**Producing and consuming craft objects *in* situ: The role of place identity in a post-covid era**

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In the last decades, place has gained significant traction within the fields of marketing and consumer research (*cf.* Chatzidakis et al., 2018) and has been most recently theorized as a complex and multi-faceted concept which should not be only treated as a another ‘product’ to be marketed but also as a dynamic entity that emerges through the creation of multiple narratives from various stakeholders (Kalandides, 2011; Lichrou, O’Malley, & Patterson, 2014; Warnaby & Medway, 2013). Place is often perceived as a lived and phenomenological concept which is constituted by material and symbolic dimensions that cut across the built environment, social processes, and cultural manifestations, amongst others (Casey, 1998; Creswell & Hoskins, 2008; Tuan, 1977). To these ends, place identity refers to the fluid and processual nature of specific places and unfolds via ‘a complex system of interactions between the individual and the collective, between the physical and the non-physical, between the functional and the emotional, between the internal and the external, and between the organized and the random’ (Kavaratzis & Hatch, 2013: 76).

Although place marketing has been primarily concerned with the fine-tuning of specific places to manage the provision of offerings and the demand of consumer groups *in* situ (Boisen, Terlouw, Groute & Couwenberg, 2018), little attention has been paid to the role of place identity in the variety of ways in which different places are positioned, that is the ‘jostling of places for stakeholder attention’ (Hanna, Rowley & Keegan, 2021: 113). In light of globalisation trends, recent technological advancements, and most importantly, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, this study explores the opportunities and challenges associated with the production and consumption of craft objects in a specific place and the broader implications for place marketing theory and practice.

We focus on Manchester’s Craft and Design Centre which hosts the studios of various craft makers and also acts as a retail platform to showcase and sell craft objects. We employed a two-stage methodological approach which included conducting in-depth interviews with twenty craft makers and twenty visitors within Manchester’s Craft and Design Centre. Our findingshighlight the role of place in acting as a collective hub of activity which fosters local and community-based forms of interaction and collaboration with various stakeholders. More specifically, our data revolve around the following themes: 1) *the* *historical meanings of place*, 2) *the diverse experiences of production and consumption in situ*,and 3) *the* *online representation of physical space*. Our study provides insights into the idiosyncratic essence of specific places such as the Craft and Design Centre and its potential for developing a non- reductionist and non-commodified place identity (Warnaby & Medway, 2013) in a post-Covid world which takes into consideration the needs of various stakeholders such as producers and consumers of craft.

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