significant player in a global economy [...] The other discourse, from film societies and guilds, is concerned with the definition of film as a form, with the aim of broadening categories of definition in contrast to the studio format of Hollywood film. (Harbord, 2002, p. 64)

As will be elaborated soon, there is relevance of these two set of discourses in running the

CIFF – one discourse concerned with identity building and branding, and another discourse concerned with the industry defining the film as a form. The founding of CIFF entails its search for recognition as an ‘international film festival’ within the field of IFFs. The evolution of such film festivals has a history, and institutionalized practices have been established and defined by the early film festivals. City branding, as we will discuss later, seemingly is not a significant consideration when running an IFF.

Brand Copenhagen

Branding a city goes beyond attracting tourists; it also means attracting investments, skilled workers and trade. Tourism authorities around the world, however, often ended up being the ‘marketing department’ for their respective cities or countries. Denmark is no different. VisitDenmark markets at the country-level, Wonderful Copenhagen markets the capital city to tourists. Recently, Wonderful Copenhagen and Copenhagen Capacity have become the lead agencies behind the branding of Copenhagen. Wonderful Copenhagen or WoCo, founded in 1992 but claims roots to 1887, is the tourism promotion agency. Copenhagen Capacity or CopCap, founded at about the same time, is the official inward investment agency for the city. CopCap aims to attract businesses and make the environment attractive for business people. It has been tasked to promote desired industries, including filmmaking, life-sciences and information technology. In relation to the film industry, CopCap is given the job by the government of transforming the film industry by encroaching into the wider entertainment industry. This vision comes from the observation of technology convergence. The convergence of movies and computer games, for instance, also means that the film industry must widen their scope of business activities (CopCap, 2009a). In cooperation with Swedish authorities, CopCap jointly promotes the Øresund region, which includes Copenhagen and Scania (the southern region of Sweden). WoCo and CopCap are in



Figure 1: Copenhagen.
Source: CopCap’s website <http://www.copcap.dk>.

the process of rebranding Copenhagen and the region. In April 2009, these organizations organized a conference titled, *Copenhagen Redefined v 2.0*, to discuss the new branding direction for the capital (CopCap and WoCo, 2009). It is also to launch a search for a new brand. It was then acknowledged that the current branding of Copenhagen is unclear. ‘Wonderful Copenhagen’ as a brand slogan for tourism has been in use since the 1950s. Wanting to learn from ‘IAMsterdam’ and ‘Stockholm, Capital of Scandinavia’, the authorities want Copenhagen to become more internationally visible with a clearer message. By wanting to present the city as tolerant, it celebrates diversity. The historical and the post-modern, modern technology and human emotions, welfare state and a thriving capitalist system are blended into a stable and open city.

The message is currently communicated through *Copenhagen* (see Figure 1). The logo is used to highlight the city as open and tolerant, particularly when it was used in World Outgames 2009. On Copcap’s website – <http://www.copcap.dk> – it is tagged as ‘Open for business’, alluding to a welcoming, modern and efficient business environment.

Although WoCo and CopCap have the responsibilities to promote the capital city, its main tool of garnering support and cooperation from the various industries and the community is through persuasion. One-third of the money comes from the state, another third comes from membership and the final third is through selling their services. As a result, for instance, the attempt at downplaying the historical image of Copenhagen was flatly rejected by many tourism operators who organize tours. Images

of historical Copenhagen – the Little Mermaid, Amalienborg (the palace where the royal family lives), the neo-classical Marble Church – remain salient and strongly promoted in tourism publications and promotional materials by the private sector (Ooi, 2004). The youthful, trendy and vibrant images of Copenhagen – Danish design, a lively night scene and a tolerant society – are found on the official websites. As a result, when one visits the official website of WoCo, there is a smorgasbord of images and impressions, ranging from romantic Copenhagen to gay Copenhagen, green Copenhagen to ‘wellness in Copenhagen’. Different events and activities are featured at different times of the year, ranging from Copenhagen Contemporary (a festival for contemporary art in the city) to Golden Days in Copenhagen (a biennale on romantic art), dancing in cool clubs to shopping in flea markets. The CIFF is also listed in official marketing materials (<http://www.visitcopenhagen.com>).

CopCap sticks to the modern, creative and efficient image of Copenhagen in the branding of the capital; modern infrastructure, tax holidays, quality of life for expatriates and a positive business environment are highlighted. From the ‘Why Copenhagen’ page of CopCap’s, the city is said to offer (CopCap, 2009b):

A unique, secure and flexible labour market

The Danish labour market is very flexible, and at the same time it offers a unique social security system that safeguards and supports employees.

A balanced lifestyle

The work and leisure balance in Copenhagen create an incredible quality of life that you don’t find elsewhere.

A productive and innovative workforce

How can you benefit from the Danish work culture, which is characterised by a lean, efficient work style?

Strongholds

Copenhagen is exceptionally strong within industries such as

- > Life science
- > ICT
- > Creative and entertainment
- > Cleantech.

The film industry is featured in the ‘Creative and entertainment’ industry. In December 2009, Copenhagen asserted its environment credentials by hosting the world summit of leaders on the environment, as global leaders replaced the Kyoto Protocol with the Copenhagen Accord.

A modern, trendy and human-friendly image of Copenhagen is the main brand story. Thus, Karen, the single mother, highlights the open-mindedness of the society, for instance. Modern contemporary images of Copenhagen are said to appeal to investors and businessmen, as well as to younger and trendy visitors and expatriates. *Copenhagen* points to a society with a high quality of life – a cozy and charming city that respects diversity and welcomes everyone.

Copenhagen International Film Festival

The first CIFF kicked off in August 2003. The idea for the festival was conceived in 2002. One of the prime drivers behind the initiative was ‘Hovedstadens Udviklingsråd’ (The Development Council for the Wider Copenhagen Area), who in the wake of the international success for Danish film, decided to donate money for two purposes. First, they donated money (€70,000) for a regional film commission for the ‘Öresund region’ to attract international production of film, TV and commercials. Second, they donated money (€70,000) to support the new CIFF and money (€35,000) for a film festival for children’s films (‘Buster’) (Dabelsteen, 2002). CIFF also received money (€65,000) from the Danish Film Institute (DFI) and were promised another €70,000 on top of this amount of money. Apart from this financial support, CIFF also received money from the municipality of Copenhagen (main contributor with €500,000) and the Ministry of Culture (donating a yearly amount of €150,000 for a 4-year period), so that the

festival altogether received approximately €850 000. On top of this financial support, CIFF was also met with moral and political support from prominent politicians in Copenhagen (Hjort, 2002). With the support of the local authorities, CIFF is tacitly expected to cooperate in the enlivening and branding of the city. As the unfolding events are revealed next, the city branding agenda was and is largely missing.

From the beginning, CIFF meets local criticisms. In particular, the Manager of the Odense Short and Documentary film festival was not pleased because CIFF had placed itself at the same time as the Odense Short and Documentary film festival; the Odense festival manager was afraid that CIFF would take focus from his own festival (Dabelsteen, 2002). Apart from this critical voice, other parties in the film industry doubted whether Denmark needed yet another film festival as Copenhagen already has its Gay & Lesbian Film Festival, founded in 1985, the 'NatFilmfestival' (The Night Film Festival) founded in 1990, 'Buster' (Children's films) founded in 2000 and CPH:DOX (on documentary films) also founded in 2003 (Eising, 2004).

On the other hand, CIFF also received tremendous support from various prominent stakeholders in the Danish film industry, as well as from industrialists and politicians (*Politiken Weekly*, 2002). CIFF was established as a foundation. It hired festival director, Janne Giese who was one of the prime drivers behind the initiative. With regard to positioning, CIFF on the one hand was inspired by the large IFFs like those in Berlin, Cannes and Venice, but on the other it did not want to compete with these festivals, instead wanting to collaborate with existing Danish film festivals (Giese, 2002). An argument for establishing CIFF came from the Mayor for Culture in the Municipality of Copenhagen (Martin Geertsen), stating that:

When we are good at doing something, as we are in the case of filmmaking, we should not be afraid to boast and show it. The festival will create experiences and provide energy to the city and expand the international pulse already

existing in Copenhagen. [...] The goal is to make it the best Scandinavian film festival and a major international event. (Dabelsteen, 2002)

With regard to the profile and positioning of the film festival, Henning Camre, former director of the DFI, reasoned that:

the new Danish film festival has a chance as they have decided to focus very strongly on European film. No other film festival has done that. (Dabelsteen, 2002)

In August 2003, the first CIFF ran 10 series and more than 150 films (from Spanish Western comedies to Dutch musicals), a large competition with 14 international films and an international jury of five members, headed by the Greek film director Theo Angelopoulos and together with film directors Jan Troell, Jutta Brückner, Marion Hänsel and Danish director Bille August,³ awarding the 'Golden Swan' designed by Line Utzon.⁴ Apart from the European focus, a special series on African films was shown. At the opening, the festival director, Janne Giese, commented:

Any major city with self-respect ought to have a film festival. I cannot understand, why we have not already had one long time ago. (Ritzaus Bureau, 2003a)

In the first festival, no real film market was established (Lange, 2003a). Apart from the public money CIFF was also to attract private money but failed in getting a main sponsor and had to cut down on some of the activities, among other activities, the film market (Fyens Stiftstidende, 2003). The DFI had to come up with yet another €150 000 in support and as a guarantee against a deficit (Straarup, 2003a).

CIFF started out with a goal of about 30 000 film-goers, then adjusted it to 20 000, but finally ended up with only around 15–16 000 tickets of which approximately 5000 were handed out for free. The blame for the lack of attention from audience was given to the weather. Janne Giese, festival director, estimated that the festival lost about 10–15 000 tickets because of the heat wave in August (Lange,

Table 2: Copenhagen international film festival (2003–2006)

	2003	2004	2005	2006
Number of films	153	111	117	148
EU ratio (%)	75	74	100	93
Number of screenings	269	240	235	300
Number of accredited participants	290	364	400	no info
Tickets	16688	23814	22571	25273

Source: CIFF website.

2003b). Concerning key figures for CIFF, see Table 2. Ticket sales increased, and so did the number of screenings.

After the first festival, CIFF was moved as to avoid the overlap with Odense film festival (Straarup, 2003b). It was, however, not easy to agree on scheduling a new date for CIFF as several conflicting interests were raised. The festival program in general leaves little room in the busy calendar, and the cinema theater owners wanted to fill their theaters during the low summer season, whereas CIFF wanted to get away from the warm and low season (Jensen, 2003; Ritzaus Bureau, 2003b). CIFF was not interested in entertaining tourists during the high tourism summer months.

In addition, after the first season, changes occurred in the composition of the board of CIFF. Peter Aalbæk Jensen, CEO of Zentropa (and one of the strongest critics of CIFF) and Kenneth Plummer, CEO of Nordisk Film joined the board of CIFF to strengthen the relation to the Danish film industry. The head of the program was also changed. Since 2004, Jacob Neiiendam has been in charge of the program (Ritzaus Bureau, 2004) and, in 2005 he strengthened the European profile of CIFF (Ritzaus Bureau, 2005). The changes to the festival were directed at pleasing the film industry, not in promoting the city image.

From very early on, and in particular articulated by Peter Aalbæk Jensen, CEO of Zentropa, a merger of CIFF and the NatFilmfestival was suggested (Bjerre, 2004). CIFF organizers declared that they were positive, whereas Natfilmfestival organizers were more skeptical concerning this suggestion. Nothing happened, however, with regard to

merging the two festivals, and they (as well as Buster and CPH: DOX) continued their business as usual. Politicians brought up the suggestion about merging the two film festivals in subsequent years but inertia remained. From the city branding perspective, hosting more film festivals is good because it gives the image of an eventful place. But the failure to merge the festivals then had nothing to do with WoCo or CopCap, it was mainly political tardiness and gridlock.

In spring 2005, CIFF, however, embarked on a plan to collaborate with ‘Buster’ (the children’s film festival), in particular on the sponsoring and marketing of the two festivals (Eising, 2005a). Another initiative, ‘Copenhagen Screenings’ was launched in July 2005. Copenhagen Screenings was an initiative that invited 170 foreign film buyers to Copenhagen, creating a kind of local film market, however, promoting Danish films. The initiative is carried out in collaboration with The DFI, Trust Film Sales and Nordisk Film International Sales (Enggaard, 2005).

In 2006, CIFF changed its schedule and moved from August to September in the hope of attracting more festival-goers (Eising, 2005b). Apart from the weather, Janne Giese also argued that when CIFF is placed after Venice, Toronto and San Sebastian, better-quality films are likely to be given free for CIFF and other festivals (Eising, 2005b). In 2006, CIFF also embarked on a new sponsor strategy and managed to attract three main sponsors (Irma, Café Noir and Nokia N-series) together with a media partner (Politiken) (Solgaard, 2006), and Lars Von Trier’s film ‘The Boss of Everything’ opened the festival that year.

In spring 2007, the collaboration previously mentioned between CIFF and 'Buster' was extended in the way that CIFF takes over the responsibility for 'Buster', and it seems to be a merger of the two festivals. (Thielst, 2007). The 2007 edition of CIFF looked like a grand IFF with large posters in town, a big screen on the city hall square, red carpet in front of the central festival theatre ('Imperial'), press, lots of films, sponsors, visiting filmmakers, local (Danish) stars, a permanent staff of around 25–30 people and around 80 volunteers. But still too few tickets were sold and attracted limited audiences. Again that year, the annual suggestion from politicians about merging the major festivals was reiterated, and this time it was more successful. During fall 2007, it was announced that the politicians want to merge all four film festivals in Copenhagen (CIFF, NatFilmfestival, Buster and CPH: DOX). The two foundations ('Natsværmerfonden' and 'Fonden Copenhagen International Film Festival') behind the two CIFF and NatFilmfestival are merged into a new foundation ('Fonden de Købehavnske filmfestivaler') responsible for three festivals. The four festivals are merged into three festivals – 'Buster' (Children's films) is taking place in September, CPH-DOX stays in its current position in November and CIFF and NatFilmfestival are being merged into one festival named CPH:PIX, taking place in April.

Throughout the unfolding of events of the film festivals, WoCo has used the festivals in marketing Copenhagen. WoCo did not, and could not, play a more active role in shaping the festivals for the branding of the city. It does not have the resources. And it would also be considered inappropriate for film festivals to be dictated by the demands of tourism promotion authorities.

DISCUSSION

The CIFF changed over the years. Although it aims to highlight Copenhagen and the region as a film-making place, the practicalities of running the series of festivals are embroiled in politics, conflicting interests and the

competition for resources. Although WoCo and CopCap are, and were, not directly involved in the intrigues of when the festival should run or what movies should be screened, local authorities in Copenhagen and other parties have vested interests, for instance, officials in Odense were not pleased with the 'monopolization' of Copenhagen. In the whole debate, CIFF was more concerned with itself seeking legitimization from the film industry, ironing out the kinks among organizers of film festivals in Denmark and getting acceptance from various parties in the local film industry. Place branding is not a primary concern by the organizers, even though local authorities support the project. There are a number of issues that have to be addressed when we examine the primary interests of the organizers of CIFF and the promoters of *Copenhagen*.

As discussed earlier, there are a number of purposes for the branding of places. The place branding exercise aims to modify the global image of Copenhagen; it selectively frames the city, it asserts a unique identity for the place and it provides a set of lenses for people to understand and interpret the city. How would an event like CIFF contribute to the Copenhagen brand? A series of events like CIFF contributes to the branding of the city at various levels.

One, it enlivens the city. The city is framed as lively and vibrant; CIFF contributes to the city by running the events. Two, CIFF creates and maintains international awareness of the city, especially when the festival is internationally recognized and popular. The Cannes film festival is an example of how a film festival attracts attention to the city every year. Three, it asserts Copenhagen as a movie city, which complements the film industry promoted by the government and CopCap.

Despite the increased number of ticket sales and screenings (Table 2), the CIFF is, however, not very successful in comparison to some other events in the city, for example the 2009 International Olympic Council congress held in Copenhagen, during which Rio de Janeiro was selected for the 2016 games. Owing to the

significance of the event, and also because of the many famous personalities from competing candidate cities came to the capital, which included entertainer Oprah Winfrey, US President Barack Obama, Brazil President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva, King Juan Carlos of Spain and footballer Pele, hundreds of journalists descended into Copenhagen. The announcement of the result was telecasted 'live' to more than a billion people, during which a promotional clip of Copenhagen was presented. Subsequently after the event, non-Olympic features and stories of Copenhagen were published, broadcasted and telecasted as journalists returned home with a new collection of stories. For instance, Oprah Winfrey made a feature on why Danes are the happiest people in the world, using Copenhagen as the backdrop during her visit to support Chicago's bid. CIFF has not attracted such attention.

Established and famous IFFs attract not only industry people, but also press people and media attention (for example, IFFs like Cannes, Venice and Berlin accredit between 3000 and 4000 media people for their events). Stories of celebrities visiting the city and gossips add to the glamour of the place. Visual images of the city would be presented to the world when news stories break. The yearly events ensure that journalists renew their stories as they report from the scene, thus disseminating information and images of the host cities.

As discussed earlier, scholars are advocating the view that a place branding exercise should engage local stakeholders too. Without local support, the place brand will be less legitimate. As alluded in our case here, coordinating among stakeholders can run up high governance and coordination costs. Furthermore, as among WoCo, CopCap and CIFF, these parties have different or even conflicting interests and agendas; they have different primary audiences. These stakeholders do not want to have closer relationships. Let us reiterate and clarify.

The organizers of CIFF are not opposed to being used in the branding of Copenhagen. They, however, are not giving the branding of

the city priority. As seen in our discussion earlier, they are trapped in their concerns of how and when to run the festival. Regardless, CIFF takes on the city's name. While the image of the city is generally positive, the audiences of the festivals are mainly residents. Film trading remains a primary concern. What is important for the film industry is how friendly the city is to the film business, in terms of access to financial support, resources and facilities. CopCap is helping to ensure that the city is film industry friendly. Much of the CIFF events and activities are also directed towards the European film industry rather than to building up a good name for the city. To many film buffs and industry players, a made-in-Denmark film invokes certain impressions; Dogma movies are, for example, associated with the country. But from the discussion above, again, the concerns of CIFF are geared towards legitimacy and recognition in the global film industry.

As mentioned, organizers of the CIFF would be proud to let WoCo and CopCap to associate the film festival with the city; the festival, however, must not be seen primarily as a city branding exercise. Else, the legitimacy of the festival would be diminished. The branding of Copenhagen is beneficial for CIFF because the festival is located in the city, and a city known for its creativity and innovation would imply that the film industry is also exciting. Furthermore, Copenhagen as an attractive city – safe, secure and stable – will not hinder industry players from wanting to participate in the festival. The film festival can tap into the benefits of the Copenhagen brand, and it may also contribute. But CIFF must not be seen to serve the marketing of the city, at least not more than it serves the film industry.

The relationships between CIFF and the branding authorities are loosely complementary, rather than symbiotic. The loose relationships are embedded in several circumstances. One, CIFF is geared towards the film industry. Its significant target audiences are within that industry. The branding of Copenhagen is not directed specifically at CIFF's targeted

audiences. CIFF attempts to legitimize itself in the field, and the legitimacy does not entail being involved in place branding; on the contrary, if it emphasizes on branding Copenhagen, its credibility may be eroded. Two, the local authorities, WoCo and CopCap, do find value in promoting and supporting the CIFF not only because the festivals enliven the city, but also because the festivals have the potential to become a major global player in the future. The screening of movies is also popular with residents. Although the branding authorities neither have the resources to dictate how the festivals should be run nor have the resources to jump-start CIFF into a major film festival, they can only hope that the CIFF will become a big player in the film festival markets. When that happens, CIFF will become even more central in the Copenhagen brand story.

As a result, organizers of CIFF and the city branding authorities in Copenhagen keep each other informed and support each other in a loose manner. Their relationships remain relatively simple, in the sense that they support each other but without setting either one's agenda. The potential to couple CIFF with brand Copenhagen is promising, but the nature of their activities and the limited resources available mean that each party concentrates on what each is good at and collaborate when it is convenient.

CONCLUSIONS

The stakeholder and bottom-up approach is advocated by many researchers in the place branding literature. In order for a place brand to be successful, it must be supported by the various stakeholders. Moreover, it is an ethical issue. Although studies have shown how place brands fail because of the lack of consultation with stakeholders, building up consensus among stakeholders is easier said than done. Models are plentiful, but the practice can be different story. How should these models translate into actual practices? We looked at CIFF and the branding of Copenhagen.

Ideally, at the broader level, the film festival increases the vibrancy of the city by hosting events. The festival enhances the image of a place that is happening. A well-established and famous film festival – like Cannes, Venice and Sundance – increases the profile of the city through media exposure. The authorities in the city must offer the infrastructure and support for the film festivals. Residents also welcome the film festival. The relationship between the film festival, the place brand and the community are intertwined. Different stakeholders should – ideally – collaborate and cooperate to bring about common good for the community and enhance their own interests.

In this article, we stay focused on two groups of stakeholders that are involved in the branding of Copenhagen and the organization of CIFF. From the outset, their relationship is far from ideal because they have different agendas. Upon closer examination, we identify the different interests of CIFF and the Copenhagen branding campaign. Do their interests overlap? Only to a limited degree and in some ways, conflicting. For instance, CIFF should not give any impression that they are engaged in the place branding agenda to maintain credibility of the festival series. Their collaboration is limited. In the literature, suggestions are made that these stakeholders must work more closely to bring about more effective results in the place branding campaign. It may not be wise or needed.

This article started with the fictitious character, Karen. Her story, however, is not unfounded in this country. Nonetheless, the public do not want her attitude to tarnish the image of Denmark. VisitDenmark thought it would enhance the image of the country. Many Danes disagree. Behind the commercial goals of place branding, there is the issue of authenticity and respecting the needs of the grassroots. Stakeholders should be respected. From the example of Karen, the local stakeholders may not want to present an image of their own society that they do not like. As in the case CIFF, the cooperation is at arm's length and it works, although not in a closely entwined

manner. Therefore, in response to the body of literature on the importance of stakeholder cooperation, how deeply must the place branding authorities engage with various stakeholders? The collaboration between organizers behind CIFF and authorities behind brand *Copenhagen* is relatively successful, not because they collaborate deeply but because they engage only when it is convenient.

NOTES

- 1 See Stevenson (2003) for a further description of the Dogma95 manifesto and rules.
- 2 In this study, the definition of film festivals and data on specific film festivals come from The International Federation of Film Producers Associations FIAPF (2008).
- 3 Bille August had to cancel last minute and was substituted by Danish film director Ole Roos.
- 4 Apart from the 'Golden Swan', a Lifetime Achievement Award was handed out to Liv Ullmann, and two Honorary awards to Theo Angelopoulos and Lars Von Trier.

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