AN EXPLORATORY INVESTIGATION INTO DESTINATION MARKETING AND PLACE MARKETING IN CHESHIRE AND WARRINGTON: THE NEED FOR ORGANIZATIONAL AMBIDEXTERITY

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of Liverpool John Moores University for the degree of Doctor of Business Administration

May 2019

DECLARATION

No portion of this work has been submitted in support of an application for any other degree or qualification at this or any other university or institution of learning. In addition, the author hereby confirms that, the thesis is written solely by him and is based entirely on his work in this research. All works by others, reviewed and cited in the thesis, are acknowledged in the References section at the end of the thesis.

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Abstract

AN EXPLORATORY INVESTIGATION INTO DESTINATION MARKETING AND
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As a result of globalisation and increased competitiveness, in the twentieth twenty-first century, destination marketing has become one of the principal ways that nations, regions and cities compete to attract visitors. Very many places across the world have set up destination marketing organisations to differentiate nations, regions and cities and to attract tourists and investment and many of these were constituted as public-private partnerships, particularly in England.

A new Government Tourism Policy was introduced in England in 2011 and it was progressively implemented over a number of years after that date. The principal canon contained in that policy document was that the previous financial support from the public purse that destination marketing and destination management organisations (DMOs) had enjoyed was to be progressively discontinued and the private sector was expected to fill the funding gap that would emerge. This begged the question of whether the private sector was willing or able to fill that gap. As the answer to that question was unknown at the time that the new policy was introduced and implemented it presented an existential threat to DMOs.

This DBA thesis explores that scenario through the lens of one particular organisation, Marketing Cheshire, which is the body responsible for promoting the sub-region of Cheshire and Warrington. Despite the focus on one particular sub-region the literature draws on the strategic approaches adopted by DMOs throughout England and in an

international context. The research was informed by a broadly interpretivist stance and it involved conducting semi-structured interviews with DMO chief executives and chief officers across England and also with key stakeholders of Marketing Cheshire.

Through the use of Template Analysis, it was found that DMOs across England faced some similar but also many different issues and that no one solution to the problem was applicable to all DMOs. Nonetheless many examples of best practice emerged and it was possible to make clear recommendations over Marketing Cheshire's strategic choices. One of the key recommendations is that Marketing Cheshire should move from destination marketing (largely promoting tourism) to place marketing which involves promoting the place across the whole visit, work, live, study and invest agenda.

DBA theses are expected to make contributions to both theory and to practice. This thesis is believed to one of the first instances in which the theoretical concept of organizational ambidexterity is applied to DMOs. The researcher is a university academic who teaches events management and international tourism management students and one of the practical contributions the research makes is to inform that teaching. The other practical contribution is the analysis of Marketing Cheshire's strategic options which could be used to inform that organisation's future trajectory.

The final chapter in the thesis is an account of the reflective learning that occurred over the duration of the DBA programme.

Acknowledgements

This study would not have been possible without the assistance of many people to whom I will always be grateful.

At the forefront of these I must thank my doctoral supervisors, Professor Peter Stokes and Dr. Mike Aiello. The commitment that they have shown in guiding me in my research has been truly exceptional and I have received much wise counsel from them both.

I also received valuable feedback on my work from Dr Karim Menacre, Dr Matthew Tucker and Dr Hannah Wilson for which I am very grateful.

My wife, Professor Annette McIntosh-Scott, could always be relied upon for sage advice over my thesis. Annette's patience must have been sorely tried at times but she remained extremely supportive throughout the course of my doctoral programme. Tamsin, my daughter, was always a great support and encouragement on all sorts of levels. She was particularly good at protecting my time to allow me to complete my thesis.

Jane McElmeel was a great help over the formatting and setting-out of my thesis.

Finally, I am also very grateful to the interview participants who were so generous in giving me their valuable time to assist me with my research.

Abbreviations used in the thesis

AMA – American Marketing Association

Brexit – The exit of the United Kingdom from the European Community (British exit)

CAD – Canadian Dollars

CAQDAS – Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis

CIM – Chartered Institute of Marketing

CBBE – Consumer-Based Brand Equity

DBA – Doctor of Business Administration

DPA – Doctor of Public Administration

DCMS – Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, a UK government department

DMO – to some this abbreviation means Destination Marketing Organisation whilst to others it is an abbreviation for Destination Management Organisations

DMMO – Destination Marketing Organisations and Destination Management Organisations. This represents an attempt by Wang and Pizam (2011, ix) to clarify the anomalous use of the abbreviation, DMO. Unfortunately, it has not been widely adopted.

ECM – European Cities Marketing

EdD – Doctor of Education

EU – European Union

HRD – Human Resource Development

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

GVA – Gross Value Added

LJMU – Liverpool John Moores University

LEP – Local Enterprise Partnership. A government created network of partnerships that exist across England. LEPs are charged with responsibility for determining local economic priorities and facilitating economic growth.

MBA – Master of Business Administration

MPA – Master of Public Administration

NHS – National Health Service

NTO – National Tourism Organisation

PPP – Public Private Partnership

QAA – Quality Assurance Agency

RDA – Regional Development Agency

SAS – Scandinavia Air Services

SDL – Service Dominant Logic

SGD – Singapore Dollars

ROI – Return On Investment

UGC – User-Generated Content

UK – United Kingdom

UNESCO – United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNWTO – United Nations World Tourism Organization

US – United States

Chapter One - Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the purpose of the study. It then provides an overview of the literature associated with the broad field of study. The background to the study is presented and it is explained why the focus of this study has a particular resonance with the author. A statement of the problem is then made followed by a rationale for the study. The study's aim, objectives and research question are then stated. The chapter ends with a brief description of the structure of the study.

Here at the beginning of this study it is important to explain that a particular word appears frequently in this thesis with two different spellings. In the thesis, the word in question is sometimes spelt 'organisation' and at other times it is spelt 'organization'. The reason for this is that different conventions apply to the spelling. It is the norm in the literature for any reference to destination marketing organisations to use that spelling whereas references to organizational ambidexterity, a topic which features throughout this study, are usually spelt with a 'z' rather than an 's'. Any publications that are referenced in this thesis adopt the spelling of organisation or organization as it appears in the title of the reference. Given that destination marketing organisations feature so prominently in this thesis the author has elected to spell organisations with a 's' as his default spelling of the word in this thesis.

1.2 Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to explore how a destination marketing organisation (DMO) can engage with its stakeholders in order to operate effectively in circumstances of reduced public financial support.

1.3 Overview of the literature

This study is concerned with the ways in which places or destinations are marketed, by specific organisations charged with this responsibility, in England and with particular regard to how, Cheshire and Warrington, a specific sub-region in North-West England is marketed.

As the general subject area of place and destination marketing has commanded the attention of researchers, authors and practitioners from several different disciplines e.g. tourism, marketing, management and town planning it cannot be said to occupy a single academic domain which is universally acknowledged by all interested parties and contributors. The absence of a precise, single term to describe this area of study may reflect the fact that the general subject area has been adopted by several different disciplines. As a result, different terms with broadly similar meanings have emerged in the academic literature and have become largely independent bodies of literature in their own right. Examples of these are 'destination marketing' (Heeley, 2015, Hristov and Ramkissoon, 2016, Pike, 2016, Proctor, Dunne and Flanagan, 2018), 'destination management' (Morrison, 2019), 'destination branding' (Morgan, Pritchard and Pride, 2011, Apostalakis et al, 2015), 'place marketing' (Gertner, 2011a, 2011b, Vuignier, 2017, Boisen et al, 2018), 'place branding' (Anholt, 1998, 2009, Hanna and Rowley, 2014, Boisen et al, 2018, de Noronha, Coca-Stefaniak and Morrison, 2017, Gertner, 2011a, 2011b, Hankinson, 2010) and 'city branding' (Lucarelli and Berg, 2011, Hassan and Giovanardi, 2018, Gómez et al, 2018). This is a divided and fragmented area of study and the use of a specific term has a tendency to identify the user with a particular school of thought or approach to the subject area. This research does not seek to be identified with any particular position or standpoint as a result of choosing to use any

of these terms. The particular words used in this study to describe the subject of the research have been largely determined by the terminology used in a government policy document and by the terminology that senior practitioners in the study use to describe the business that they are in.

Within the general field of literature six particular areas of debate have resonance with this specific research project. These are the debates around the consolidation of the body of literature (including the relative lack of empirical research), whether there is a need for clear differentiation in place and destination marketing, place marketing as a process, the role of stakeholders in place marketing, the debate over the value of place marketing and the digital challenge. Leading authors in the general field of literature include (but are by no means limited to) Anholt (1998, 2009, 2011), Kavaratzis (2015), Kavaratzis, Warnaby and Ashworth, (2015), Gertner, (2011a, 2011b), Hankinson (2010), Morgan et al (2011), Morrison (2019), Lucarelli and Berg (2011), Pike and Page (2014) and Pike (2016). The academic literature area is characterised by a lack of attention to practitioner issues (Hannah and Rowley, 2012, Kavaratzis, 2015). This provides justification for this study to place a heavy emphasis on the perceptions of senior practitioners.

1.4 Background of the study

The context within which this study is situated was shaped by a significant change in government policy, international changes in practice and emerging themes in the academic literature pertaining to the subject area.

In 2011 John Penrose, Minister for Tourism and Heritage in the UK Government's Department for Culture, Media and Sport Department (DCMS) published a new Government Tourism Policy document (Department for Culture, Media and Sport 2011 *Government Tourism Policy*). This document set out the UK government's position with regard to the visitor economy and included amongst its key objectives were intentions to create new, independent tourism bodies, to ensure that these bodies have a brief to engage in destination management rather than merely destination marketing and to significantly reduce the public funding of destination management and marketing activity in future. These three intentions signalled a radical departure from previous tourism policy and they presented significant new challenges for organisations who were engaged in promoting destinations in England (the DCMS has no jurisdiction in any other part of the UK outside England). Although the UK government, via the DCMS, has subsequently published several other documents relating to this subject area, for example, *Backing the Tourism Sector. A Five Point Plan* (DCMS, 2015), *The Tourism Action Plan* (DCMS, 2016) and the *Tourism Action Plan – One Year On* (DCMS, 2017), it is the *Government Tourism Policy* (Penrose, 2011) that has proved to be the most significant statement of policy in the context of this thesis and research project.

This research study explores the implications of these proposed strategic changes with regard to the destination marketing and destination management of Cheshire and Warrington. The research will interrogate the perceptions of senior executives in destination marketing and destination management organisations throughout England and those of key stakeholders in the marketing of Cheshire and Warrington. The

engagement and goodwill of these stakeholders is a business critical issue for the organisation that is responsible for promoting Cheshire and Warrington.

The body that is charged with responsibility for promoting the strengths of Cheshire and Warrington is known as Marketing Cheshire. Marketing Cheshire describes itself as a private-public sector partnership whose role is to create business opportunities in Cheshire and Warrington 'across the whole invest, visit, live agenda' (Marketing Cheshire Business Plan 2012/3, p.2). The Marketing Cheshire brand name dates from 2011 and it was previously known as Visit Chester and Cheshire (Marketing Cheshire, 2019a).

As the research is chiefly concerned with the geographical area which is termed Cheshire and Warrington it is appropriate to provide some background information regarding this area. Cheshire and Warrington constitute a sub-region (Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership, 2019) which is located within North-West England. The name 'Cheshire' was first recorded as Legeceasterscir or 'the shire city of the [Roman] legions' in 980 but it is thought that the county was created around 920 (Crosby, 1996, p.31). The boundaries of Cheshire were defined in 1284 and they remained stable from that date until the twentieth century (Crosby, 1996, Lewis, 1991). Cheshire's administrative boundaries changed somewhat during the twentieth century with the most radical boundary revision occurring in 1974 when land to the north east and the north west of the county were annexed by the adjoining counties of Greater Manchester and Merseyside. At this time Widnes and Warrington were 'strangely' added to Cheshire (Crosby, 1996, p. 132). Crosby does not elaborate on why he uses the word 'strangely' to describe this addition but he clearly feels that this was an

illogical move. Widnes and Warrington remained part of Cheshire until 1998 (Bounds, 2011). Throughout much of its history Warrington had been a part of the County of Lancashire however in 1998 it became an independent unitary authority.

Although it has a history of more than a thousand years from a political and administrative perspective the County of Cheshire no longer exists. On April 1st 2009 Cheshire County Council and six district councils were abolished and two unitary authorities Cheshire West and Chester and East Cheshire were formed. Cheshire West and Cheshire has a population of about 338,000 in 2017 (Cheshire West and Chester, 2019). Cheshire East has a slightly larger population of around 378,800 (Cheshire East, 2019) whilst Warrington has a smaller population of some 209,700 people (Warrington Borough Council, 2019). Collectively these areas have a Gross Value Added (GVA) of over £22n billion per annum and an equivalence in economic terms to the cities of Birmingham or Leeds (Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership, 2019). The ambition is for the sub-region's annual economy to be worth at least £50 billion GVA by 2040 (Cox, 2017). Cheshire and Warrington supports a broad business base but advanced high value engineering, life sciences, energy technology and production and financial and business services are particularly well represented (Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership, 2019). Despite this Cheshire is a predominately rural county. Key tourist attractions are the historic city of Chester, Chester Zoo and Tatton Park, which hosts the Royal Horticultural Society's Northern Show. The visitor economy in Cheshire and Warrington (including retail and hospitality) currently generates just under £4bn per annum and it supports over 100,000 people (Marketing Cheshire, 2019b). From a historical perspective the relative lack of a shared heritage between Cheshire and Warrington begs the question

of how cohesive the grouping together of these areas can be especially as the term 'Marketing Cheshire' effectively excludes Warrington as a destination.

As previously noted Marketing Cheshire describes itself as a private-public sector partnership. Although the academic field of literature contains copious references to public-private partnerships no reference to private-public partnerships has yet been found. The designation 'private-public partnership' is presumably intended to convey that this is a private sector organisation which is in partnership with the public sector but this will need to be conclusively established as part of the research process. By way of parallel example, the majority of general practitioner practices in the UK are composed of self-employed (and therefore private sector) doctors who have entered into contracts with the National Health Service (a public sector organisation). Perhaps this can be seen as a precedent for a private-public partnership. No reference can also be found to Marketing Cheshire as an organisational structure with Companies House. Rather this is a brand name under which CWTB, a private company limited by guarantee operates. The previous name of CWTB was Cheshire & Warrington Tourism Board and the name was changed on 11/4/2011 (Companies House, 2019). The implications of the policy changes described in the Government Tourism Policy (Penrose, 2011) are the backdrop to the proposed research and this document is a critical element in the contextual background to the study.

The researcher was born in Cheshire and apart from a number of years of global travel as a seaman in the Norwegian Merchant Navy and several additional years of living away from Cheshire, he has been a resident of Cheshire all his life. As a result, he has a keen personal interest in the fortunes and the social, economic and cultural

development of Cheshire. The researcher is an MBA and a Chartered Marketer who has spent the major part of his career in the private sector, in the sport and leisure sector and more latterly in the pharmaceutical industry, in sales, marketing and general management positions. He has been a full-time academic (Senior Lecturer in Marketing and Management) since 2010 and he teaches marketing and management subjects to Tourism and Leisure Management, International Tourism Management and Events Management students at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The author of this work has also recently led modules on MBA programmes and has taught strategy and marketing to senior managers, directors and senior professionals. The researcher is a member of Club Liverpool and is a Liverpool Ambassador. Liverpool Ambassadors are deemed by Marketing Liverpool (the Liverpool City Region's DMO) to have the contacts and influence to bring an international conference to Liverpool. This research project coincides very closely with the researcher's teaching and research interests. Throughout the course of his doctoral programme the researcher has presented at international academic conferences and has had journal articles and other outputs published. All of these have been peer-reviewed and all have been published with ISSN and ISBN numbers. Four of the conference presentations and five of the journal articles relate directly to the current research project. A full list of the researcher's publication and other research activity can be found in Appendix 1.

1.5 Statement of the problem

Government funding has traditionally played a significant role in the funding of destination marketing in many countries including the UK. For instance, during 2016/17 VisitBritain received grant-in-aid funding of £26.5 million from the DCMS.

Similarly, Tourism Australia received AUD 148.3 million from the Australian government during 2017/18 which represented 88.8% of its total budget that year. In 2016/17 the Singapore Tourism Board received around 82.5% of its SGD 271.3 million revenue from government coffers and in 2017 the Canadian Federal Government provided CAD 95.5 million towards Destination Canada's operational budget (Morrison, 2019). In two cases (Australia and Canada) this represented a reduction in previous years' funding. This was also the case in the UK when inflation is taken into account (Morrison, 2013, Morrison, 2019).

Adverse economic conditions have had a negative effect on state funding of destination marketing in recent years in a number of countries. As an example, government funding of VisitBritain in 2011/12 was reduced by comparison with 2010/11 and this reduction in funding led to job losses (Morrison, 2013). Moreover, as a result of the (UK) Government Tourism Policy (Penrose, 2011) public funding was drastically and progressively reduced and it was the government's stated expectation that the private sector would play a much greater role in destination marketing. That dramatic reduction in public funding threatened to severely constrain DMO operations and it even challenged the continued financial viability of some DMOs. This resulted in an opportunity to undertake a compelling research study.

1.6 Rationale for the study

The proposed and actual reduction in public funding of destination marketing presented a significant challenge for destination marketers. The 2011 Government Tourism Policy proposes that the private sector should adopt an increasingly important role in destination marketing governance and funding however it remains to be seen

as to whether or not the private sector is willing or able to perform such a role. Although the 2011 policy statement (Penrose, 2011) is no longer a new policy, its' consequences have been profound and they are still being felt. Despite this, the reduction in public funding has received relatively little coverage in the academic literature and a gap in that body of literature therefore exists.

In order for an increased role for the private sector to be feasible a higher level of key stakeholder engagement is likely to be required. This study interrogates the perceptions of key stakeholders in the promotion of Cheshire and Warrington and senior destination marketing practitioners throughout England. Therefore, through the lens of one particular destination this study will seek to establish the most salient issues amongst the key stakeholders over the establishment of an effective destination or place marketing partnership which encompasses both the private and public sectors. This information provides the basis on which to provide clear recommendations regarding appropriate strategic directions for a partnership approach to destination marketing centred on a more prominent role for the private sector and a subtly different role for the public sector.

This also leads to the application of extant theory - organizational ambidexterity - to a subject area where it has only very rarely (and recently) been applied before. According to Lucarelli and Berg (2011) the lack of a conceptual and theoretical framework was the most discussed topic within the place marketing arena and that continues to be the case today (Vuignier, 2017).

1.7 Research aim

To examine the contemporary challenges and future opportunities for English destination marketing organisations with particular reference to Cheshire and Warrington.

1.8 Research objectives

1. To explore the perceptions of DMO chief executives and chief officers with regards to DMO partnership working, the reduction in public sector funding and the future of DMOs.

2. To explore the perceptions of DMO key stakeholders in Cheshire and Warrington with regards to DMO partnership working, the reduction in public sector funding and the future of DMOs.

3. To explore the strategic dynamics and options open to a particular DMO in circumstances of reduced public sector funding.

1.9 Research question

The research question that this study aims to answer is:

How can a place or destination marketing organisation engage with its stakeholders in order to operate effectively in dynamic circumstances of reduced public sector funding?

1.10 Structure of the study

The study comprises the following seven chapters:

Chapter One: Introduction

This chapter sets out the purpose of the study and frames the study within an academic and a business context. An overview of relevant literature is provided; the context within which the study is situated is explained as is the nature of the problem that the study seeks to address. The rationale for the study is provided, the research question is articulated and clear research objectives are set.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

The literature review provides a comprehensive critical analysis of the subject area including the development of underpinning theory as it relates to destination and place marketing. This chapter also introduces and elaborates the concept or theory of organizational ambidexterity. Gaps in the extant literature are identified which provide further justification for the study.

Chapter Three: Research Methodology and Research Methods

In this chapter research philosophies are discussed and the author's philosophical stance is explained. A rationale and justification is provided for the selected research method and the research design is set out. Full details are provided of the process by which the results are analysed.

Chapter Four: Findings and Analysis

This chapter contains a detailed analysis of the findings of the study.

Chapter Five: Discussion

In this chapter the implications of the findings are comprehensively discussed and these are related to the findings of other researchers whose work features in the literature review. The broader issues that these findings raise are also identified and commented upon. In addition, the implications of the research in terms of theory and practice are discussed.

Chapter Six: Conclusions and Recommendations

Appropriate conclusions are drawn from the study, the aim, objectives and research question are discussed, the contribution to theory (the application of organizational ambidexterity to DMOs) and practice that the thesis makes are explicated, recommendations are made based on the findings and discussion of the study, the limitations of the study are identified and suggestions for future research are made.

Chapter Seven: Learning Reflection

This chapter chronicles, discusses and analyses the learning that has occurred from the researcher's personal perspective during the denouement of this doctoral programme of study. The focus of this chapter is the concept or notion of the scholarly practitioner.

1.11 Conclusion

The thesis has now been introduced and in the next chapter the literature pertaining to the field of study will be examined.

Chapter Two - Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this literature review was to investigate the business environment and circumstances surrounding DMOs, primarily in the English context but also taking account of international contexts, in order to establish what is currently known about this aspect of human activity.

The literature review sets out the relevant published material that is pertinent to the current research project. The approach that has been adopted can be broadly described as a traditional as opposed to a systematic review. As a traditional literature review the content has been determined by the researcher's judgement in respect of the most pertinent and relevant source material (Easterby-Smith et al, 2018). Had it been a systematic literature review it might have only included peer-reviewed journal articles (Easterby-Smith et al, 2018). This literature review focuses on peer-reviewed journal articles and academic books but it also includes 'grey literature' in the form of government publications and other sources (Easterby-Smith et al, 2018). Indeed, to a considerable extent the research was prompted by a grey literature document in the form of the Government Tourism Policy (Penrose, 2011). This is understandable in this context because a document such as this has a more profound and direct impact on the sector in question than any peer-reviewed journal articles. The literature review begins with a brief outline of the development of marketing as an academic and practical discipline together with a brief history of place promotion and place marketing. This is followed by sections which describe the current administrative framework and which trace the histories of Cheshire and Warrington. The literature

review ends by legitimising the aims and objectives set out in the introductory chapter and by identifying gaps in the extant literature that the thesis has addressed.

In compiling the literature review Liverpool John Moores University's extensive 'Discover' library catalogue was used in the first instance and this was supplemented by the use of Google Scholar and the internet in general. The actual search terms that were used will be discussed later in the literature review. Peer-reviewed journal articles form the core of the literature review but these are supported by other sources in the interests of completeness.

The review is presented in the following sections:

2.1 Introduction

2.2 What is marketing?

2.3 A summary of the development of marketing thought and theory in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries

2.4 A brief history of the marketing and promotion of places

2.5 Destination

2.6 Destination challenges

2.7 Destination management, destination marketing, place marketing and place management

2.8 Threats to funding

2.9 The academic domain(s) that inform the subject area

2.10 Consolidation of the literature

2.11 Differentiation

2.12 Place branding

2.2 What is marketing?

Before exploring the meaning of the term destination marketing is it is necessary to understand what marketing is and what that word actually means. Unfortunately, 'marketing' is a term that appears to have different meanings to different people. According to the Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM) (CIM, 2019a): "Marketing is the management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying customer requirements profitably". By contrast, in the words of the American Marketing Association (AMA) (AMA, 2019a): "Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large". In the experience of the writer, undergraduate students studying marketing for the first time

when asked 'What is marketing?' are apt to respond in a reductionist manner that that it is 'advertising' or 'promotion'.

Implicit within the CIM's definition is a need to understand what consumers need and value and this in turn conceptualises marketing as a business philosophy that places customer satisfaction at its heart. This philosophy may be termed the 'marketing concept'. The AMA's definition is a little narrower than that of the CIM in that it stresses a process-based approach rather than a business philosophy. In any event both definitions imply something much larger (CIM) or larger (AMA) than merely advertising or promotion. Most marketers would agree that at its heart marketing is actually a business philosophy that places customer satisfaction at its core.

2.3 A summary of the development of marketing thought and theory in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries

Vargo and Lusch (2004) assert that the formal study of marketing derived from economics and that it evolved from roots early in the twentieth century into something which they term the marketing management school which emerged in the early 1950's. Initially academics writing and studying marketing were concerned with the exchange of goods. Vargo and Lusch contend that the marketing management school approach was associated with a decision-making approach to the management of marketing functions and to a strong focus on the satisfaction of customer needs. In essence this approach involved the selection of a target market and then decision-making over the marketing mix variables of product, price, promotion and place (known as the 4P's) so that the offering could be tailored towards the satisfaction of customer needs within this target market. Important advances in the field of marketing include the

development of the notion of the marketing mix which was first presented at a conference in 1953 by Neil Borden, a Harvard professor, although it first appeared in print rather later (Borden, 1964) and with the conceptualisation of the marketing mix as the 4P's (McCarthy, 1960). A further landmark was the Booms and Bitner's (1981) extension of the 4P's into the 7P's which is sometimes known as the services marketing mix.

Branding has long been an integral part of marketing. The origin of the word 'brand' derives from the 'old Norse word, *brandr*, meaning 'to burn'. Brands used to be burnt on to livestock by their owners as identifying marks (Fahy and Jobber, 2012). The practice of branding in marketing is to aid differentiation and to create identity in the minds of consumers. According to Fahy and Jobber (2012), with branded products value may derive less from the product and more from the brand associations (reliability, durability, prestige, exclusivity etc.). Branding is applied to both products and services. Fahy and Jobber (2012, p.237) define a brand as: "a distinctive product offering created by the use of a name, symbol, design, packaging, or some combination of these, intended to differentiate it from its competitors".

From the beginning of the 1980's new marketing topics began to emerge such as relationship management, marketing orientation, supply chain management and networks (Vargo and Lusch, 2004). Perhaps the most significant development around this time was a new emphasis on the marketing of services as opposed to the marketing of goods. From 1980 to 2000 Vargo and Lusch (2004) contend that marketing was increasingly seen to be being a social and economic process and that this approach had the potential to unify diverse strands of marketing thought. Vargo

and Lusch (2004) argue that marketing, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, was moving towards establishing a new dominant logic which integrates products and services. Vargo and Lusch (2004) term this approach to marketing thought as service dominant logic. Service dominant logic is predicated upon the creation of value through the application of specialist human knowledge or skills. Vargo and Lusch's (2004) paper has exerted an important influence over marketing thought since its publication but service dominant logic may not have resulted in the paradigm shift in marketing thinking that was anticipated by the authors of the paper. However, Warnaby and Medway (2015) have even applied Vargo and Lusch's (2004) service dominant logic of marketing to the place product.

Moreover, Tadajewski (2009) traces the antecedents of the marketing concept and the development of a consumer focus over the course of the earlier part of the twentieth century. Tadajewski (2009) observes that marketing scholars were advocating a consumer centric approach early in the twentieth century but business practitioners were rather slower in accepting the concept and putting it into practice. In making this assertion Tadajewski differs somewhat with Vargo and Lusch (2004) who argue that the marketing concept, a philosophy which places the achievement of customer satisfaction at the heart of business practice, did not emerge until the 1950s.

2.4 A brief history of the marketing and promotion of places

As this study sought to establish how a destination or place marketing organisation can engage with its stakeholders in order to operate effectively in circumstances of reduced public financial support it was necessary to explore the history and

development of theory and practice in relation to the marketing and promotion of places.

Whilst many authors would agree that the marketing concept and the study of marketing emerged during the twentieth century (e.g. Jones and Tadajewski, 2015, Kumar, 2015, Pressey, 2017, Shaw, 2015, Tadajewski, 2009, Vargo and Lusch, 2004), others claim a much longer history for the marketing, or rather the promotion of places. Ashworth and Voogd (2004) cite the very early example of Leif Erickson who, some 2,000 years ago, in naming a very large and newly-discovered island as 'Greenland' sought to project a favourable and attractive image to prospective visitors and potential settlers. Heeley (2015) argues that Richard 'Beau' Nash who was appointed as Bath's Master of Ceremonies in 1705 established the embryonic format of the world's first destination marketing organisation. Nash's local government department was charged with being "responsible for organising entertainments and diversions" and he also promoted the town and personally welcomed visiting dignitaries (Heeley, 2015, p.20). Heeley (2015), also views 1879 as being a significant date in destination marketing as that was the year when the rapidly developing seaside resort of Blackpool first levied a two-penny rate in order to raise money to fund an advertising campaign. In making this claim Heeley (2015) cites Walton (1983) when he says that the purpose of the advertising campaign was concerned with "stating the attractions and amusements of the town" (Walton, 1983 p.150).

In the nineteenth century much place promotion activity in North America, Europe and the UK were linked to the development of railway networks (Ward, 1998). Throughout the second half of the nineteenth century the United States federal government was

keen to encourage railroad construction and it made land grants of territory to railroad companies. These railway companies were keen to develop railways in the mid and far West of America and this meant that the lure of the rapidly advancing frontier needed to be sold to potential settlers (Ward, 1998). The land that had formerly been the collectively owned home of indigenous North Americans came to be promoted as a private commodity that could now be bought and sold. This heralded the beginning of the United States (US) tradition of place marketing which became known as 'boosterism'. Boosterism involved the promotion of the new territories (via handbills, pamphlets, posters and newspapers) to target markets in the east of the US and in Europe (Ward, 1998). The early promotional messages were not always grounded in reality. Opportunities for settlement were stressed but negative issues such as cultivation difficulties, poor drainage, a lack of drinking water, dangerous or poisonous animals or the risk of disease were frequently not mentioned (Ward, 1998). Although Blackpool held an early lead in the promotion of the seaside in the U.K. it was in France where it really developed on a large scale. However, an English railway executive, Edward Blount, Chairman of France's Compagnie de l'Ouest, played a leading role in this development. As the Compagnie de l'Ouest's railway network began to spread from Paris into the then less developed regions of Brittany and Normandy in the late 1800's the company struggled to be profitable and in an attempt to break this cycle it began to publicise tourist destinations on its routes. This publicity included illustrated brochures and from 1886 onwards, colour posters. Over the following years Compagnie de l'Ouest and other large French railway companies began to advertise tourist destinations located on their rail networks (Ward, 1998). In Britain the promotion of seaside resorts did occur with the development of the railways in the

nineteenth century but it was modest in nature although as previously noted Blackpool played a pioneering role (Ward, 1998).

It was in the latter part of the 1930s when competitive seaside resort advertising came to the fore as many more workers began to qualify for paid holidays from their employers. The resorts and the railways combined their forces in order to sell the seaside and they together formed the vanguard of tourism marketing in Britain (Ward, 1998). By the early 1950s traditional seaside resorts were enjoyed by the majority of people in Britain but over-inflated publicity which made bold claims about the prevailing weather at the British coastal resorts that were being promoted were beginning to wear thin (Ward, 1998). Competition from newer resorts particularly in Spain was also beginning to emerge as the social expectations of holidays began to rise with increasing disposable income and favourable exchange rates (Ward, 1998). Although Blackpool managed to maintain its allure well into the latter decades of the twentieth century other traditional British seaside resorts began to decline in the face of foreign competition (Ward, 1998).

In the twenty-first century, as the world has become more globalised and competitive, destination marketing has grown to be the principal means by which nations, regions and cities compete to attract visitors (Pike and Page, 2014). This is a global phenomenon but Visit Britain currently lists over 150 DMOs in England alone (Visit Britain, 2019).

2.5 Destination

In the view of the Morgan, Pritchard and Pride (2011) the term 'destination' is 'probably of most significance to marketing professionals and academics, and destinations exist only through the act of marketing. According to these authors. 'a 'place' only becomes a 'destination' through the narratives and images communicated by tourism promotional material' (Morgan, Pritchard and Pride, 2011, p.4). Does this mean that you buy a train ticket to a place and not a destination? According to the Oxford English Dictionary destination means: "The fact of being destined or bound for a particular place; hence, short for place of destination, the place for which a person or thing is destined; the intended end of a journey or course" (Oxford English Dictionary, 2018). As the Oxford English Dictionary makes no mention of 'destinations' only existing through the act of marketing Morgan, Pritchard and Pride's (2011) viewpoint can be contested as can the meaning and interpretation of other words these authors use. Indeed, the authors themselves acknowledge that: "The very terms 'destination', 'competitiveness', 'authenticity', 'creativity', and 'place brand' are slippery, elusive, contested and often misunderstood" (Morgan, Pritchard and Pride, 2011, p.5). Morgan Pritchard and Pride's (2011) edited book, *Destination Brands* may appear to be rather dated now but it is still one of the best sources relating to the field. Morgan, Pritchard and Pride (2011) state that their book had three broad messages to convey:

- In the tourism sector the need for differentiation is more important than ever
- Competence in managing the reputation of the place tends to be the preserve of the DMO and this is only likely to be enhanced in the digital age
- Creativity, innovation and sustainability will be the key themes in future

2.6 Destination challenges

In the early nineteen-nineties Kotler, Haider and Rein (1993) wrote about the key challenges that places faced. These authors saw four principal challenges and these were:

- The risks associated with "the accelerating pace of change in the global, economic political, and technological environment" (p. 312)

- The risks associated with "normal processes or urban evolution or decay" (p. 314)

- "Places are facing a growing number of competitors in their efforts to attract scarce resources" (p. 315)

- "Places have to rely increasingly on their own local resources to face the growing competition" (p. 316)

Increased competitiveness has prompted destinations to become progressively more active in city branding and place promotion in order to differentiate themselves from their competition. It is perhaps surprising that some 25 years later, in broad terms, the principal challenges that places face are still those that Kotler, Haider and Rein (1993) identified.

Dramatic changes in tourism patterns have occurred in recent decades. Back in 1950 nearly 90% of tourists visited the world's 15 most popular destinations but by 2005 the most popular tourism destinations hosted less than 60% of tourist arrivals (UNWTO, 2009, cited in Morgan, Pritchard and Pride, 2011). As Anholt (2011) noted: 'Barring their close neighbours, most people in the world really only respect, occasionally think about, claim to know about, and generally admire a maximum of 14 or 15 countries

apart from their own and these are all major, industrialised democracies in Western Europe and the English-speaking world, plus Japan and Brazil' (Anholt, 2011, p. 30) Anholt (2011) noted because of time constraints most people and organisations do not seek out detailed information about places that are not familiar to them. We get by with abbreviated and simplified views e.g.: "Paris is about style, Japan about technology, Switzerland about wealth and precision, Rio de Janeiro about carnival and football, Tuscany about the good life, and most African countries about poverty, corruption, war, famine, and disease" (Anholt, 2011, p. 22). As Anholt (2011, p.22) says: "When you haven't got time to read a book, you judge it by its cover".

Anholt (2011) produced a hexagonal diagram to illustrate how factors collectively contribute to the competitive identity of a place which is shown below.

Figure 1 - Adapted from The hexagon of Competitive Identity, Anholt, S. (2011) In: Morgan, N., Pritchard, A. and Pride Destination Brands, p.23

According to Anholt (2011) the contribution of these factors to the image of a place is as follows:

1. The most powerful voice in image creation is often that of tourism promotion in addition to visitors' first-hand accounts of the experience that they had of the place when travelling as tourists or on business.

2. The brands that are produced in or are associated with the place have an important role in shaping the place's image but only if the place of origin of those brands is explicit.

3. The policy decisions that the place makes contribute to its image e.g. the degree of inclusiveness that it embraces or the extent to which it welcomes entrepreneurs and encourages start-up businesses.

4. The extent to which the place encourages inward investment, recruitment of talented individuals and foreign direct investment.

5. The place's cultural activities and attributes; authors, artists, musicians, sports teams and architecture.

6. The people who are associated with the place. The place's highest profile leaders, celebrities and sports stars. The welcome extended to visitors and the way that the place's people behave when away from the place.

The importance of these issues is one illustration of the difference between branding a place and branding a product or service. Avraham and Ketter (2008, p.7), use the term "social-public marketing" to describe the marketing of places and they believe that if such marketing is to succeed: 'local decision makers must act democratically, not in an elitist or patronising way; they have to cooperate in the process with the place's residents and other local players; the marketing plan should not be imposed

on the market as a top-down decision but evolve bottom-up; and it should be based on the benefit to the general public rather than to the decision-makers or their narrow self-interests'. If a destination brand strategy is seen as a self-serving exercise developed solely by those with a direct vested interest in the strategy, then it will not secure sufficient buy-in from the wider group of stakeholders. To give an example of this, in Amsterdam, the strategies used to promote tourism have generated a negative response from many of the city's residents (van der Avert, 2018). As the world becomes increasingly competitive countries, regions, sub-regions and cities are recognising the need to differentiate themselves from their competitors through their branding strategies as such strategies can assist in sustainable development through the attraction of bright, talented people, organisations, inward investment and tourism. The importance of culture and heritage in the differentiation process is witnessed by the fierce competition for the European Capital of Culture title as it brings with it positive publicity, potential employment opportunities, investment and cultural recognition. Place branding assists in the differentiation process and it assists in positioning the destination in the minds of potential visitors and residents (Allan, 2011).

Dinnie (2011) notes that the issue of commodification in which the branding of a destination in all its complexity in terms of the richness of its history and culture is reduced down to a shorthand like a product in a supermarket is frowned upon by many. However, such a process may enable consumers to focus on those things that they want from a destination.

Morgan, Pritchard and Pride (2011) question whether measuring the success of destinations in terms of visitor numbers or how much those visitors spend is

compatible with the current focus on sustainability and the maintenance of the destination's culture, tradition and environment. Furthermore, Anholt (2011, p.22) noted that countries: "pull in investors, aid, tourists, business visitors, students, major events, researchers, travel writers, and talented entrepreneurs' and they push out 'products, services, policies, culture, and ideas". The later categories are traded at a "'discount if the country's image is weak or negative, and at a premium if it is strong and positive'".

In 2004, Pike wrote that ultimately the role of the DMO must be to: 'enhance the long term competitiveness of the destination' (Pike, 2004, p.39). Some twelve years later Pike's view had changed little when he stated: "the *raison d'etre* and mission of DMOs as being to enhance the competitiveness of their geographical space as a visitor destination" (Pike, 2016, p. 2). Although a place may acquire a reputation irrespective of what its DMO does, the place can nonetheless have a vision of what image it wants to be projected, of how it would like to be seen and of what it aspires to in the future. Brand management can be employed to enable its key stakeholders to achieve this vision, to differentiate the place from other places and to create a competitive identity (Morgan, Pritchard and Pride, 2011). It can be argued that in this context the DMO's role is what Morgan, Pritchard and Pride (2011, p. 6) refer to as 'stewardship' rather than management. Such a role still involves place brand management and communication with consumers and the tourism sector as well as the coordination and leadership and guidance of stakeholder interaction with core target markets.

2.7 Destination management, destination marketing, place marketing and place management

Although the UK government, via the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS), has published a number of documents, for example, *Backing the Tourism Sector. A Five Point Plan* (DCMS, 2015), the *Tourism Action Plan* (DCMS, 2016) and the *Tourism Action Plan – One Year On* (DCMS, 2017), it is the *Government Tourism Policy* (Penrose, 2011) that has proved to be the most significant statement of policy in the context of this thesis and research project. The proposed changes described in the Government Tourism Policy (Penrose, 2011) are the backdrop to the research described in this thesis. As previously stated amongst its aims, this policy document signalled an intention that bodies responsible for tourism should in future engage in destination management rather than merely destination marketing.

This suggests that the search terms 'destination marketing' and 'destination management' were appropriate in conducting the literature review. In 2013 Morrison reported that a global shift had been detected from a focus on destination marketing to destination management (Morrison, 2013).   Some six years later, in 2019, destination marketing was still the most frequently occurring of the two terms on Google Scholar and Morrison (2019, p.xvii) could only report that destination management was 'catching up' on destination marketing although this statement is not entirely borne out by the figures that he produces.

Morrison (2019) obtained data from Google Scholar that shows that the terms 'destination marketing' and destination management' began to appear in the tourism literature in the 1980's. They then began to appear with repeated frequency during

the 1990's until they finally became 'mainstream' subject areas between 2000 and 2009.

Decade	Destination marketing	Destination management
1960-1969	2	2
1970-1979	8	6
1980-1989	49	17
1990-1999	557	300
2000-2009	5,560	4,230
2010-2018*	16,100	14,700
Total	22,274	19,253

* At March 2018

Table 1 - References to destination marketing and destination management in Google Scholar 1960-2018 (excluding citations).

Adapted from Morrison (2019, p. xviii)

The above table shows very clear growth in references to destination marketing and destination management over recent decades but the term destination marketing is still to the fore.

Throughout almost all the periods recorded by Morrison references to destination marketing have exceeded references to destination management and in recent times that tendency has become more marked. The pronounced growth in references to both of these terms over the period between over the last decade is indicative of a strongly growing body of literature but Google Scholar records the work of academics and the terminology that academics use is not necessarily the same as the terminology used by practitioners. It is generally acknowledged that there is a wide gap between

theory and practice in this sector: so much so that (Karavatzis, 2015, p. 266) has queried whether place branding academics and practitioners should be described as 'strangers in the night'. The terminology used by practitioners to describe the business that they are in is something therefore that this study will explore.

Destination management is the term used by Visit England (which as a part of Visit Britain is sponsored by the DCMS) and it is also the term preferred by the DCMS in their Government Tourism Policy. A search of various web sites produced the results displayed in the table able below shows the terminology used by DMOs in describing themselves.

Destination marketing and destination management. How some leading DMOs describe themselves on their websites	
Organisation	Description
Marketing Cheshire	Marketing Cheshire avoids the use of either of the most common terms describing itself instead as 'the agency responsible for promoting Cheshire and Warrington nationally and internationally
Marketing Liverpool	The city's destination marketing organisation
Shropshire Tourism	The only destination marketing association in the country to be entirely self-funded through earned income, receiving no public subsidies or grants.
Visit Bath	Formerly official destination marketing organisation for Bath and beyond, now Destination Management Organisation for the City of Bath
Visit County Durham	The destination management organisation (DMO) for Durham
Visit Cornwall	We're more than a destination marketing organisation
Visit Lincoln	Visit Lincoln is the city's official destination management organisation

Wye Valley and Forest of Dean Tourism	….are the official destination management organisation for the Wye Valley and the Forest of Dean

Table 2 - Destination marketing and destination management. How some leading DMOs describe themselves on their websites.

Fyall (2011a) wrote that the destinations of the future would need to adopt an inclusive approach and to develop a "holistic mindset *vis-à-vis* the management of destinations" (Fyall, 2011a, p. 99). In this context he was referring to what he termed: "a recent conceptualisation of the organisation function for the management of destinations, where the 'M' emphasises total management rather than marketing" (Fyall, 2011a, p.99). In making this statement Fyall (2011a) was alluding to what he saw as a changed philosophy in which DMOs adopted a more holistic approach which entailed taking responsibility for all aspects of the destination rather than merely its promotion.

There can be seen to be two essential problems with using the term destination management rather than destination marketing. The first of these relates to the meaning of the term 'marketing'. As noted earlier, most marketers would contend that marketing is concerned with the 4 Ps (Product, Promotion, Price and Place – with place meaning distribution in this instance) or, in the case of the service sector, the 7 Ps, the original 4 Ps supplemented with physical evidence, process and people (for example, Booms and Bitner 1981, Vargo and Lush, 2004). Whichever of these frameworks is adopted marketing is concerned with the 'Product' which presumably includes all those elements to which the advocates of the term 'destination management' are referring to. Promotion is at best only one of four (but more

probably one of seven) of the principal functions of marketing a destination and it is not the sole function of a DMO irrespective of the underlying philosophy.

The second problem with the term destination management relates to the degree of control that a DMOs can realistically expect to have over the 'management' that can be exercised over key aspects of the visitor experience such as litter collection and transport infrastructure. Where DMOs are effectively embedded within local authorities they may have some tenuous influence over these aspects but they can hardly be said to have the power to 'manage' them. In circumstances of reduced public funding of DMOs any such influence on the part of DMOs is likely to be considerably reduced. As Pike (2016, p. 4) puts it: 'The vast majority of DMOs simply do not have the mandate or the resources to control the management of their destination's resources'. Indeed, Fyall himself (2011b, p. 345) stated that: "unless all elements are owned by the same body, then the ability to control and influence the direction, quality and development of the destination pose very real challenges". As the term 'management' implies control and as the overwhelming number of DMOs do not have control over the resources within their destination the term destination management organisation is a misnomer (Pike, 2016). Given that some English DMOs such as Marketing Shropshire and Visit Cornwall claim to operate independently of the local authority ambit they cannot and do not claim to be destination management organisations.

To compound matters confusion can arise over the meaning of the acronym DMO which is frequently used in the literature to variously describe a destination marketing organisation (Middleton et al, 2009, Pike and Page, 2014, Pike, 2016), a destination

management organisation (Hristov and Ramkissoon, 2016, Morrison, 2013, Morrison, 2019, Penrose, 2011) or both (Wang, 2011. p.4). In their preface, Wang and Pizam (2011, ix) observe that: "a tendency is arising for destination management organisations (DMOs) to change to become destination management and marketing organisations (DMMOs)". The use of this latter acronym would appear to be a sensible route to avoid confusion over the meaning of the term DMO particularly as it is implied by Wang and Pizam (2011) that the process by which destination marketing organisations become destination management organisations is evolutionary and it is therefore difficult to assess what stage an organisation is at any point in time without a detailed knowledge of that organisation. Unfortunately, the acronym DMMO has not been widely adopted.

A further terminological variation which has relevance in the context of this study is Visit England's choice of term to describe the organisations that exist to promote tourism at a city or sub-regional level. Visit England is England's "national tourist board" with a role: "to grow the value of tourism by working in partnership with the industry to deliver inspirational marketing campaigns and to provide advocacy for the industry and our visitors" (Visit England, 2016a). Visit England refers to 'destination organisations' (Visit England, 2016a), which, if it were shortened would introduce the new acronym of DO however it also refers to 'destination management' (Visit England, 2016b) and therefore achieves consistency with the Government Tourism Policy (Penrose, 2011). Visit England (now part of Visit Britain) administers some funding initiatives within the sector and it can be seen as the lead organisation for the promotion of tourism in England. As it resides within the Department of Culture, Media and Sport it is essentially linked to national government and it can therefore be

expected to endorse and to mirror if not to actually initiate government tourism policy. According to Morrison (Visit England, 2012 cited in Morrison,2019, p. 8) Visit England defined destination management as "a process of leading, influencing and co-ordinating the management of all the aspects of a destination that contribute to a visitor's experience, taking account of the needs of visitors, local residents, businesses and the environment".

Quinn (2013, p. 85) provides a clarification of the different (but similar) meanings of the terms 'place marketing' and 'destination marketing.'

> Place marketing is the business of setting a particular place apart from others; of creating an image for a place such that it appears more attractive to a wide array of inward flows of capital, revenue, skills, human capital, tourists and so on. Destination marketing has a similar meaning, except that it is more specifically oriented towards attracting tourists and developing tourism activity.

Marketing Cheshire describes itself as: "the agency responsible for promoting Cheshire & Warrington nationally and internationally to investors, business and leisure visitors and those lucky enough to live and study here" (Marketing Cheshire, 2019c). The significance of this is that, in the light of Quinn's (2013) words, the implication is that Marketing Cheshire is engaged in place marketing rather than merely destination marketing. The brand Marketing Cheshire first appeared in 2011 but the term 'place marketing' has a longer history. Selby and Morgan (1996 p. 287) noted that 'the 1990s have seen the continued development of a 'place marketing' philosophy.

Place management is yet another alternative designation. The Institute of Place Management defines place management as: "a coordinated, area-based, multi-stakeholder approach to improve locations, harnessing the skills, experiences and

resources of those in the private, public and voluntary sectors" (Institute of Place Management, 2018).

2.8 The academic domain(s) that inform the subject area

What is the academic domain which provides the backdrop to the proposed research? The answer to this question is rather complex.

The subject area has commanded the attention of researchers, authors and practitioners from several different disciplines e.g. tourism, marketing, management and town planning. As a result, different terms with broadly similar meanings have emerged in the academic literature and have become somewhat independent bodies of literature in their own right. Examples of these are 'destination marketing', 'destination management', 'place marketing' and 'place branding'. All these search terms were used in the literature review.

The absence of a precise, single term to describe this area of study may reflect the fact that the general subject area has been adopted by several different disciplines. As an illustration of this Hanna and Rowley (2008) have observed that the term 'destination' tends to occur in the tourism literature whilst the term 'place' is found more frequently in business and branding journals. Skinner (2011) suggests that authors may align their writing to fit within the scope of particular journals (e.g. place branding, destination marketing/branding and so on) in preference to a consideration of the most appropriate conceptual framework.

In his book, 'Selling Places: The marketing and promotion of towns and cities 1850-2000', Ward (1998) argues that a surge in publications on the subject of the marketing and selling of places began in the late 1980's but prior to that the literature was fragmentary and anecdotal in nature. Pike (2016) contends that the academic literature associated with destination marketing began in 1973 and he has chronicled what he believes to be the key milestones in the field. These are as follows:

- 1973 - the first journal article (see Matejka, 1973)

- 1998 - the first book (see Gartrell, 1998)

- 1990 - the first academic conference ('Selling tourism destinations', Geographical Institutes of the University of Groningen and the University of Reading)

- 1992 - the first book on DMOs (see Pearce, 1992)

- 1997 - the first destination branding conference session (see Gnoth, 1998)

- 1998 - the first destination branding journal articles (see Dosen, Vranesevic and Prebezac, 1998; Pritchard and Morgan, 1998)

- 1999 - the first journal special issue, in the Journal of Vacation Marketing

- 2002 - the first book on destination branding (see Morgan, Pritchard and Pride, 2002)

- 2005 - the first destination branding academic conference (First International Conference on Destination and Marketing, IFT Macau and Perdue University)

- 2007 - the first journal special issue on destination branding, in Tourism Analysis (Vol 2, no.s 5-6)

- 2009 - the first review of the destination branding literature (see Pike, 2009)

- 2014 - the first review of the destination marketing literature (see Pike and Page, 2014)

 (adapted from Pike, 2016)

Within the general field of literature reviewed six particular areas of debate have resonance with this particular research study. These are the debates around the consolidation of the body of literature (including the relative lack of empirical research), whether there is a need for clear differentiation in place and destination marketing, place branding as a process, the debate over the value of destination and place marketing, the role of stakeholders in place marketing and digital marketing.

As befits an emerging multi-disciplinary field other discrete themes have emerged which have more peripheral relevance to this study. Examples of these are, demarketing (Medway, Warnaby and Dharni, 2010), the measurement of success in place marketing and branding (Zenker and Martin, 2011), collaboration between DMMOs (Wang et al, 2013), destination ambassadors (de Diesbach, 2012), place marketing and shoppers' perceptions (Teller et al, 2010) and the use of customer relations management (CRM) initiatives by destination marketers (Murdy and Pike, 2012).

At this point it is apposite to consider the six areas of debate that occur in the literature that have most direct relevance to this research project.

2.9 Consolidation of the literature

Some authors have attempted to consolidate the various strands of this emerging field of academic study (Gertner, 2011a, Gertner, 2011b, Hankinson, 2010, Lucarelli and Berg, 2011, Martinez, 2011 and Pike and Page, 2014, Vuignier, 2017) or to advocate the same (Kavaratzis, Warnaby and Ashworth, 2014) whilst others have sought to

clarify the confused terminology (Hanna and Rowley, 2008, Skinner, 2008, Boisen et al, 2018).

In an attempt to provide a meta-analysis of the place marketing and place branding literature Gertner (2011a) deliberately avoided the use of the search term 'destination image' as this is associated with travel and tourism literature even though this might have produced a useful contribution. The exclusion of published work deriving from the travel and tourism field in Gertner's meta-analysis might have created a gap in the context of this study but fortunately Pike and Page (2014) have chronicled the destination marketing literature and this complements Gertner's meta-analysis. In addition, Vuignier (2017) has conducted a large-scale literature review of the place marketing and place branding literature between 1976 and 2016.

There is an evident debate over the consolidation of the literature. Hanna and Rowley (2008) undertook a study using content analysis and they established that place branding had experienced a shift from the tourism domain to branding and business. Their research also established that the term 'destination' generally relates to tourism only. Hanna and Rowley engage in a measured debate over the meaning of these and other terms but they do offer the suggestion that the lack of clarity between the terms under discussion may be pure semantics (Hanna and Rowley, 2008).

Lucarelli and Berg (2011) conducted a review of the city branding literature but they acknowledged the use other designations in their review and they noted that terms that included the word marketing were more common in the literature (place, city, destination and urban marketing) than those that included the word branding (place, city, destination and urban branding). Lucarelli and Berg (2011) found that the most

discussed topic in the literature was the lack of conceptualisation and the theoretical shortcomings associated with the field.

Hankinson (2010) argues that in the past there was separate development within the academic domains of urban policy, tourism and mainstream branding but more recently a new encompassing domain of place branding has emerged. Hankinson (2010) refers to the growing acceptance of the notion that mainstream branding theory is applicable to place branding but because of the importance of stakeholders in place branding he calls for more research into the role and management of stakeholders.

Anholt (2011) identifies several spheres of activity that collectively contribute to the image of the place. Some of these reflect the deliberate efforts of the place to communicate with its publics and others contribute positively or negatively to the image of the place irrespective of the place's strategic communication efforts.

A comprehensive review of the place marketing and place branding literature over two decades was undertaken by Gertner (2011a) and he stated that:

> Many published reviews of the history of the discipline cite 'Nation brands of the 21st century' published in *Journal of Brand Management* as a significant landmark. Although earlier articles discuss place marketing, Simon Anholt's 1998 article is considered a turning point in the field's evolution, coining the idea of 'nation brands' and articulating the difference between 'place marketing' and 'place branding (Gertner, 2011a, p91).

In an echo of this, Horlings (2012) refers to Anholt as the originator of the place branding concept.

Anholt is clearly a thought-leader in the place branding arena. He initiated the Anholt-Gfk Roper Nation Brand Index and the Anholt-Gfk Roper City Brand Index. The results of these large scale biennial surveys are eagerly anticipated by NTOs and international city DMOs across the world. Anholt has been retained as a consultant by heads of governments in many countries and he is emeritus editor (and was managing editor) of *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, which is one of the most influential journals in this field. Anholt is widely published but his seminal (1998) article is concerned with nations rather than cities or sub-regions (as the configuration of Cheshire and Warrington can be described) and he makes the point that during the twentieth century the most successful brands have developed from countries that are successful brands in themselves e.g. America. Anholt (1998) argues that emerging nations and in particular Brazil have the capacity to create global brands as a result of the brand equity that they already possess. Clifton (2011) has developed this concept further by examining the way in which three Welsh beverage brands reflect their Welsh heritage and their connection with place branding.

In his meta-analysis of the place marketing and place branding literature Gertner (2011a) expresses frustration at the fragmented nature of the published field and at the lack of a theoretical framework. Whilst excusing an exploratory approach on the basis that this is a relatively new field of study Gertner (2011a) bemoans the comparative lack of empirical research and notes that: "Only 12 out of the 212 articles about 'place marketing' and 'place branding' examined stated research questions and advanced and tested models or hypotheses" (p.99). Gertner (2011a) concludes that if place marketing and place branding seek credibility as academic disciplines they must move on from a descriptive to a normative stage and begin to build robust theory.

Although Gertner's (2011a) publication dates back some years the published field is still fragmented in 2019, some 8 years later and it still lacks an adequate theoretical framework.

2.10 Differentiation

Another area highlighted in the literature is that of differentiation. Several authors (Anholt, 2009, Apostolakis et al, 2014, Heeley, 2015, Ren and Blichfeldt, 2011) address whether or not place brands should convey clear, simple messages to their target markets in the same way that commodities do. Anholt (2009) argues that although branding in the commercial sector tends to be a reductionist process resulting in a distilled and clear message, this is not generally possible or desirable with regard to places. Anholt sees the challenge with places (nations in this case) as being about: "building richness and complexity into a national image" (Anholt, 2009, p.92). He does, however, concede that there may be some equivalent to the notion of the classic marketing theory of the 'evoked set' in place marketing in which potential consumers tend to hold a shortlist of very few items at any one point in time. Such a shortlist may not be detrimental if the target market(s) are looking for different things e.g. potential investors might look for a well-educated workforce, affordable land values and a good communications infrastructure whilst a tourist might be seeking heritage, culture and gastronomy. These attributes are not necessarily mutually exclusive. In general, place brands are much more complex than product brands as places are made up of so many (sometimes competing) elements. Place brands can reflect all these complexities or they be distilled down to reflect the most dominant aspects of a place. The objective of any offer should be to achieve a suitable degree of differentiation but no loss of authenticity or truth. Sometimes the image of a place can conflict with the

reality. Frochot and Badat (2013) report on 'Paris syndrome' which Japanese tourists in Paris can suffer as a result of their experience of the city not matching their prior perception of the place. This syndrome apparently afflicts around twenty Japanese tourists each year and causes a number of them to be hospitalised. Hornskov (2011) argues that authenticity is critically important in place branding. In order to successfully achieve differentiation without loss of authenticity the public sector normally need to work together with the other key stakeholders (usually from the private sector) in a shared leadership role. Developing place brand strategy in this way through a broad coalition of interested parties is likely to produce a better result than if the task were to be left entirely to the public or private sectors (Allan, 2011).

Heeley (2015) argues forcibly that rather than differentiating their destination from its competition most urban DMOs in Europe practice the 'marketing of everything' (Heeley, p. 101). Heeley (2015) believes that this occurs through the process of stakeholder consultation to reflect the various interests of all stakeholders and thus to dilute the brand. Of 62 European cities and towns in Heeley's sample he believes that only 2 genuinely differentiate themselves in terms of their leisure tourism offering. These two are Vienna and Innsbruck which are both in Austria. All the other 58 others (including 18 UK towns and cities) practice the 'marketing of everything'. Apostolakis et al (2014) argue in favour of a place emphasising its uniqueness and authenticity in its branding and they point to the widespread failure to do so as one of the weaknesses of current destination branding practice.

According to Ren and Blichfeldt (2011) the emphasis on one, simple image in branding can be traced to the concept of points of parity versus points of difference. When related to places this involves determining what a place has to offer that other

competitive places cannot offer. This, they believe, is one reason why destinations have sought to promote a single image. Ren and Blichfeldt (2011) challenge the concept of one simple image in place branding and urge those responsible for promoting destinations to embrace diversity in their offering. Anholt (2009, p.96) supports this premise when he asserts that 'Place branding, when properly understood, is a system that respects the power of integrity above all else, and recognises that only perfect integrity can sway public opinion'.

The English city of Leicester provides an interesting example with regards to differentiation. Hassen and Giovanardi (2018) have chronicled how Leicester has successfully branded itself on the basis of its ethnic diversity and multiculturalism. However, two recent significant events have (potentially) compromised the coherence of its branding message. These events are the discovery of King Richard III's burial site in Leicester and the success of Leicester City Football Club in winning the Premier League in the 2015/6 football season. Both these events generated widespread international publicity for the city but they posed a potential risk of diluting the multicultural image that the city had carefully nurtured. However, the football story, at least, reinforced and enhanced the city's multicultural image as the all-conquering team included players from Japan, Algeria and a number of European countries and Leicester City Football Club was owned by a Thai businessman. The assimilation of King Richard III's burial site into the Leicester narrative requires a delicate approach to avoid compromising the city's authentic multicultural image (Hassen and Giovanardi, 2018).

Place brands can reflect many complexities or they can be distilled down to reflect the most dominant aspects of a place. The objective of any offer should be to achieve a suitable degree of differentiation but no loss of authenticity or truth. In order to get to this point successfully the public sector normally to work together with the other key stakeholders (usually from the private sector) in a shared leadership role. Developing place brand strategy in this way through a broad coalition of interested parties is likely to produce a better result than if the task were to be left entirely to the public or private sectors (Allan, 2011).

Differentiation has particular relevance in the case of Cheshire and Warrington as the sub-region is very diverse in that it includes the historic city of Chester, the town of Warrington which is much larger than the city of Chester and other urban areas within a predominately rural landscape. In addition, Marketing Cheshire needs to convey messages to investors, tourists and prospective residents; all of whom have different needs and different agendas. It is difficult to be all things to all people (Giles, Bosworth and Willett, 2013, Russell et al, 2014, Zenker and Beckmann, 2011). Nonetheless, as Wise (2016) points out, the economic prospects for tourism are very closely linked to the success of local communities and the preservation of the environment. In essence if a location is an attractive place to live it is also likely to be an attractive place to visit. In the case of Cheshire and Warrington, the clarity of Marketing Cheshire's message is compromised to some extent because the name Marketing Cheshire excludes Warrington even though Warrington is an integral part of the place offering that the organisation is seeking to promote.

This issue is exemplified by the map below. This map which is entitled Map of Cheshire is available to download on the Visit Cheshire website (Visit Cheshire, 2018). Visit Cheshire is a Marketing Cheshire sub-brand. A similar map also features in Chester & Cheshire, The Ultimate Guide, Summer 2018 which is produced by Marketing Cheshire (Marketing Cheshire, 2018, p. 39). In this publication the map is captioned 'Cheshire'. Although the map does depict Cheshire it also shows Warrington and Warrington is subsumed into the lighter coloured area which comprises the Cheshire and Warrington sub-region. The map therefore 'claims' Warrington as part of Cheshire.

Figure 2 - (Visit Cheshire, 2018)

The dependency on place names in place branding has not been explored in great detail in the literature (Kostanski, 2011). The significance of this in the current context is the anomalous position of Warrington within the brand of Marketing Cheshire. There is something of a paradox here in that whilst Cheshire no longer exists as a local

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authority administrative area, Warrington is very much in existence as a borough council and unitary authority and yet it does not feature in the brand name of the organisation that is ostensibly charged with the responsibility of promoting the town and aspiring city. Medway and Warnaby (2014) observe that conventional brand names are rarely the subject of conflict as a result of the legal protection that they enjoy. When disputes occur, if unresolved, they are likely to end up in the law courts. By contrast place names are often contested. Examples include Derry/Londonderry, Macedonia and the Arabian Gulf/Persian Gulf (Medway and Warnaby, 2014). Kostanski (2011) found that the associations that people form with place names are determined by the ability of the name to engender or link to the unique aspects of the place. If that is true, the brand Marketing Cheshire does not adequately represent Warrington.

2.11 Place branding

A third area that emerges in the literature is that of the process of place branding.

The AMA's definition of a brand is a,"Name, term, design, symbol, or any other feature that identifies one seller's good or service as distinct from those of other sellers" (AMA, 2019b). On the basis of this definition, Marketing Cheshire (or indeed, Cheshire) might qualify as a brand. However, the CIM's marketing glossary describes a brand as representing: "The set of physical attributes of a product or service, together with the beliefs and expectations surrounding it - a unique combination which the name or logo of the product or service should evoke in the mind of the audience" (CIM, 2019b). Under such a definition, a brand is seen, at least partly, in terms of the evoked response that it fosters in the target audience. This definition relates to the concept of brand equity or value which the CIM describes as: "The real value that a brand name

is worth encompassing the name, the logo and the emotional association" (CIM, 2019b). The brand equity or value of Cheshire (in brand terms) has not been quantified but the suspicion must be that it may not be as great as it could be given Marketing Cheshire's budgetary constraints and because Cheshire no longer exists as a local authority entity.

Place branding, destination branding and city branding are very common terms in the literature relating to the marketing of places. Indeed, since the late 1990's destination branding (and the other similar terms e.g. place branding and city branding) have emerged as some of the most discussed topics amongst both academics and destination marketers (Morrison, 2019). Morgan, Pritchard and Pride (2011) consider that the branding of consumer goods has a history which extends beyond the industrial revolution but the concept of tourism destinations developing a systematic approach to brand strategy only began in the 1990s.

However, a number of academics have contested whether places can ever be brands in the strictest sense (Morgan, Pritchard and Pride, 2011) and, drawing the conclusion that they cannot, they have instead used the terms place reputation management or competitive identity as an alternative to place branding. Morgan, Pritchard and Pride (2011) contend that 'place reputation stewardship' is an even more accurate description. Although place reputation management, competitive identity and place reputation stewardship may aptly describe the role of a destination marketing/management organisation (DMO) they sound neither very sexy nor very vital functions especially in a tourism concept and they are less likely to promote stakeholder engagement compared with terms such as destination marketing or

destination management even if these terms are less accurate in describing the DMO's actual role.

Anholt (2011) states that he first started to write about the notion of what he called the *nation brand* in 1996. His original position on the subject was 'that the reputations of countries, (and, by extension, cities and regions too) function rather like the brand images of companies and products and that they are equally critical to the progress, prosperity, and good management of those places' (Anholt, 2011, p.21).

Anholt (2011) complains that the terms *nation brand* and *place brand* were seized upon by consultants and 'naïve governments' and converted into *nation branding* and *place branding.* In Anholt's view these are misleading terms that suggest that "the images of countries, cities and regions can be directly manipulated using the techniques of 'commercial marketing communications" (Anholt, 2011, p.21). Anholt has repeatedly called for evidence of this but he claims to have uncovered none. In Anholt's view countries are: "judged by what they do, not by what they say, yet the notion that a country can simply buy its way into a better reputation has proved to be a pernicious and surprisingly resilient one" (Anholt, 2011, p.21).

Anholt cites his own book C*ompetitive Identity* (2007) which, he says, makes the point that: "national image has more to do with national and regional identity and the politics and economies of competitiveness than with branding as it is usually understood in the commercial sector" (Anholt, 2011, p.21). This does not appear to be a very big point to make as it seems to be a rather hair-splitting argument, but nevertheless it reinforces the notion that place branding is widely seen as being multi-factorial.

Several authors (Clifton, 2011, Florida, 2002 and Jansson and Power, 2006) note that places with strong and dynamic brands attract companies, creative people and entrepreneurs.

Although slogans such as 'I love New York' and 'Glasgow's Miles Better' were precursors to these brand strategies, according to Morgan, Pritchard and Pride (2011) an approach to destination branding was first introduced at both a strategic and national level with countries such as Spain, Hong Kong and Australia and it is difficult to discuss the branding of places and destinations without also discussing attempts to brand nations. Later, a variety of different countries, regions and cities such as the US cities of Seattle, Las Vegas and Pittsburgh sought to promote themselves as brands in order to assume a higher profile in an ever more competitive environment, to create a framework that would facilitate strategic decision-making and, in some instances, to make themselves more accountable to their stakeholders (Morgan, Pritchard and Pride, 2011).

Morgan, Pritchard and Pride (2011) opined that a broad range of destinations now consider that the branding of places has a wider focus than that of tourism alone involving aspects such as inward investment, exports, culture, sports, events, education and immigration and that these are significant factors in their competitive armoury.

Morgan, Pritchard and Pride (2011) introduced a conceptual model showing "the virtuous circle of creative destination reputation" (p11), which includes Tone, Tradition,

Tolerance, Talent, Transformability, Testimony. Together these combine to constitute creative destinations. A full explanation of the terms is offered by the authors but the model appears to be rather contrived in its focus on words that begin with the letter 'T' in the same way that the 4 Ps includes 'place' when 'distribution' may be seen as a more appropriate term. Morgan, Pritchard and Pride, (2011) state that the reputation of a place reflects the ways that it is perceived by others and the ways in which it views itself, noting that a clear vision for the future can enable a place to influence how it is perceived in future. Morgan, Pritchard and Pride (2002, p.3) have observed that many people believe that: "places are too complex to include in branding discussions since they have too many stakeholders and too little management control, have underdeveloped identities and are not perceived as brands by the general public". Dinnie (2011) sees some justification in this statement but he believes that if a place does not seek to manage its image and reputation then the risk is that the place will either be disregarded by external audiences or 'branded' by the media and others in a disadvantageous way. Dinnie (2011) concludes that there is therefore an ethical requirement for the appropriate bodies to protect the place's reputation.

In Dinnie's (2011) view the potential advantages of place branding significantly counter any disadvantages that may be associated with the practice. In de Deisbach's opinion the purpose of place branding lies in differentiating the place from its competitors (de Deisbach, 2012). Baker (2007) provides a compelling and comprehensive summary of the benefits of place branding when he states that branding a place:

- creates a unifying focus for all public, private, and non-profit sector organisations that rely on the image of the place and its attractiveness
- Corrects out of date, inaccurate or unbalanced perceptions

- Increases the attractiveness of local products

- Increases the ability to attract, recruit and retain talented people

- Contributes to a broader economic base.

        Baker (2007, p.41)

In this instance, Baker is referring to the branding of small cities but the benefits that he espouses as deriving from an applied destination-brand management strategy apply equally to other types of places such as sub-regions like Cheshire and Warrington or even nations.

In addressing the question of whether countries can also be brands, Kotler and Gertner (2011) imply that they can by citing empirical evidence over country of origin designations e.g. 'made in Germany', 'made in Switzerland' or 'made in Japan'. They suggest that these designations can add value because these countries are perceived to be industrial countries with superior reputations for the production of good quality products. Labels such as 'made in Surinam' or 'made in Myanmar' do not possess the same cachet.

According to Kotler and Gertner (2011, p.37) country image can be described as:

> the sum of beliefs and impressions people hold about places. Images represent a simplification of a large number of associations and pieces of information connected with a place. They are the product of a mind trying to process and pick out essential information from huge amounts of data about a place.

In essence, if implemented correctly, an appropriate place brand strategy should encourage diverse stakeholders to co-operate in the interests of attracting tourism, investment and talent to the place in addition to generating demand for the place's products and services (Baker, 2007).

Dinnie (2011, p.70) sees an ethical issue in the treatment of places as brands as some perceive branding to be a "manipulative and dubious activity, which may perhaps be tolerated in the purely commercial arena of product branding but which is inappropriate for places". As Anholt (2007) has pointed out, it is an irony that the practice of branding has become something a bad brand in itself. Anholt (2007, p3) suggests that: "there's a lot of mistrust about brands and branding these days, and this isn't helped by the fact that nobody seems to agree on what the words really mean".

One of the most important distinctions between the branding of places and the branding of consumer brands relates to the issue of brand ownership. Clegg and Kornberger (2010, p.9) recognise the essential differences between consumer brands and destination brands when they say: "Legally speaking, commercial brands are owned by organizations who hold the copyright over them, but who owns a city?". As Stubbs and Warnaby (2014) point out the situation with place brands is not the same as with consumer brands and it is a complex issue. Anholt (2009) astutely observes that in branding a place or destination what is being promoted is essentially something that is not up for sale and often being targeted at consumers who most likely have little, or no interest. This points to the need for promotional messages to be tailored and targeted as specifically as possible to the intended audience.

Kotler and Gertner (2011) also note that previously run-down and depressing industrial cities have been revitalised and reinvented as leisure destinations and emerging nations are also increasingly attracting tourists, investment, highly skilled residents and international events. Countries and places across the world have increasingly seen themselves as brands and have pursued place marketing strategies to try to gain

a competitive advantage in a market place which offers consumers choices like never before. In a situation where competition is increasing and differentiation is becoming more difficult marketers of products, services and increasingly places have looked to branding as the means to effect differentiation and create value (Kotler and Getner, 2011).

Hospers (2007, p.3), seemingly no fan of place branding, which he describes as "the latest fad", notes that the terms, "place (or city or regional) marketing and branding" are used interchangeably although he asserts that they are subtly different concepts. The evidence from Google Scholar is that place branding is not a fad as this search engine recorded some 137,000 references to place branding between 2007 and October 2018. Place marketing and place branding are certainly different concepts although they are closely linked. For instance, it is eminently possible to market Cheshire although Cheshire would not necessarily be considered to be a brand as such.

Gertner (2011a) is critical of the comparative lack of a theoretical framework in the field of place marketing and place branding. Hanna and Rowley (2011) make a rare contribution to theory in highlighting six conceptual models of the place-branding process as well as providing their own strategic place brand-management model (the SPBM model). As the authors suggest this model might usefully be tested in a number of case-study contexts to explore its feasibility and adaptability. In a later work Hanna and Rowley (2014) argue that DMOs need adopt strategic approaches which embrace digital channels. In support of their argument they have developed a further theoretical framework and they have linked this to their SPBM model. Hanna and Rowley should

be applauded for their efforts to introduce theory into an academic field that is conspicuously lacking in it.

Building on Anholt's (2009) views regarding integrity and authenticity, Aitken and Campelo (2011) have articulated their four Rs of place branding; rights, roles, relationships and responsibilities. These, they assert, are the fundamental components of an authentic place brand. However, Aitken and Campelo's (2011) conclusions are based upon an ethnographic study of Chatham Islanders (New Zealand) and it may not be possible for the findings to be replicated elsewhere. To some extent this type of case study approach was what Gertner (2011a) was critical of when he called for more theory to be built that can be tested across different locations and in different situations.

Obstacles to place marketing are the subject of Eshuis, Braun and Klijn's (2013) research. They surveyed 274 managers involved in public sector place management in the Netherlands. They found that there were three chief obstacles to effective place marketing in the public sector. These were, administrative obstacles within the municipalities, opposition to developing the substance of marketing programmes and political obstacles. In seeking more participation from the private sector it may be that the UK Government Tourism Policy (Penrose, 2011) can address these obstacles to some extent although other different obstacles to progress may well occur. The implications of the Government Tourism Policy (Penrose, 2011) are a key element in this research so these findings are particularly interesting.

In a rare study which addressed practitioners perceptions of place branding, de Noronha, Coca-Stefaniak and Morrison (2017) found unanimity amongst their study participants over the strategic value of place branding but confusion over how it should best be practised. The participants in the study, who were described by the authors of the paper as 'place management professionals' were largely employed by Business Improvement Districts (BIDs), place branding consultancies and DMOs in the U.K and Eastern Ireland. It is not known if the study participants described themselves as 'place marketing professionals' but it seems unlikely that they did.

2.12 The value of destination and place marketing

Whilst it is relatively easy to attribute the growth of DMOs to increased globalisation and competitiveness in the world (Pike and Page, 2014), it is much less easy to evaluate the performance of DMOs and this is an underreported topic in the literature (Pike, 2016). The voice of the DMO has always been only one of many within a destination. Many private organisations also promote destinations even if only from the narrow perspective of their own commercial interests. Spending by private sector destinations on promotion is collectively likely to dwarf any similar expenditure made by the DMO. It is consequently difficult to quantify the DMO's contribution to economic development (Pike, 2016). In addition, the growth in social media, online travel agents and sites such as TripAdvisor have provided consumers with numerous other ways to access information about destinations that don't require them to visit the DMOs website or to read any of its published data. For DMOs these various factors have produced something of a relevance challenge.

Given the difficulties that DMOs have been experiencing over recent years one might have expected that international tourism might have suffered as a result. This was not the case however. In 2017 the U.K. hosted around 39 million international visitors and these visitors spent £24.5 billion in the U.K. These figures represent a record both in terms of the visitor numbers and their expenditure (visitbritain.org, 2018b). One could infer from this that DMOs need to direct their efforts towards international markets or one could equally conclude that, if these records were achieved when DMOs were facing financial and other constraints, how much do DMOs really contribute to visitor numbers? In actual fact, in the U.K. in 2017, foreign visitor spending was 16.9% of total visitor spending and domestic visitor spending amounted to 83.1% (Morrison, 2019). Having said that, some international markets offer great potential. For instance, Visit Britain reported that in 2016 China ranked number one in the world for international tourism expenditure and, in addition, Chinese visitors ranked Britain highly (third out of forty-nine countries) for tourism and culture (Visit Britain, 2018a).

On the subject of the value of destination and place marketing, Medway et al (2014) record an Oxford-style debate that took place on 2/8/14 at an American Marketing Association Conference in San Francisco. The title of the session was, 'Place branding: are we wasting our time?'. In support of the motion: 'Yes we are wasting our time', one team pointed to difficulties in applying conventional marketing concepts to places (Ashworth, 1993 cited in Medway et al, 2014, Kavaratzis, 2007 cited in Medway et al, 2014) and especially when it comes to branding. It was suggested that place branding happens anyway without the interventions of marketers and that the money could be better spent on actually improving the place (Elliot and Delpy Neirotti, 2008 cited in Medway et al, 2014, p. 64) rather than by trying to artificially create a

brand. It was argued that place brands are more likely to emerge as a naturally occurring co-creative process rather than as a managed process. This viewpoint draws on a social constructionist and phenomenological view of place (Cresswell, 2004, cited in Medway et al, 2014, p. 64). The team who advanced the alternative viewpoint 'No we are not wasting our time' made the observation that as there is competition amongst places to attract tourism, investment, residents and talented graduates etc. it is perfectly reasonable that place branding should occur to try to alter perceptions and especially negative ones. The team opposing the notion won the debate (this was not a particularly surprising outcome at a major academic conference about marketing) but team membership had been allocated randomly by the chair of the debate (Swanson) and the expressed opinions during the debate did not necessarily reflect the actual beliefs of the team members. The debate was conducted purely as an intellectual exercise in the interests of scholarship. Both teams tended to agree that much place branding activity today is wanting but they tended to disagree on what to do about it. One way forward might be to engage with stakeholders better in order to shape branding via a wider constituency which would involve a move away from the imposition of a brand in favour of brand 'curation' or stewardship.

2.13 Stakeholder engagement

One of the most pervading issues in the literature is that of stakeholder engagement. In the view of Hanna and Rowley (2011a), stakeholder engagement is at the heart of place branding and it is this component that distinguishes place branding from other forms of commercial branding. Many authors refer to stakeholders in connection with destinations, places and cities e.g. Braun, Kavaratzis and Zenker (2013), Cox and

Wray (2011), Elbe, Hallén and Axelsson (2009), Hankinson (2010), Hanna and Rowley (2011a), Horlings (2012), Kavaratzis and Hatch (2013), Kemp, Childers and Williams (2012), Klijn, Eshuis and Braun (2012), Lichrou, O'Malley and Patterson (2010) and McCamely, Gilmore and McCartan-Quinn (2011). Giles, Bosworth and Willett (2013) are notable for avoiding the use of the term 'stakeholder' although they are concerned with essentially the same broad subject area. They refer instead to business owners. Zach (2012) does use the term 'stakeholder' but refers much more often to 'partners' although it is not exactly clear whether these terms have the same or a similar meaning in this context. Some of the topics that are developed within the stakeholder theme are the need for stakeholders to act collectively and cooperatively (Cox and Wray, 2011), the importance of stakeholder involvement (Hankinson, 2010, Kemp, Childers and Williams, 2012, Klijn, Eshuis and Braun, 2012), mobilising the resources of stakeholders (Elbe, Hallén and Axelsson, 2009), the fit between marketing communications and the perceptions of business owners (Giles, Bosworth and Willett, 2013), partnership and innovation (Zach, 2012) and the role(s) of residents (Braun, Kavaratzis and Zenker, 2013). Care and selectivity is required when choosing what to say about a place in branding terms. It is also important to consider who is going to receive the message. Russell et al (2014) have shown how messages that promote a place's historical character can be at odds with the needs of the same place's forward-thinking business stakeholders. This is a dilemma for Chester, the historical capital of Cheshire. Promotional messages should be delivered with 'style, clarity of, and economy of language, if you are going to describe it in ways that will catch and hold interest, be memorable and be action orientated' (Allan, 2011, p. 82). In order to obtain the required simplicity and clarity in promotional message there needs to be agreement amongst the destination brand's key stakeholders.

The success of place brands is determined by the degree of engagement of the organisations and people who provide the principal services and experiences that the place offers since these organisations and people are the key stakeholders in the place and they are heavily invested in what the place has to offer. Therefore, successful place brands are built by the key stakeholders of the place acting together in partnership (Allan, 2011). As Kotler and Gertner (2011) note consumers are likely to expect to pay less for unbranded products and more for products that they perceive to possess brand equity; brands can engender customer loyalty and customer preferences and they can produce financial gains.

Since the concept was first introduced by Vargo and Lusch (2004), Service - Dominant Logic (SDL), has exerted a considerable influence over marketing theory despite the fact that it has not been uncritically accepted by all scholars. Warnaby and Medway (2015) have applied SDL to the practice of place marketing. One of the principal characteristics of the marketing of places is the presence of a large number of stakeholders from the public, the private and the voluntary sectors. Satisfying the needs of these disparate stakeholders requires an inclusive and consensual approach. This requirement becomes increasingly more important in situations where resources e.g. finance are restricted. Although Warnaby and Medway (2015) argue that is possible to apply almost all the tenets of SDL to place marketing they see a paradox between the top-down marketing approaches practised by DMOs and the co-creativity (in brand creation) which is emphasised in SDL. The key stakeholders in a place need to work in close partnership with each other in order to realise the potential of the place and to develop a brand that encapsulates the essence of the place. This requires a

particular form of leadership which often comes from elected mayors, politicians and other leaders who have the capacity to influence what others think about the place. One thinks of the mayors of cities like London, New York, Manchester and Liverpool. The words and actions of such people can either attract or discourage potential visitors, residents, investors and students alike (Allan, 2011).

Pine and Gilmore (1999) coined the term, 'the experience economy' with their book, T*he Experience Economy: Work Is Theatre and Every Business Is a Stage.* The authors make the point that the developed world is moving from a service-based to an experience-based economy and that the way to engage customers is to actively offer them experiences rather than mere services and advocate that organisations should spend less of their marketing budgets on advertising and more on creating experiences for them and on staging events (Pine and Glimore, 2004). This concept appears to have a natural affinity with the tourism sector and Morgan, Elbe and de Esteban Curiel (2009) undertook a study investigating the feasibility of using the concept of experiential marketing to inform marketing and management strategies. Their aim was to explore the extent to which destination managers had been influenced by the extant literature on experiential marketing; in terms of the perceptions of those managers of what their customers wanted and of the influence of experiential marketing on their strategic thinking. The views of senior destination managers were sampled in three destinations that had previously relied on traditional offerings but which were now faced with a challenging and changing macro-environment. The selected destinations were Bournemouth (a seaside resort) in England, Siljan (an inland, rural resort) in Sweden and Alcala de Henares (an urban cultural destination) in Spain. Morgan, Elbe and de Esteban Curiel (2009) found that

amongst the senior managers who were sampled there was evidence of a different approach to the understanding of customer needs and there was also evidence that flagship projects were being initiated and events were being developed to offer consumers new experiences in response to changes in customer preferences. However, respondents expressed some scepticism over the limitations of experienced-based strategies as a longer term panacea and also felt that the private sector in their destinations was not making sufficient progress in introducing incremental, small but innovative experiences for their customers. Morgan, Elbe and de Esteban Curiel (2009) note that much of the discussion of experiential marketing cites very large enterprises such as Disney and Starbucks but the tourism sector is characterised by a plethora of micro-businesses who do not possess the time or resources to invest in creating experiences on a necessary scale. This is a valid point but many cities have developed valuable tourism offerings through the staging of events and by offering tourists an experience rather than a standard product. Edinburgh is a prime example of this as is Liverpool (Brown, 2017). Kotler and Gertner (2011) draw parallels between the burgeoning global competition that now exists between suppliers of products and services and the competition that exists amongst and between places over tourism revenue, commercial investment, attracting well-educated and trained residents and over the staging of events.

Business events and business tourists are also big business (Rogers and Davidson, 2016). Liverpool's Arena and Conference Centre (ACC) required an investment of £164 million which was met by five funding partners; the EU, English Partnerships, the North-West Development Association, Liverpool Vision and Liverpool City Council. A cumulative return on this investment of £6.6 million was anticipated after 5 years but the actual figure was £15.5 million. Over the ten years from when it opened in 2008

until 2018 the economic contribution of the ACC to the local economy of Liverpool City Region was £1.4 billion (Lechthaller, 2018). The ACC has positioned Liverpool amongst the largest European venues for conferences (Lechthaler, 2016). Cheshire and Warrington could learn from this and promote the sub-region more as a destination for business events especially if they focused on niche areas associated with industrial sectors that are well represented in Cheshire and Warrington such as the nuclear and automotive industries.

In the current era stakeholders are demanding greater value from public budgets and successful destinations need to devise creative ways of developing their reputations via the increasingly important events sector (as cited before, Liverpool is a good example of a city that has used events to build its visitor economy), by aligning with contemporary culture and digital platforms, by the delivery of distinctive individual experiences and by positively utilising the expressed views of tourists, residents and other stakeholders (Morgan, Pritchard and Pride, 2011, Scott et al, 2018). Such events can include smaller participatory sports events (Kennelly, 2017), major sports events (Ulvnes and Solberg, 2016), music events (Arnegger and Herz, 2016) conferences, conventions and business events (Rogers and Davidson, 2016) and a whole host of other kinds of events. In addition, a number of destinations are seeking to integrate their attractiveness holistically across the visit, live, study and invest agenda and this requires the development of strong stakeholder partnerships across the public and private sectors (Morgan, Pritchard and Pride, 2011). Individuals are also becoming increasing aware that the reputation of the place where they live matters to them. This is manifested in the way that the place is administered and governed, in the extent to which resident's opinions are canvassed and in how the

place interacts with its residents and shares their values and aspirations. Private companies and other organisations are also becoming more and more concerned with the reputations and identities of the places where they choose to locate as they reflect organisational values and affect recruitment and retention (Allan, 2011).

Additionally, according to Florida (2003) when considering the USA, what he terms as the creative class is an important aspect. This group represents "30% or 38.3 million of the US population" (Florida, 2003, p.8) and he notes that: "the creative class is the most influential and its members earn nearly twice as much as the other two classes (working class and service class). The core of the class includes people in science and engineering, architecture and design, education, arts, music and entertainment around the core, the Creative Class also includes a broader group of professionals in business and finance, law, healthcare and related fields" (Florida, 2003, p.8). If Florida's analysis is correct, destinations like Cheshire and Warrington need to attract members of the creative class in order to be economically successful and the creative class may represent a key target market for Marketing Cheshire.

Hanna and Rowley (2012) have noted that much of the academic literature surrounding the subject of place branding has neglected to take account of the views of practitioners. Consequently, Hanna and Rowley (2012) asked 15 UK practitioners to describe what they understood by the term 'place brand management'. The study makes a valuable contribution by canvassing the opinions of a critical but neglected group however, the term 'place brand management' may have more meaning in academic circles than it does amongst practitioners. If the practitioners had been asked, 'What business they were in, would they have answered 'place brand

management'? Would the organisations that they worked for have described themselves on their websites as being engaged in 'place brand management'? This research does attempt to bridge the gap between academia and the practitioner world but could it have gone further? Moreover, Zenker and Beckman (2013) looked at the differing perceptions of Hamburg of two target groups and concluded that there was a need for more differentiated brand communication in order to meet the needs of the different target groups. Russell et al (2014) also found tensions and conflicts between the local public and private sectors perceptions of how a place should be promoted in a UK based case study. Consumers, in the form of shoppers, can be crucially important stakeholders in many destinations but as Teller et al (2010) have shown, place users perceptions have not received as much attention in the literature compared with more strategic considerations.

In Dinnie's (2011) view, a key challenge, from an ethical perspective, for a DMO is to ensure that all legitimate stakeholders have a voice in the development of place marketing and place branding strategy. In situations where an insufficiently inclusive approach is adopted the strategy may be ignored by disaffected stakeholders and even sabotaged. On the other hand, if an excessively inclusive approach is adopted, a DMO may be paralysed into inertia as competing actors seek to prioritise their own agendas.

Mendelow (1981) devised a way of classifying and mapping stakeholders diagrammatically which is known as Mendelow's Power/Interest Matrix. In this matrix stakeholders are ascribed to one of four quadrants on the basis of the power and

interest that they wield. Each of the quadrants is associated with a particular strategic approach.

- High power, high interest – these are known as key stakeholders and they need to be engaged fully. Every effort must be expended on satisfying this group.

- High power, low interest – this group should receive an adequate amount of attention for them to remain satisfied but not so much as to bore them with the message.

- Low power, high interest – ensure that this group is communicated with regularly and is not alienated

- Low power, low interest – this group are still stakeholders and as such they need to be kept informed. Their views should be monitored

Key stakeholders are very important to the organisation which is being analysed, so much, so that without them the organisation may not be able to continue to exist. They are not generally replaceable and there is no substitute for their existence (Mendelow,1981). Servicing this group requires the organisation's greatest attention and their opinions and perceptions of the organisation hold a business critical dimension for that organisation. In Mendelow's Power/Interest matrix below the key stakeholders occupy the top right quadrant. This group have a business critical role and they need to be managed closely.

Stakeholder relations are particularly important to DMOs as their function is predicated on commitment and buy-in from their key stakeholders. The views of this group about their local DMO and their attitudes towards it are of paramount importance.
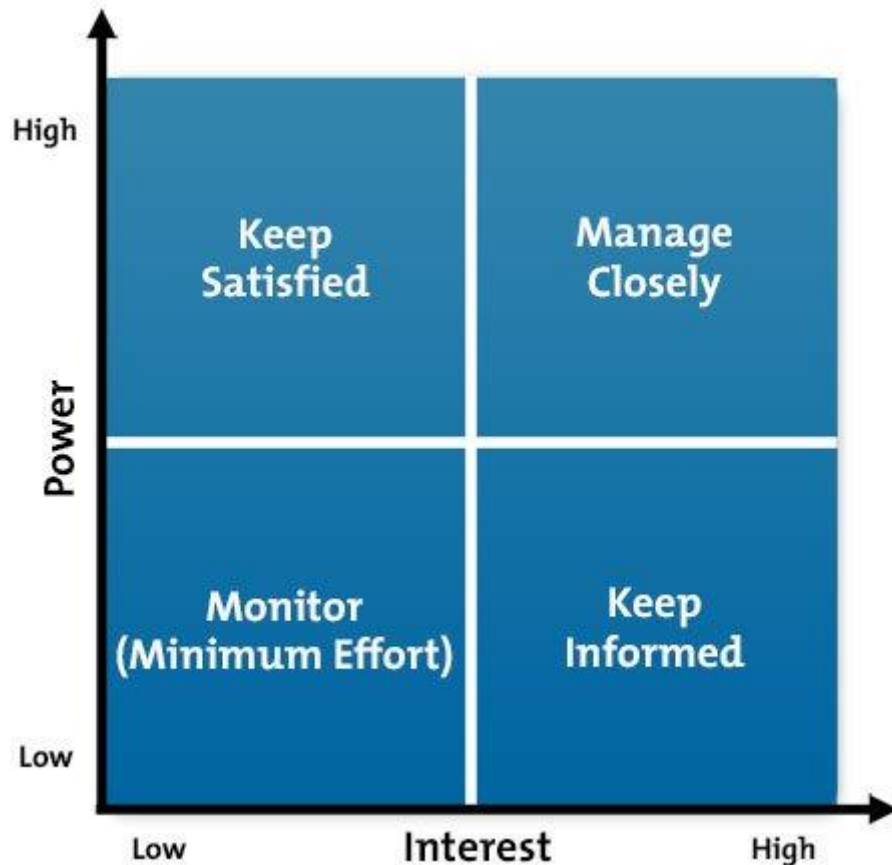
Figure 3 - Mendelow's Power/Interest Matrix (Thompson, R. mindtools.com)

The role of stakeholders is particularly important in the context of the current study. Successful DMOs operate in partnership with their key stakeholders and when faced with a rapidly changing business environment it is essential for DMOs to take due account of the views of their key stakeholders. This study places a lot of emphasis on interrogating the views and perceptions of Marketing Cheshire's key stakeholders.

2.14 Digital marketing

One of the most profound changes that all marketers have faced in recent years has been brought about by the growth in digital channels. This has caused a fundamental shift in customer behaviour because it has created a proliferation of online platforms such as social media that enable consumers to publicly voice their opinions. These platforms have effected a large-scale change in the power relationship between

consumers and brands by enabling consumers to exert much more influence over the way that the brand is presented in the public arena (Munro and Richards, 2011, Yeoman and McMahon-Beattie, 2011, Sevin, 2013, Fortezza and Pencarelli 2015, Oliveira and Panyik 2015, Roque and Rapuso 2016, Li, Robinson and Oriadne, 2017, Scott et al, 2017a, Fortezza and Pencarelli, 2018). The recommendations of friends are often quoted as being the most influential determining factor in decisions over where to go on holiday and online recommendations figure very prominently in such decisions (Munro and Richards, 2011). According to Munro and Richards (2011) user-generated content (UGC) has become so important because people trust their perceived peers much more than they trust corporate messages. This distrust of corporate messages has been growing over the years (Yeoman and McMahon-Beattie, 2011). Through the analysis of big data relating to Vienna and Barcelona respectively, Költringer and Dickinger (2015) and Marine-Roig and Clavé (2015) have shown that the analysis of UGC can offer a rich resource which can inform destination branding, positioning and marketing strategy. Whereas previously organisations promoted their products by exposing their target markets (if they could identify them precisely enough) to the messages that they wanted to convey; the tendency now is for the target market to take increased control over their relationship with the product or brand by airing their views online and contributing to the product or brand's reputation or detracting from it in the eyes of other potential consumers (Munro and Richards, 2011, Andéhn, et al, 2014). Fortezza and Pencarelli (2015) make the important point that DMOs have to address a complication that is not an issue for most other organisations in that they need to chime their communications messages with the promotional content that is generated by a whole host of private organisations who are promoting their own products and services within the destination. This is a key

feature of the role of a DMO and if it is not achieved well mixed messages may be the result. In some respects, the best hope for organisations now is merely to be able to influence the online conversations that are taking place about their brands. This in turn poses questions over the continued relevance of destination marketing organisations as we know them today.

Sevin (2013) conducted an analysis into the ways in which Twitter was used to promote destination marketing campaigns associated with Illinois, San Francisco, Idaho, Texas and Milwaukee. The study was concerned with both one-way and two-way communication and it was linked to Kavaratzis' (2004) publication on place image communication. Sevin (2013) found that the majority (64%) of the tweets from the DMOs in his study did not attempt to engage in online conversations and that they merely broadcast information. Kavaratzis (2004) argues that there are three different forms of communication that can augment the image of a place. He terms these Primary, Secondary and Tertiary communication. Primary communication relates primarily to infrastructure development and to the effectiveness of the local municipality. Secondary communication refers to the active and formal communication that the destination engages in and tertiary communication is communication about the destination by third parties. Although Twitter can embrace secondary and tertiary communication, by their largely broadcast activity on Twitter the DMOs in question did not exploit all the opportunities that were available to them on the platform.

Andéhn et al (2014) analysed data posted on Twitter about Stockholm over a 3-month period in an attempt to measure variations in brand image over time. They found that

some events such as a Justin Bieber concert generated a great deal of content on Twitter but were transient in their overall contribution to brand equity. Kotler and Gertner (2011) believe that with each mention of the name of a place an opportunity exists to add to or subtract value from the brand equity of the place. This concept has clear resonance with Jan Carlzon's (1987) Moment's of Truth. In this seminal volume on customer satisfaction Carlzon, who was Chief Executive of Scandinavian Air Services (SAS) said that: "Last year each of our ten million customers came in contact with approximately five SAS employees, and this contact lasted an average of 15 seconds each time. Thus, SAS is 'created' 50 million times a year, 15 seconds at a time. These 50 million 'moments of truth' are the moments that ultimately determine whether SAS will succeed or fail as a company. They are the moments when we must prove to our customers that SAS is their best alternative". (Carlzon, 1987, p. 3). According to Kotler and Gertner (2011), on this basis, a sub-region like Cheshire and Warrington has very many opportunities every year to either enhance or subtract from its brand equity whenever it is mentioned online or in other media.

Roque and Rapuso (2016) compared social media activity of NTOs (although they refer to them as DMOs) from 5 continents – South Africa, Brazil, Malaysia, Portugal, Spain, France, UK, Norway, Austria, Germany, Greece, Italy and Australia and found that different countries' NTOs use different social media platforms e.g. Italy (Twitter, Facebook, Google+, YouTube, Foursquare), UK (Twitter, Facebook, Flickr, YouTube, Pinterest), Australia (Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Pinterest). They used the Alexa index to measure the popularity of DMO websites (which only measures traffic to the website to produce a ranking) and showed that Australian website (www.australia.com), cited in Roque and Raposo, p. 68) was the most popular

website and the Australian NTO stood out by its ability to exploit the communication opportunities that social media offers. Facebook, Twitter and YouTube were the social media that were most used by the NTOs in the sample to communicate with their target markets. However, a weakness of the study of Roque and Rapuso (2016) is that qualitative data was not collected so that effectiveness could be better analysed – the measurement of traffic to the website was a rather crude measure.

Fortezza and Pencarelli (2015) make the important point that DMOs have to address a complication that is not an issue for most other organisations in that they need to chime their communications messages with the promotional content that is generated by a whole host of private organisations who are promoting their own products and services within the destination. This is a key feature of the role of a DMO and if it is not achieved well mixed messages may be the result. Oliveira and Panyik (2015) noted that two countries- Tourism Australia and VisitSweden - are examples of NTOs who are successful in using social media to build their online presence. They advocated an integrated strategic approach rather than a half-hearted attempt to merely digitalise existing straplines and logos and co-creation of content is seen as the way ahead in destination branding.

It has been shown that the analysis of UGC can offer a rich resource which can inform destination branding, positioning and marketing_strategy. Marine-Roig and Clavé (2015) conducted a big data analysis of the over 100,000 travel blogs and online travel reviews contributed by tourists in English about Barcelona over a period of ten years. Despite the fact that Barcelona is a leading 'smart city', which is a designation that the city would like to promote, the term 'smart city' was not mentioned in a single one of

the over 100,000 travel blogs. Költringer and Dickinger (2015) contrasted three different sources of information about Vienna using a data mining approach. The three sources were UGC, promotional material from DMO websites and content produced by the Anglo-American news media. Költringer and Dickinger (2015) found that these three different information sources tended to focus on different things but there was a crossover when it came to dominant themes. Given the number of individual authors it was not surprising that the richest and most diverse source of online information about Vienna was the UGC. The DMO content tended to focus on Vienna's major sights and cultural attractions whilst the Anglo-American news media were mainly concerned with themes with international appeal. Interestingly the UGC contained more references to transport and accommodation than the other two sources and this may reflect what tourists are really interested in. It seems that by paying close attention to UGC, DMOs may be better able to serve the actual needs of tourists and other visitors. In addition, the longitudinal monitoring of online visitor sentiment could inform the effectiveness of destination branding and promotional campaigns over time. Mundy and Pike (2011) have shown that more engagement from DMOs with regards to the perceptions of previous visitors could be beneficial in attracting new visitors.

2.15 DMOs and some of Europe's most popular tourist destinations

Gómez et al (2018) undertook a study of the city branding of five top European capitals from a visitor perspective. The cities were Berlin, London, Madrid Paris and Rome. Using the measure that the authors' devised (the City Branding Index) the capital cities with the highest brand equity were London, Paris, Berlin, Rome and Madrid. Interestingly, Rome and Venice are not served by DMOs (Heeley, 2015). As these are anyway two of the world's most popular tourism destinations it could easily be

argued that they do not need the services of a DMO. However, Venice has recently been warned that it will be placed on the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's (UNESCO's) list of endangered heritage sites if it does not ban visits by large cruise ships to the Venice lagoon by February 2017. UNESCO's world heritage committee has expressed "extreme concern" over the damage which is being caused to the lagoon and over the "lack of architectural and town planning coherence" (McKenna, 2016, p.19). Venice currently hosts almost 30 million tourists per annum (McKenna, 2016) and bitter debate has raged between environmentalists and the tourism industry over the best measures to protect the city. It is argued that Venice does not need to be promoted further and indeed further promotion of the city might well have harmful consequences., However the marketing of the city in the true sense of the word marketing could certainly be improved and there is a strong argument in favour of Venice being represented by a destination management agency with genuine powers to influence and possibly to bridle unrestricted tourism development. In very popular destinations the environment, whether it be architectural or natural that the visitors are seeking to consume, can be irretrievably damaged by their very presence. In the case of Venice and destinations like it there may even be justification for the de-marketing of the city to actively discourage further visitors (Medway, Warnaby and Dharni, 2010).

According to Frans van der Avert, Chief Executive of Amsterdam Marketing, Amsterdam has around 800,000 residents but it attracts about 18,000,000 tourists every year (van der Avert, 2018). The presence of so many tourists has caused friction with many of the residents. The residents are permitted to vote for local politicians but the tourists have no votes. This has meant that Amsterdam's local politicians have to

listen to the voice of the residents if they want to be elected. As a result, Amsterdam Marketing no longer seeks to attract more visitors to the city and instead seeks to manage visitor numbers over the course of the year (van der Avert, 2018).

Occasionally a form of de-marketing is practised in England. In the hot summer of 2018 many visitors were descending on a relatively small number of Cornish beaches and Malcolm Bell, Chief Executive of Visit Cornwall, appeared on BBC Television and BBC Radio Cornwall and announced that some of Cornwall's most idyllic beauty spots were no longer being advertised in an attempt to prevent overcrowding and to allow the residents to live more peaceful lives (BBC News, 2018b).

2.16 Brexit

The impending political changes with U.K leaving the European Union received much coverage in the media prior to the referendum which canvassed the public's view on this subject in June 2016 (BBC News, 2018a). Since the referendum, when the public voted narrowly in favour of Brexit (British exit) or, more accurately, the U.K.'s exit from the European Union, all forms of media have been dominated by the topic. At the time of writing (February, 2019) the U.K. is set to leave the European Union on 29th March 2019 (BBC News, 2018a). However, the terms of the 'divorce agreement' have yet to be ratified by Parliament and there remains some considerable doubt over whether they will be ratified. A rejection of the proposals by Parliament could result in a second referendum, a 'no-deal Brexit' or some other outcome. Brexit remains a matter of the upmost economic and political significance for the U.K. (and potentially much of the rest of the world) but it is attended by a great deal of uncertainty regarding its

outcomes. Brexit is bound to impact significantly on English DMOs but at the present time it is not possible to predict what specific effect it will have.

Philip Cox, Chief Executive of Cheshire and Warrington LEP addressed the impact of Brexit on the Cheshire and Warrington sub-region in a presentation in October 2017. Cox (2017) reported that at that point in time the immediate impact of the referendum vote had been negligible in Cheshire and Warrington. Cox reported that in 2017 the Cheshire and Warrington economy was in a very healthy state. Businesses were apparently more worried about red tape and transport congestion than they were about Brexit. There were no fundamental problems with the Cheshire and Warrington economy however future challenges were expected. Cox reported on some of the key economic sectors in the sub-region. Financial services in Cheshire and Warrington were more exposed to general economic trends than to Brexit. The nuclear industry, which has an internationally significant presence in Warrington (Warrington & Co., 2019) was concerned that it might experience challenges in the recruitment of skilled staff in the light of Brexit. The automotive industry, represented in the Cheshire and Warrington sub-region by Vauxhall and Bentley, was heavily dependent on the outcome of the Brexit negotiations. Otherwise it seemed that some industries might benefit from Brexit whilst others would not. Change though, was inevitable and there would be casualties (Cox, 2017). However, Brexit manifests itself it does seem clear that the U.K. will need to market its products and services with renewed vigour in both existing markets and in new ones. This should create opportunities for DMOs. For instance, in 2017, the U.K. welcomed around 39 million international visitors who spent £24.5 billion (Visit Britain, 2018b). This constituted a record number of visitors and a record expenditure. These figures strongly suggest that DMOs should direct their

attention to international visitors particularly in destinations where tourism is a significant factor in the local economy.

The topic of Brexit is a rare feature in the academic literature about destinations and place and city branding. This is probably because the topic is relatively new and it has yet to emerge to any significant extent in peer-reviewed journals as they cannot follow current events too closely as a result of the review and editorial processes that they are subject too. A rare reference to Brexit occurs in Hassen and Giovanardi (2018) in which the authors express a fear that Brexit may have the effect of compromising the city of Leicester's multicultural image and render it less attractive to migrants and potential residents from abroad.

2.17 DMO governance

As indicated above, Heeley (2015), argues that what he terms 'urban destination marketing' began with the work of Richard 'Beau' Nash in Bath in 1705, with records showing that for the first two and a half centuries of its practice up until 1955 it was largely a function of local government because there was ostensibly little prospect of a return to attract private investment. In 1955 the Vienna Tourist Board was established as a public-private partnership (PPP) and from the end of the 1970s onwards this form of governance spread throughout Europe. The destinations that these organisations serve include the great capitals of Europe, resort destinations, regenerated industrial cities and centres of culture and heritage. According to Heeley (2015) currently around half of the urban DMOs in Europe are PPPs and the remaining half are local government entities.

Noting the shift in consumer power as a result of social media and other interventions, Morgan, Pritchard and Power (2011) observed that DMOs have little or no control over elements such as product, the image, story, the media, or the message and that the reputation of a place or destination exists whatever its DMO, whether or not it actually has a DMO. Dinnie (2011), in considering the issue of applying branding techniques to places, highlighted two key issues. First, there is the question over who is entitled to act as the destination brand manager and secondly there is the issue over who can legitimately determine the brand values that are going to provide the foundation for the destination brand strategy. Both issues require careful attention as acting without a proper mandate over these factors could alienate stakeholders and lead to a breakdown of the strategy (Dinnie, 2011). As Allan (2011) notes, place branding should not ordinarily be the province of just one stakeholder, for example, the local or national government. It is most effective when the key stakeholders of a place can be brought together to work in concert to plan and manage their interests in the destination, to develop the destination's offer and the experience that they want people to have there. Although these key stakeholders will have specific and different areas of interest what unites them is a desire to see the destination succeed and they have a collective interest in this objective.

However, as Morgan, Pritchard and Pride, (2011) observe, the communities, stakeholders, and leaders involved in any place or destination can still formulate a vision of how they want to see it and how they want it to be seen; brand management can enable its key stakeholders to achieve this vision, attain differentiation, and secure a competitive identity. In this sense, DMOs remain responsible for the *management* and *stewardship* of destination reputations. Indeed, Anholt (2011) argues that responsible bodies such as governments and regional administrations have a duty to

investigate what the wider world thinks of the place that they are responsible for and then need to develop strategies to manage the reputation of the place so that the external perception of the place is consistent with its attributes and values.

Over the last few years DMOs have been subject to considerable scrutiny. The reputation of a place derives from many different sources and the activities of the DMO are only one of these many sources. A destination's offer is usually complex: it may be built on a number of discrete factors such as the products and services on offer, distinctive architecture or physical features, festivals and events, historical associations and all the varied influences that can contribute to a distinctive patterns of local culture. Place branding involves taking all these factors into account and distilling them into some representative form of sense-making of the place for those who know it and those who do not (Allan, 2011). DMOs have relatively little real control over the places they represent and they do not own the destination. However, as Dinnie (2011) noted, branding a destination is an activity that can be seen to be highly political, requiring those involved in destination brand management to have or quickly gain skills in areas such as negotiation, change management and conflict resolution. Dinnie (2011) also opined that this skillset in itself was not sufficient but had to be underpinned by a sound understanding of the need to managing the brand of the destination in such a way that there was a clear and sustainable development plan and strategy. Various authors note that in a world in which social media plays a dominant role the consumer is increasingly becoming the main protagonist in shaping the reputation of places. DMOs never did control their product but now they even have limited control over the message and their best hope may be to influence the online

conversations about their destinations (Epperson, 2009, Morgan, Pritchard and Pride, 2011, Scott et al, 2017a).

According to Pike (2016) there has been little research into the extent to which DMOs have built a destination's brand equity and the monitoring of brand performance in terms of brand salience (strength of the brand in the consumer's mind), brand image and brand loyalty could help DMOs to demonstrate progress in terms of the achievement of the goals that they set themselves. Heeley has detected a three-decade long trend towards the PPP model amongst DMOs (Heeley, 2015). This form of organisational structure has enabled DMOs to adopt a more commercial approach and a culture that is orientated towards the achievement of results.

The measurement of DMO performance is one of the most challenging facets of this sector and yet it receives little coverage in the extant academic literature. DMO promotional activity is often dwarfed in comparison with private sector promotion within the same destination so it is problematic to ascribe return on investment (ROI) to DMO activity. Consequently, it has been suggested that DMOs measure what can be measured rather than what should be measured (Pike, 2016). Zenker and Martin (2011) note that there is the need for place marketing organisations to be able to measure to what extent they are being successful in meeting their objectives, recognising that different target groups have different wants and needs. Gómez et al (2018) are unusual in that they actually offer a measurement model (the City Brand Index) which the authors use to compare the brand equity of five European capitals; Berlin, London, Madrid, Paris and Rome.

According to Allan (2011) there are certain principles on which place brand leadership should be founded. These are:

- No single, powerful local leader should dominate the agenda and place brand leadership should be a joint venture emanating from the interactions of all stakeholders.

- The brand vision should emerge from genuine dialogue between the stakeholders

- Place brand partnerships (e.g.DMOs) should be led by someone with skills in relationship building, in partnership working and who has strong negotiation skills.

- Stakeholder partnerships need to be prepared to work in new and innovative ways to achieve the common good and partisan views may need to be set aside in order to achieve a shared goal.

- Stakeholder partnerships need to operate in an atmosphere of trust and in a spirit of reciprocity.

- Brand partners need to make an effort to break down any prejudices and barriers between themselves and to foster an ethos of accountability.

As Allan (2011, p. 82) states, in words that parody a familiar saying attributed to Abraham Lincoln: "You cannot describe everything about your place and all that it offers to all people, everywhere, all of the time". Place branding can be seen to be a reductive process which, if it is done well, can help potential visitors, students, investors and residents to better understand a place and its various offerings. This has resonance with Anholt's statement: "When you haven't got time to read a book, you judge it by its cover" (Anholt, 2011, p.22).

Prior to the development of a new destination brand strategy Stubbs (2011) advocates a destination brand audit to establish the current position. Such an audit should enable an accurate assessment to emerge of where the brand is now. Before developing any strategy, it is important to ask, 'Where are we now?' and to answer that question comprehensively and accurately. Once the first question has been answered the next question that should be asked is, 'Where do we want to get to?' This latter question should be accompanied by a time scale of, say, five years. The emergent strategy should address the gap between the current position and the future objective and progress towards the objective should assessed periodically over time.

In recent times, a greater onus has been placed on DMOs to justify their existence and the ability to demonstrate value for money is paramount in attracting private funding and in justifying contributions from the public sector. Pike (2016) advocates that DMOs should use consumer-based brand equity (CBBE) metrics to monitor performance and he sees the following advantages for DMOs.

1. The opportunity to measure the effectiveness of previous marketing communications
2. The provision of future performance indicators
3. Better stakeholder accountability as a result of providing linkages between marketing objectives and actual performance

2.18 DMO finance

Fyall (2011a) wrote prophetically about what he saw as one of the most notable challenges facing DMOs: that of diminishing public sector funding. He envisaged this factor to represent a particularly important driver for change (Fyall, 2011a, with the capacity to alter the way that destinations are perceived by the public and by organisations. In Fyall's (2011a) view the public funding challenges would force DMOs to review their previous practices and encourage more radical and innovative approaches to partnership.

Although DMO finance and funding is something of a neglected area within the literature given the profound reduction in public sector funding, one author who does refer to DMO funding in some detail is Pike (2016). Pike recognises the importance of funding when he states that, 'Funding is a critical issue for DMOs. In fact, for any marketing organisation without products or services of its own to gain sales revenue, it is arguably the most important consideration' (Pike, 2016, p. 53). Pike (2016) argues that the DMO funding problem is a global one and apart from the UK he provides examples from Australia, Canada and the USA. Other authors such as Coles, Dinan and Hutchison (2014) examine the ways in which changing government policy decisions have impacted on DMO funding in England. Heeley (2015) does refer to DMO finance but the main theme of his work is to argue that there is too little differentiation and too much similarity in the ways in which DMOs promote their destinations.

A survey undertaken by European Cities Marketing (ECM) in 2011 found four different levels of DMO funding amongst a membership which is "made up mainly of larger

cities and towns" (Heeley, 2015, p.36). The ECM survey found that 39% of its member organisations were comprised of town and city government based DMOs, whilst the 61% remainder were public private partnership (PPP) organisations (Heeley, 2015). At the highest level the survey found annual budgets in excess of €20 million e.g. Gothenburg and Vienna. A secondary group reported annual budgets of between €10 million and €19 million (Copenhagen, Lisbon, Brussels and Paris). A third group had annual budgets of between €5 million and €10 million (Amsterdam, Barcelona, Geneva, Lucerne, Luxembourg, Lyon, Oslo, Stockholm and Stuttgart). 'The remaining 59% of the sample' operated with annual budgets of less than €5 million (Heeley, 2015, p.36). As the membership of ECM is generally composed of larger cities and towns it is perhaps not surprising that Heeley (2015) believes that the vast majority of urban DMOs in England have annual operating budgets of less than €1 million.

Within the ECM survey the DMOs received an average of 48% funding from public sources in 2010. A previous survey in 2003 produced a comparable figure of 65% which indicates a long term trend away from public funding in favour of private sector revenue streams. (Heeley, 2015).

The 2011 survey revealed a very considerable variation in the proportion of total expenditure that was consumed by operating costs ranging from 14% (Dijon) to 80% (Lisbon). On average in the 2010 ECM survey DMOs "that were branches of city government received nearly three-quarters (69%) of their funding from the public sector, whereas for PPPs the comparable figure was less than half (43%)" (Heeley, p.36). The survey found that some PPPs were able to generate substantial private sector income. For every €1 of public funding (from the city council and chamber of

commerce), Barcelona Tourism secured €32 of commercial income largely from sales at tourism information centres, souvenir shops and bus services for tourists. DMOs in Bergen, Oslo and York have also demonstrated an ability to generate commercial revenue to the extent that such sources generate "95%, 74% and 72% respectively of their annual gross incomes" (Heeley, 2015, p.37). The ratio of operating costs to marketing budget is an important metric of organisational effectiveness but it is not the only important measure. The return on the marketing spend is also a critically important measure of organisational effectiveness.

The ECM survey reported that on average salaries and other overheads consumed a little over half (52%) of DMO expenditure. The remaining 48% represented the proportion of gross expenditure that was available to spend on actually marketing the destination. This 52:48 ratio of operating costs to marketing budget compared with the 46:54 ratio that was reported in 2003 (Heeley, 2015).

In some instances, the cut in public funding has been dramatic. For example, Visit York is heavily reliant on commercial revenue and in 2011/12 some 80% of its annual £1.7 million revenue had been budgeted to be generated from this source. In the event commercial revenue produced a shortfall of £98,000 against budget which resulted in a trading deficit of £67,000. The unfortunate consequence of this was a reduction in staff numbers. Marketing Cheshire suffered a 90% reduction in its public sector funding between 2011 and 2014 such that public sector funding reduced to only about 20% of its annual income. This reduction in public funding resulted in a consequent 30% reduction in staff costs during the operating year 2013/14 (Heeley, 2011).

The extant literature contains relatively little coverage of DMO funding particularly in England since the introduction and implementation of the Government Tourism Policy 2011 (Penrose, 2011). One of the main thrusts of this document was to signal a dramatic reduction of public sector funding of tourism coupled with a desire to see the private sector fill the funding gap thus created. In a publication dating from the year before the publication of the Government Tourism Policy (Penrose, 2011), Fyall, Fletcher and Spyriadis, (2010, p.25) state that:

> Furthermore, the view that tourism is a mature industry and in that sense requires no financial support from the public sector is a view that to date has not led to any DMOs being funded solely from private sector funds anywhere in the world. For this reason alone, economically self-sustaining DMOs remain a utopian ideal.

Today, almost a decade on, as public sector funding has reduced and disappeared altogether in some places, such a position might now be contested by some organisations. These could include Marketing Shropshire and Visit Cornwall who both claim to operate independently and without local authority funding and who have traded successfully for several years now.

In the year that the UK's Government Tourism Policy was published, Morgan, Pritchard and Pride (2011, p. 67) wrote:

> Those who are responsible for marketing tourism places face considerable challenges today. It is a very tough operating environment. Consumer confidence is fragile and many of the world's more economically developed economies have seen market failures, recession, and weak economic confidence, while threats to political stability, peace, and the environment are continuing global concerns. In this environment, DMOs face serious challenges and their cost, relevance, and value-for-money are under extreme scrutiny.

In addition to the reduction in public funding of DMOs, the UK government's austerity measures and its ideological commitment to a reduction in the role, size and influence

of the state also resulted in deep cuts to the national tourism organisation's funding. Consequently, Visit Britain, the NTO, experienced a 58% drop in its budget from £73.9 million in 2011-12 to £43.6 million in 2014-15 (Kennel and Chaperon, 2014).

2.19 Threats to funding

This thesis came about as a result of the implementation of Government Tourism Policy (Penrose, 2011). This document heralded a gradual and progressive move away from the public sector funding of DMOs with the expectation that the private sector would fill the funding gap that would be created with the reduction in public sector funding. The new policy begged the question of whether or not the private sector was both willing and able to fill the gap.

The introduction of the Government Tourism Policy (Penrose, 2011) had a very destabilising effect on most DMOs and it was coupled with the abolition of Regional Development Agencies which had included regional tourism boards (Kennell and Chaperon, 2013, Coles et al, 2014). These Regional Development Agencies were replaced in part by Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). LEPs are responsible for economic development and it is their choice whether or not they assume any of the former regional tourist board's or local DMOs functions (Pike, 2016). To date the vast majority of LEPs have not elected to do so.

2.20 Local authority funding in Cheshire and Warrington

Cheshire West and Chester and East Cheshire, the two local authorities who each contribute £70 p.a. to Marketing Cheshire will only allow their contribution to be spent on tourism and not on the rest of the study work, invest agenda. Warrington Borough

Council has its own inward investment department. Warrington pledged to not make any financial contribution to Marketing Cheshire after April 2015.   Two additional Cheshire destination brands have been promoted in recent years: Cheshire's Peak District' was associated with East Cheshire Borough Council and it promoted as a brand in its own right but it now appears to have been subsumed into Chester, Cheshire and Beyond which is a recent Marketing Cheshire initiative.

The Mid-Cheshire Development Board (formerly the Weaver Valley Partnership) is an independent and informal board which was formed as a collaboration between Cheshire West and Chester and Cheshire East local authorities. The board's purpose is to support economic growth in the Mid-Cheshire towns of Northwich, Winsford and Middlewich and their surrounding areas. It is a low profile organisation which does not appear to be backed by any significant funding (Mid-Cheshire Development Board, 2018).

2.21 Warrington and Warrington Wolves

According to its website Marketing Cheshire is the agency responsible for promoting Cheshire and Warrington nationally and internationally (Marketing Cheshire, 2019) and yet Warrington is not included in the brand name Marketing Cheshire. Such an omission is unlikely to encourage Warrington to contribute to the enterprise and yet Warrington is the most economically successful area of the Cheshire and Warrington sub-region (Cox, 2016). In addition to its economic success Warrington is also home to the biggest sporting brand in the sub-region. Warrington Wolves are a successful professional rugby league club who compete in the Super League (warringtonwolves.com, 2019). Warrington Wolves have been a member of rugby

league's elite since 1895 and their games feature regularly on major television channels. In addition, the Halliwell Jones Stadium, the home of Warrington Wolves, hosted two international games during the 2013 Rugby League World Cup (Rugby League World Cup Report 2013) and the same stadium is due to host a further three games during the 2021 Rugby League World Cup (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government and Jake Berry MP, 2019). Such events produce significant economic impacts and they raise the profile of the destination to an international media audience. Wise (2017) has chronicled World Rugby's (the international rugby union organisation) international expansion ambitions but rugby league, the other rugby code, is also seeking to expand internationally and the publicity surrounding Warrington Wolves and particularly the publicity surrounding the Rugby League World Cup has the potential to raise the profile of Warrington to an international audience. Sparvero and Chalip (2007) and Proctor, Flanagan and Dunne (2018) have both investigated the potential of professional sports teams to contribute to the promotion of a destination. Warrington Wolves would appear to have the potential to enhance the reputation of Warrington, if not Cheshire and Warrington, especially as unlike Liverpool (Liverpool F.C. and Everton F.C.) and Manchester (Manchester United F.C. and Manchester City F.C.), there is no competing sports club in the vicinity. It is interesting in this context that University of Chester (which has a satellite campus in Warrington) is a significant sponsor of Warrington Wolves.

2.22 Future challenges for DMOs

Fyall, Fletcher and Spyriadis (2010) undertook a study on the future management of destinations in England. In this study twelve key lessons emerged from a widespread

review of destination partnership practice. The authors summarised these key lessons as follows:

- 'Each destination in a unique wider environmental and political context and thus no blueprint structure exists for the generic management of destinations;'

- 'Many destinations are facing considerable pressure on both capital and revenue budgets;'

- 'Large capital budgets appear more likely to be available when tourism is more closely allied to wider regeneration programs;'

- 'All destinations are beginning to adopt a more commercial focus;'

- 'Partnerships appear to work less well in more mature destinations (particularly where financial inducements are less forthcoming);'

- 'Considerable trust is required from the trade to 'buy in' to new structures;'

- 'Key industry players are essential members;'

- 'A long-term evolutionary approach to change is recommended rather than radical change;'

- 'A positive and genuine approach to partnership working is necessary as is the ability to continually reinvent within a constant cycle of change;'

- 'Local authorities are deemed to be, and are to remain, an essential player in maintaining the neutrality of new organisational structures;'

- 'A strong political will which encompasses the need to continue investment in tourism is required for alternative to succeed;'

- 'A holistic view of the management of the destination is considered paramount for the successful management of destinations.'

(Fyall, Fletcher and Spyriadis (2010), pp. 21-25)

Fyall, Fletcher and Spyriadis' (2010) study is notable for its future perspective. The study was published in the same year that the UK government announced the abolition of Regional Development Agencies (which in 2010 still held responsibility for regional tourism) and the year before the *Government Tourism Policy* (Penrose, 2011) was published. The publication of Fyall, Fletcher and Spyriadis' study came after the global financial crisis of 2007-2008 and in the midst of the subsequent economic downturn that occurred in the UK. It will be enlightening to compare the findings of this study with what actually happened in the management of destinations in the period up to 2019.

Although destinations across England face common issues over, for example, a reduction in public sector finance and challenges associated with the digital era there does not appear to be any common solution or blueprint to follow in response to these issues. In this context Fyall, (2011, p. 96) wrote:

> For destinations, however, no single approach is universally applicable to their effective management while all destinations are faced with a reasonably common set of problems and challenges and that a variety of structural opinions exist for adoption and implementation by those managing destinations.

This is another statement that can be tested with the benefit of hindsight.

A model which sought to encapsulate the main governance options for DMOs to support and manage the business of destination marketing and destination management was proposed by Malcolm Bell, Chief Executive of Visit Cornwall and a former director of tourism with the South-West Regional Development Agency. Bell (2014) proposed what he described as his 'yurt' model which is shown below.
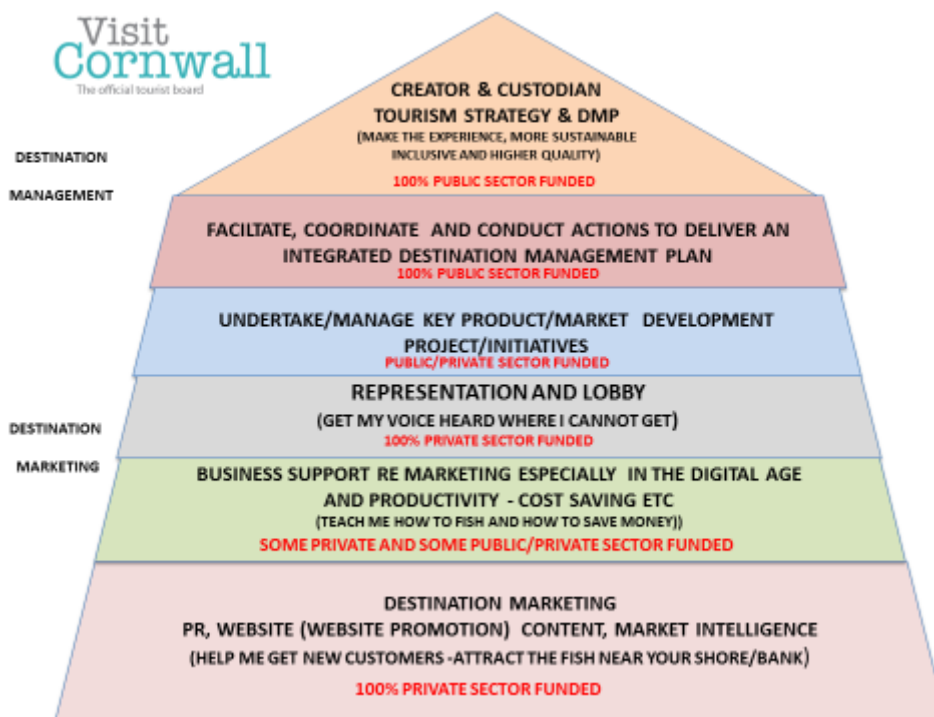
Figure 4 - Adapted from Bell (2014)

Bell's (2014) yurt model aptly illustrates that many different organisational forms are possible for DMOs which vindicates Fyall's (2011) observation that no single approach is universally applicable in all destinations.

DMOs have faced many challenges in recent years which have forced a rethinking of their custom and practice. According to Munro and Richards (2011 p.153):

> DMOs are not typically strategic agile organisations but if they are going to survive in an environment of rapid and constant change they need to engage in strategic analysis, development, and implementation on a more continuous basis and over shorter cycles than they have ever done in the past. Success requires the right people, the right mindset, the right internal structures, and the right stakeholder and industry relationships where, across all of those things, innovation, decentralisation, and collaboration are all important.

This lack of strategic agility is in itself one of the greatest challenges that DMOs have faced in the light of reduced public sector funding. Many DMOs were previously constrained by local authority policies and practices and had difficulty in adjusting to a

changed business environment. DMOs often had a high cost base as a result of their prevailing employment contracts and pension arrangements and could not downsize as readily many purely private sector could. This situation placed a focus on the leadership of DMOs and on the organisational culture that underpinned many DMOs as the necessary adjustments might have been beyond the capability of the organisations (Scott et al, 2018). In the light of the financial constraints that have faced DMOs in recent years an innovative and flexible approach is required coupled with can-do attitudes to business. This is epitomised by the concept of organisational ambidexterity which recognises that organisations have two primary functions: these are to act both in an exploitative and also in an exploratory capacity. These two functions will be explored the following section. The need to exercise organizational ambidexterity was compelling as public sector funding cuts began to bite.

2.23 Organizational ambidexterity

The term 'organizational ambidexterity' is the term used to describe a theory that can readily be applied to characterise and analyse the situation that has confronted DMOs in recent years (Scott et al, 2017b). Organizational ambidexterity refers to the capacity of an organization to be both exploitative and explorative in the way that it operates. The exploitative aspect involves a primary focus on existing customers and markets within known and relatively predictable contexts whilst the explorative component requires a focus on new markets and new methods with inherent unpredictability, uncertainty and attendant risks (O'Reilly and Tushman, 2013, Smith, 2016). Exploitation occurs as a result of continuous improvement of processes and refinement whilst exploration is generated by innovation and the introduction of new ideas. In the main, exploitative resources generally already exist whilst exploratory

resources are often emerging and evolving (Stokes et al, 2015). To some extent exploitation and exploration can be contradictory positions but it is argued that in order to succeed sustainably organizations need to be adept at both functions (Gupta, Smith and Shalley, 2006, Raisch et al, 2009). Tushman and O'Reilly (1996, p8) argue that an ambidextrous organisation is one that is: 'able to implement both incremental and revolutionary change'. Junni et al (2013) have noted that the management of innovation may have a particular significance in organizations that draw largely upon intangible assets and knowledge to make themselves marketable and this aptly describes DMOs. Birkinshaw and Gibson (2004) identified two different types of organizational ambidexterity: structural ambidexterity and contextual ambidexterity. In structural ambidexterity different organizational structures are set up to deal with exploratory and exploitative activities. Contextual ambidexterity focuses on behavioural and cultural change factors as drivers of ambidexterity. In the context of contextual ambidexterity individuals are alert to new opportunities, they are cooperative and they seek out opportunities to engage with others, they seek to make internal linkages and they are flexible in their approach to their work. Structural and contextual ambidexterity are not alternative positions; they are complementary (Birkinshaw and Gibson, 2004). Contextual ambidexterity arises because a culture is in place which permits it to flourish and which encourages leadership throughout the organisation. Creating such an environment is a key challenge for DMO senior management. A compelling need to be organizationally ambidextrous and strategically agile (Weber and Tarba, 2014) in order to ensure survival characterises the financial challenges currently confronting DMOs in England. Chief executives with high level organizational ambidexterity skills are required to lead DMOs through the current financial challenges. This will require the

leadership skills that are required to effect transformative change coupled with a willingness amongst the staff to embrace change throughout the organization. Junni et al (2013) point out that exploitative and exploratory operations compete for the same resources, therefore DMO leadership that is wedded to previous operating regimes may lack the flexibility to adapt to the new order (Scott et al, 2018). Conversely, too much of a focus on exploratory operations may alienate existing partnership organizations such as local authorities. Palm and Lilja (2017) have pointed out that most published organizational ambidexterity research is about private sector organisations and that research into the scope that the public sector has to practice organizational ambiguity lags behind. A public private partnership is still the dominant business structure for DMOs in England but many of the current DMOs have evolved from public sector bodies and they still exhibit some of the characteristics of the public sector (and costs) with regard to working practices and pension provision. Many chief executives and staff previously worked in the public sector either in DMOs or in the tourism departments of regional development agencies. Palm and Lilja (2017) conclude that the potential exists for public sector organizations to practice organizational ambidexterity but that certain organizational conditions need to prevail e.g. a strong market focus and committed leadership. For DMOs the pursuit of organizational ambidexterity will necessitate a more (explorative) commercial and market focused approach. It may also require a closer relationship with key stakeholders and an, arguably, less inclusive approach to other stakeholders. This is an issue not only for the chief executive and the senior DMO staff but also for the board of directors (Oehmichan et al, 2017) who, in the case of DMOs, generally represent stakeholder organizations. The achievement of optimal organizational performance will require DMOs to adopt a balanced approach that

involves the capacity to look both backwards and forwards or, in other words, to have a something of Janus perspective, like the Roman god who was able to look both to the past and to the future (O'Reilly and Tushman, 2004). The theoretical concept of organizational ambidexterity is a particularly pertinent concept to apply to DMOs at the present time given the transitions that many are experiencing (or have recently experienced) but although it has been applied to a number of different industries and contexts it has thus far only very rarely been discussed in the context of DMOs. The ability to engage in organizational ambidexterity has real resonance with the position that Marketing Cheshire has found itself in since it was threatened with a severe reduction in public funding from 2011 onwards. Organizational ambidexterity appears to offer rich potential to be theoretically applied to DMOs faced with a severe loss of public funding (Saunders et al, 2015).

2.24 Conclusion

The literature showed that DMOs have proliferated on a widespread basis in the UK and in many other countries. In the UK, they have variously formed part of local authority efforts to promote towns, cities, sub-regions and regions for a range of audiences and purposes. However, over the last few years DMOs in England have experienced a number of financial, structural and strategic challenges which have created uncertainty and which have placed the continued existence of many DMOs in jeopardy. Some aspects of this important sector have hitherto been under-researched such as the dramatic reduction in public sector funding. Nevertheless, the role fulfilled by DMOs is a potentially important from a social, economic and cultural perspective and therefore the phenomenon of DMOs merit attention. Consideration of these

factors led to the identification of the research gap and the development of the following research question:

Research Question: How can a place or destination marketing organisation engage with its stakeholders in order to operate effectively in dynamic circumstances of reduced public sector funding?

The thesis examined this research question by considering how marketing has developed as an academic and practical discipline and how this connects with the development of destination marketing, destination management, place branding and place marketing. A number of issues, tensions and dynamics were identified and examined, through the concept of organizational ambidexterity which was applied to the destination marketing/place marketing arena. Within the general field of literature there were also particular areas that had resonance with this particular research study. These included the debates around the consolidation of the body of literature (including the relative lack of empirical research), whether there is a need for clear differentiation in place and destination marketing, place marketing as a process (including place branding), the role of stakeholders in place marketing and the debate over the value of place marketing.

Gaps in the extant literature were identified such as the relative lack of publications relating to the severe reduction in public sector funding given the critical importance of such finding, the paucity of theory relating to destination and place marketing and the divide between academics and practitioners in the sector coupled with the lack of research which includes a practitioner perspective. The stance of the thesis was in

respect of the latter gap by the views articulated by authors such as Morgan, Pritchard and Pride (2011, p. 354) who recognise the gulf that exists between academics and practitioners in this arena when they state that:

> In the field of place reputation management and destination brands …more bridges need to be built between those who practise and those who write about destination reputation management. Such bridges would enrich the field of destination branding, strengthen its research base, and enhance both theory and praxis.

The literature review has served to vindicate the research objectives:

1. To explore the perceptions of DMO chief executives and chief officers with regards to DMO partnership working, the reduction in public sector funding and the future of DMOs.

2. To explore the perceptions of DMO key stakeholders in Cheshire and Warrington with regards to DMO partnership working, the reduction in public sector funding and the future of DMOs.

3. To explore the strategic dynamics and options open to a particular DMO in circumstances of reduced public sector funding

The research review has also served to vindicate the aim of the research, which is:

> To examine the contemporary challenges and future opportunities for English destination marketing organisations with particular reference to Cheshire and Warrington.

In response, the thesis built a methodology which gathered field data from a range of DMO chief executives distributed throughout England as well as key stakeholders in the promotion of Cheshire and Warrington. The data, in conjunction with the literature

review analysis, points at findings and implications for the future of destination marketing organisations.

The next chapter outlines the research methods and methodology adopted to address the research question and the objectives.

Chapter Three - Research Methodology and Research Methods

3.1 Introduction

The bulk of this chapter is broken up into two parts. The first part is concerned with methodology and the second part is about methods. Both these distinct parts are divided into numbered sub-sections. After the methodology and methods parts the chapter continues under five relatively short sub-headings which include the chapter's conclusion. The methodology part begins by elucidating the purpose of research; it then repeats this study's research question to remind the reader of the focus of the research. There is then an explanation of the research process. The next sub-section is a discussion of ontology and epistemology. This is followed by a discussion of research paradigms and sub-sections on interpretivism and quantitative versus qualitative data. After this a clear statement is made confirming that the research project is premised on an inductive approach, a qualitative research strategy, a subjective perspective, an interpretivist epistemology and a social constructivist ontology. The methodology part ends with a sub-section on reflexivity. The methods part begins by explaining the difference between methodology and methods. It then discusses the methods that might have been adopted before justifying the choice of the selected method. Sub-sections then follow on semi-structured interviews before the selected research process is described in detail. A choice that the researcher was presented with over the analysis process is then discussed and this is followed by a sub-section on template analysis. A sub-section on validity and reliability then concludes the methods part of the chapter. The final remaining sub-headings deal with conferences, presentations and meetings that informed the research, the keeping of a DBA journal, axiology (the philosophy of ethics) and finally, the chapter's conclusion.

3.2 Methodology

3.2.1 The purpose of research

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016, p. 5) define research as: 'a process that people undertake in a systematic way in order to find out things, thereby increasing their knowledge'. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016) this definition contains two important elements; these are 'systematic way' and 'to find out things'. The 'systematic' element suggests that the research is founded on logical principles rather than merely on beliefs. The other element: 'to find out things' implies a purpose or several purposes for the research and it implies an endpoint without which the research will not realise its full value (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). For the research to be worthwhile value will be realised by answering the research question(s).

3.2.2 The research question

A key rationale for undertaking business research is: 'a societal development that provides a point of departure for the development of a research question' (Bryman and Bell, 2015, p.5). In this instance, the societal development is the changed government policy with respect to the public funding of DMOs. In the view of Bryman and Bell (2015) an aspect of business and management that is not fully understood is a core reason for conducting research and the current research fits that bill.

The research question that this thesis is predicated upon is:

How can a DMO operate effectively in dynamic circumstances of reduced public sector funding?

For value to be realised in the study this question will need to be answered.

In formulating the research question consideration had to be given as to whether the research approach would involve the testing of existing theory (a deductive approach) or alternatively whether it would involve the emergent generation of theoretical explanation(s) through the collection and analysis of data (an inductive approach) (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). Gertner's (2011a) influential meta-analysis lamented the lack of a theoretical framework in the place marketing and place branding literature and it was therefore unlikely that the testing of theory would form a fruitful basis for this study. The existing lack of theory in the place marketing and place branding literature played a considerable part in the selection of an inductive approach for this thesis. The adopted approach does not seek to test a hypothesis as it is directed more towards building theory and is thus inductive in nature. Inductivism involves collecting particular observations from which theory may subsequently be built up (Stokes, 2011b).

An inductive approach appealed to the researcher because it is associated with a subjectivist stance. The researcher took the view that the business area under research and the organisations within it were complex and fragmented and that social interactions and individual perceptions were crucially important in any sense-making related to this complex arena (Weick, 1995). Subjectivity (as opposed to objectivity) was therefore going to play a central role in the interpretation of the data that emerged from the research. One key implication of this was that the researcher would reflexively be an inherent part of the research process and not a neutral and detached observer (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2017; Stokes, 2011a; Stokes, 2011b).

3.2.3 The practice of research

Practical research involves decision-making throughout the research process. The overriding decision is over which research approach to adopt to conduct the study. Such a decision is informed by the philosophical assumptions held by the researcher (ontology and epistemology), by the selected enquiry procedures (research design) and the specific modes of data collection, analysis and interpretation which are collectively known as research methods. The nature of the 'problem' being researched also influences the research approach (Cresswell, 2014). Cresswell contends that research is bound by three essential framework elements: ''Philosophical assumptions about what constitutes knowledge claims, general procedures of research called strategies of enquiry and detailed procedures of data collection, analysis and writing called methods'' (Cresswell, 2003 p. 3).

3.2.4 The research process

Many who have assessed postgraduate dissertations will be familiar with Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill's (2016) 'research onion' which describes the onion-like layers involved in the research process. The outermost layer relates to the philosophical assumptions that underpin the research. The next layer is the approach to theory development. Next, there is the research strategy or strategies followed by the time horizon which can be longitudinal or cross-sectional. Finally, at the core come data collection and data analysis. Easterby-Smith et al (2018) liken the research process to a tree. Within the tree metaphor the key parts of the tree are the roots, the trunk and branches, the leaves and the fruit. The roots of the tree represent the research traditions that underpin the work in terms of design, methods and forms of analysis. The trunk of the tree is central to it and it provides strength and structure to the tree.

In cross-section, in this metaphor, the trunk contains four core constitute rings and (working outwards) these represent, ontology, epistemology, methodology and methods and techniques. Easterby-Smith et al (2018) argue that their model conveys that the methods and techniques are the most visible aspects of the research but that the three inner rings which may be less and less visible to the observer are critical in their contribution to the robustness of the research project. This is a point well made. The leaves of the tree form on the lesser branches of the tree and they represent the collection and analysis of data. The fruit of the tree is the product of the research i.e. the writing up and dissemination of the research. The clear difference between Easterby-Smith et al's (2019) model and Saunders. Lewis and Thornhill's (2016) 'research onion' is that in the former model's cross-sectional trunk, the philosophical assumptions lie at the core whilst in the latter model they are at the periphery.

3.2.5 Ontology and epistemology

Prior to discussing the ontology and epistemology that forms the basis for this thesis it is necessary to explore what is meant by the terms. According to Cunliffe et al (2015, p.22) two key questions that face a doctoral researcher are:

- What do you see?
- How can you know?

These questions are strongly related to ontology which Cunliffe et al (2015, p. 21) define as: ''assumptions about the nature of social reality and the roles that people play in relation to that reality'', and epistemology which Cunliffe et al (2015, p.21) define as: ''assumptions about the purpose and nature of knowledge, and what 'good' knowledge should look like''.

Ontology refers to the assumptions that people make about the nature of reality (Anderson et al, 2015; Easterby-Smith et al, 2018; Mason (2002), Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016, Stokes, 2011a). Ontology relates to fundamental questions such as what represents the real world, reality, and what is it possible to know about it? (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). One way to characterise ontology is to conceptualise it as a spectrum extending from realism at one end of the spectrum and relativism at the other end (Stokes, 2011a). Easterby-Smith et al (2018) extend their spectrum or continuum beyond relativism to encompass nominalism at the opposite extreme to realism. Realism assumes that there are immutable scientific 'facts' that are *prima facie* observable and measurable. An extreme realist perspective would also include the assumption that the same kind of scientific facts that apply to the laws of physics apply equally to social structures and that it is therefore logical to study those social structures in much the same way that natural scientists investigate nature. The assumption is that if such a perspective is adopted it should be possible to draw up generalisations about universal social reality (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). Realism is therefore strongly linked to objectivity (Stokes, 2011a). Relativism holds that there can be many different 'truths' and that it is the perspective of the observer that defines how the 'truth' is perceived. Moreover, relativism has strong associations with subjectivity (Stokes, 2011a). Different observers might perceive a situation differently depending upon factors like their education, their culture or their background (Easterby-Smith et al, 2018). Easterby-Smith et al's (2018) continuum extends beyond relativism to encompass nominalism. Nominalism acknowledges no 'truths' and contends that 'facts' are all human creations. This has resonance in the ways in which apparently verifiable facts that are reported in the media are being dubbed as 'fake news' by those with vested interests in an alternative viewpoint. In such

situations it can be the most powerful voice that holds sway rather than the irrefutable facts of the matter (Easterby-Smith et al, 2018).

Epistemology refers to our understanding of how theories and knowledge are created. In other words, how it is that "we know what we know" (Easterby-Smith et al, 2018, p. 69). Easterby-Smith et al (2018) acknowledge two opposing views of how research into social science should be conducted. These are positivism and social constructionism. Although positivism and social constructionism represent opposing viewpoints even their strongest advocates do not slavishly embrace all aspects of any either of the positions. In addition, many studies combine methods that are associated with both standpoints (Easterby-Smith et al, 2018).

Positivism has its origins in the work of the French philosopher Auguste Comte (Easterby-Smith et al, 2018, Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016, Stokes, 2011a). The key tenet that underpins positivism is that the social world exists independently and externally to the observer and that its characteristics can be measured using objective methods rather than by subjectively investigating people's perceptions or intuition etc. Positivism is the philosophical stance that is associated with natural science and it emphasises the use of scientific and empirical data that is untainted by human bias or interpretive assumptions (Easterby-Smith et al, 2018, Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016, Stokes, 2011a, Stokes, 2011b).

Alternatively, within inductive perspectives there are a range of possible perspectives. For instance, social constructionism is associated with the work of Berger and Luckmann (1967) who wrote the influential text: 'The Social Construction of Reality'.

This philosophical approach emerged as a result of dissatisfaction with the results of applying positivist objectivist principles to the study of the social sciences. Social constructionism holds that reality is subjectively socially constructed and that it is given meaning through the interactions and values and beliefs of people and the social processes through which these are formed. Reality is not, therefore, objective and external but it is created by people through their interactions with each other (Easterby-Smith et al, 2018). Social constructionism calls for an understanding of people's perceptions rather than attempting to account for people's behaviour through external factors and fundamental laws. The differences between positivistic approaches and social constructive perspectives are portrayed in the table below.

	Positivism	**Social constructionism**
Researchers	must be independent	are part of what is being observed
Human interests	should be irrelevant	are the main drivers of science
Explanations	must demonstrate causality	aim to increase general understanding of the situation
Research progresses through	hypotheses and deductions	gathering rich data from which ideas are induced
Concepts	need to be defined so they can be measured	should incorporate stakeholder perspectives

Units of analysis	should be reduced to the simplest terms	may include the complexity of 'whole' situations
Generalization through	statistical probability	theoretical abstraction
Sampling requires	large numbers randomly selected	small numbers of cases chosen for specific reasons

Table 3 - Contrasting implications of positivism and social constructionism (adapted from Easterby-Smith et al, 2018)

Positivism and social constructionism represent epistemological polarities. Easterby-Smith et al (2018) discuss four different positions. The first of these is strong positivism which they associate with realism and quantitative research. The second is positivism which is associated with internal realism and a quantitative approach although this may be supplemented with qualitative data. The next position is constructionism which is linked to relativism and is likely to involve the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data. The final position is strong constructionism. This is associated with nominalism and qualitative data collection.

All epistemologies have strengths and weaknesses. For instance, in the case of strong positivism, compelling conclusions are possible but the mode of investigation may not be very helpful in understanding processes. Strong constructionism can be very useful in providing explanations and generating new theory but it is conditional on the specialist knowledge of the researcher for the interpretation of data (Easterby-Smith et al, 2018).

Positivism is generally associated with deductive reasoning, objectivity and a quantitative approach. By contrast, constructionism (which is sometimes termed constructivism) is associated with inductive reasoning, subjectivity and a qualitative approach. This thesis generally derives from a position that is broadly aligned to constructionism since that better represents the world view of the researcher (Stokes, 2011a, Stokes, 2011b). Such an approach was further justified because the researcher wanted to explore the interview subjects' perspectives, values, beliefs and understandings with regards to DMOs and destination and place marketing. In this context of this research it is assumed that the reality under investigation is socially constructed and that the researcher is not distant from but interacts with the subjects.

3.2.6 Axiology

Axiology is "a branch of philosophy concerned with the role of values and ethics within the research process" (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016, p. 711).

The researcher has experience of conducting research with medical practitioners within the National Health Service (NHS) where the need to comply with ethical standards is taken extremely seriously and where the governance of ethical issues is rigidly observed. This prior experience was particularly useful in guiding the researcher through the ethical processes associated with this research project.

Ethical approval for the study was granted by Liverpool John Moores University on 8th October 2013.

From an ethical standpoint the study embraced a long-standing and commonly held code for conducting research embodying the principles set out below (Sim & Wright, 2000, Stokes and Wall, 2014, Robinson, 2015):

Beneficence. This relates to the benefit whether actual or potential that the research may have for participants or the wider population. Participants in the study may benefit from their views being heard in order to facilitate more effective place marketing within the area in question. It is hoped that the study will have the potential to inform future policy and practice in a positive way.

Non-malificence. This concerned the protection of participant's rights to not be harmed either physically or psychologically by the research. All participants were recruited through informed consent and it is therefore highly unlikely that any harm was caused given the ethical protocols that were followed in the study.

Respect for autonomy. The respondents' right of self-determination (i.e. to take part or withdraw at any time without explanation) was upheld throughout the study. The need for veracity and the avoidance of deception required the researcher to respond honestly to any questions relating to the research.

Respect for persons. This is the requirement for people's dignity to be respected and to ensure that they were not used merely as a means to an end. In the study this principal related to gaining the informed consent of the participants and to ensuring that the research procedures did not undermine the participant's dignity or self-respect. Respondents were guaranteed anonymity.

<u>Justice</u>. This principle required fairness and adherence to the notion that the needs of individuals had to come before the research process. This requirement was met by meeting respondents at their convenience in their own place of work or elsewhere if that was their preference and by postponing or terminating the interview if the interviewee requested it.

3.2.7 Research paradigms

Kuhn (1970) is a key figure in any discussion of the term paradigm. Kuhn analysed revolutions in scientific thought and concluded that they occur as a result of changed paradigms or sets of beliefs and values about what should be researched and how it should be researched. Over time inconsistencies occur which challenge the prevailing viewpoint until a point when the prevailing assumptions are unsustainable. This results in a crisis in the discipline which leads to a revolution. The revolution ends when a new paradigm which is generally accepted by the scientific community emerges (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Difficulties have been encountered with Kuhn's use of the term 'paradigm' because it is not very specific and it generated a backlash from the scientific community who argued that social science's subjective approach lacks credibility because it is too dependent on data that cannot be scientifically verified (Bryman and Bell, 2015, Stokes, 2011b).

Burrell and Morgan (1979) devised four paradigms that apply to business research and they contend that each of these four paradigms are predicated on assumptions that are either:

- *objectivist* – here the assumption is that the organisation, which is made up of real processes and structure, can be viewed from an external standpoint

or,

- *subjectivist* – the assumption here is that the organization is socially constructed in a way that permits individuals to make sense of their interaction with it

(Burrell and Morgan, 1979 cited in Bryman and Bell, 2015, p.35)

In addition, each paradigm makes assumptions about the role and purpose of research in the business world as being either:

- *regulatory* – the underlying purpose here is to describe processes within organisations without making any judgements about them although recommendations for minor changes may occur

or,

- *radical* – the purpose of business research is to form judgements about the way that organisations should function and be configured and to make recommendations as to how this could be achieved

(Burrell and Morgan, 1979 cited in Bryman and Bell, 2015, p.35)

Burrell and Morgan's (1979) four business research paradigms are:

- *functionalist* – this is the dominant route to organisational research which is based on a problem-solving mode of enquiry which leads to a rational explanation

- *interpretative* – this paradigm focuses on the social aspects of an organisation and it strongly suggests that the understanding of situations needs to be centred on the people who work in and with organisations

- *radical humanist* – under this paradigm organisations are viewed as social arrangements from which individuals need to be emancipated: a need for change is the catalyst for this form of research

- *radical structuralist* – here the organisation is seen as being the result of structural power relationships which lead to conflict.

(Burrell and Morgan, 1979 cited in Bryman and Bell, 2015, p.35)

The main criticism of Burrell and Morgan's (1979) research paradigms is that their boundaries are too prescriptive and they do not allow for any research positions that cross the paradigms boundaries because in Burrell and Morgan's (1979) view the paradigms are incompatible with each other (Bryman and Bell, 2015, Stokes, 2011b). Cederlund (2015) argues against the replacement of paradigms (Kuhn, 1970), or, of incompatibility between paradigms (Burrell and Morgan, 1979) and in is favour of greater flexibility of approach in business research. Popova-Novak and Cseh (2015) advocate a meta-paradigm perspective especially with regards to organisational learning. Nonetheless Burrell and Morgan's (1979) four paradigms can be helpful in broadly categorising a research study as they enable the researcher to classify their own broad set of beliefs within a framework that is recognised by others but which still allows space for individuality to be expressed (Brunt, Horner and Semley, 2017).

3.2.8 Interpretivism

One of Burrell and Morgan's four business research paradigms is the interpretative paradigm (Burrell and Morgan, 1979). As an epistemology interpretivism contrasts with positivism. Other terms such as 'constructionism' and 'phenomenology' are sometimes used in lieu of interpretivism (Fisher, 2004). Fisher (2004) notes that the

term phenomenology appears to have taken on different meanings for different people and Stokes (2011a) takes issue with the use of the term phenomenology as a shorthand for a qualitative, inductive or interpretivist approach. Interpretivism emphasises the understanding of human behaviour as opposed to the explanation of human behaviour which is characteristic of positivism (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Interpretivism is a methodological stance which begins with the proposition that understanding and action is subject to people's perceptions, values and the relationships that they form with each other. Subjectivity is valued over objectivity due to a belief that mere knowledge cannot provide a sufficient basis for action and that human factors are critically important in making sense out of a situation (Fisher, 2005, Stokes, 2011b). In general, interpretivist research is concerned with building theory (Stokes, 2011b). Research that examines how the social world is perceived and understood is generally interpretivist in nature. This differs from more traditional forms of scientific research which is more concerned with accuracy in measurement and with prediction. Max Weber, who died in 1920, distinguished between the natural and human sciences arguing that the former is concerned with *explanation* whilst the latter should be concerned with *understanding.* In interpretivist research the exploration of meaning is prioritised over the establishment of causal relationships (King and Brooks, 2016). The research in the current thesis derives principally from the interpretivist tradition. According to Ntounis, Lloveras and Parker (2015) interpretivism is the dominant epistemology in place marketing studies and that is also the case with this study. In addition, in relation to Burrell and Morgan's (1979) four business research paradigms, the current study is most closely aligned with the interpretative paradigm. According to Guba and Lincoln (1994) all researchers need to be conscious of and aware of the paradigm on which their approach is based.

3.2.9 Quantitative and qualitative research

Qualitative and qualitative research are seen by many to be fundamentally different. Measurement in some form is inherent in quantitative research and quantitative research is strongly associated with the natural or physical sciences. Quantitative research embraces a deductive approach and it is concerned with testing existing theory. Quantitative research is strongly associated with positivism and social reality is viewed as an external construct and as something that can be approached objectively. Qualitative research, by contrast, uses words and descriptions as its currency and it largely adopts an inductive approach; it is often associated with the social sciences and is concerned with the generation of theory. Qualitative research adopts a subjective approach and it is associated with interpretivism. Qualitative research is apt to recognise many different social realities which are ever changing in the light of individuals' perceptions (Bryman and Bell, 2015).

Fundamental differences between quantitative and qualitative research strategies		
	Quantitative	**Qualitative**
Principal orientation to the role of theory in relation to the research	Deductive; testing of theory	Inductive: generation of theory
Epistemological orientation	Natural science model, in particular positivism	Interpretivism
Ontological orientation	Objectivism	Constructionism

Table 4 - Adapted from Bryman and Bell (2015, p.38)

Bryman and Bell (2015) recognise the convenience of the popular rigid distinctions between quantitative and qualitative research but they argue that such distinctions may be simplistic and inaccurate at times. They suggest that these popular distinctions are best seen as tendencies rather than as absolutes. In this respect they are referring to the epistemological and ontological positions that they themselves show in a table expressing the fundamental differences between quantitative and qualitative research strategies and in the narrative of their text (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Bryman and Bell (2015) describe apparent paradoxes within business research. For instance, they note that the use of a structured interview or a self-administered questionnaire, does not necessarily imply an adherence to a positivist position or that ethnographic research requires an implicitly interpretivist approach (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Many studies in business research employ a mixed methods approach and this is becoming an increasingly popular and accepted way of conducting business research (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Whilst some argue that mixed methods research is unfeasible or undesirable, usually on the basis of inconsistent epistemological or ontological considerations, the credibility of mixed methods research is growing and that growth in credibility suggests that such inconsistencies are capable of being reconciled or resolved (Bryman and Bell, 2015).

Qualitative research is frequently associated with an interpretive philosophy because researchers have to employ sense-making to understand the ''subjective and socially constructed meanings expressed about the phenomena being studied'' (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016, p. 168). However qualitative research is not contingent upon any particular theory or paradigm (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018). Qualitative research can take many forms such as ethnographies, interviews, psychoanalysis,

cultural studies, semiotics, content analysis, surveys and participant observation to name but a few (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018). In qualitative research data collection is non-standardised and it is likely to adopt a non-probability sampling procedure. The success of the research can turn on the ability of the researcher to gain access to participants and on the degree of rapport that is established with participants. This points up both the strengths and a weaknesses of qualitative research. One main strength of qualitative research is that it enables the researcher to get close to the subject and to collect richer data than might be possible with quantitative methods because it enables the researcher to explore meaning and individual perceptions of reality. However, this introduces the possibility of researcher bias and it means that generalisations beyond the immediate subject area are not generally possible in qualitative research. The subjective nature of qualitative research has implications in terms of the reliability of the data and its validity. On the other hand, the rich and, frequently individual, data collected can provide valuable insights and perspectives that might otherwise be missed.

This research project adopts an exclusively qualitative research strategy which is consistent with an inductive approach, a subjective perspective, an interpretivist epistemology and a social constructivist ontology.

3.3.0 Reflexivity

A doctoral thesis must demonstrate that the researcher possesses the ability to function as an independent researcher and has developed a strong sense of self together with a clear understanding of the role of the researcher situate within the research. This entails the notion of 'being' a researcher as opposed to 'doing'

research. This is an important consideration in circumstances where the research takes place in close proximity to the data as the researcher inevitably becomes entwined in the issue under research (Anderson and Gold, 2015).

Reflexivity can be difficult to define and many definitions of it have emerged (Anderson and Gold, 2015, Easterby-Smith et al, 2018). Easterby-Smith et al (2018) refer to Alvesson and Sköldberg's (2017) definition in suggesting that reflexivity is an ongoing and constant understanding of "the way different kinds of linguistic, social, political and theoretical elements are woven together in the process of knowledge development, during which empirical material is constructed, interpreted and written" (Alvesson and Sköldberg, 2017, p. 5). Anderson and Gold (2015) favour Hayes's (2012, p. 72) definition:

> In simple terms, reflexivity is an awareness of the researcher's role in the practice of research and the way this is influenced by the object of the research, enabling the researcher to acknowledge the way in which he or she affects both the research process and the outcomes.

Reflexivity shares much in common with reflection but it requires a level of self-consciousness that is not found in reflection. Reflection can be seen as a learning process which occurs retrospectively (Anderson and Gold, 2015). By contrast, reflexivity is a learning process which involves learning within the context of experience or learning *in experience* as distinct from learning *from* experience as in reflection. Reflexivity has been criticised on the basis that it can be too introspective and can thus detract from the research process (Easterby-Smith et al, 2018) but it offers much in the context of the current research and it does play a significant part in the research.

3.3 Methods

3.3.1 The distinction between methodology and methods

As Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016) observe in many texts and journal articles the terms 'research methodology' and 'research methods' are used interchangeably. This thesis draws a distinction between these two terms and here research methods, or methods, refers to the ''techniques and procedures used to obtain and analyse data'' (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016, p. 4). In this thesis methodology alludes to ''the theory of how research should be undertaken'' (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016, p.4).

3.3.2 The selection of the research method

Once the broad parameters of the research had been determined (qualitative, inductive, a subjective perspective, an interpretivist epistemology and a social constructivist ontology), it was necessary to turn to the method(s) of data collection and analysis. A number of options presented, all of which would have been compatible with the methodological considerations. These included ethnography, participant observation, content analysis, questionnaires and interviews. A number of these options have been adopted by authors in the field in the past e.g. ethnography (Aitken and Campelo, 2011), content analysis and questionnaires (Coles, Dinan and Hutchison 2014), content analysis (Proctor, Dunne and Flanagan, 2018), questionnaires (Murdy and Pike, 2012) and interviews (Konstanki, 2011). Aitken and Campelo's (2011) study adopted a grounded theory approach. These authors were exploring a concept that is somewhat difficult to describe; the notion of ownership in relation to place branding and the views of diverse individuals and groups (residents and tourists) were sought in connection with their study. There are

complementarities between ethnography and participant observation since the latter is often employed within the former and both of these approaches involve the researcher being embedded within a social setting for long periods in order to observe and draw conclusions about the culture of a social group (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Ethnography and participant observation were rejected as approaches for the current study as these approaches would have been too time-consuming and they would have been unlikely routes to take in terms of answering the research question as it would not be practical or permissible to spend extensive periods in the offices of senior figures.

Coles, Dinan and Hutchison (2014) used a combination of content analysis and questionnaires to cast light on a particular theme (tourism and the public sector in England since 2010). Whilst this study has some resonance with the current study it focused on a radical policy change that had taken place with the introduction of the Government Tourism Policy (Penrose, 2011). At the time of Coles, Dinan and Hutchison's research the full ramifications of this policy change were not known and possible future responses to it were still evolving. Although content analysis coupled with questionnaires would have had the potential to inform the current study it was felt that a more engaged and reflexive approach would produce greater insights.

In several studies within the relevant literature questionnaires were employed (e.g. Murdy and Pike 2012) in DMO contexts. Murdy and Pike (2012) used their questionnaires to investigate DMOs perceptions of the value of customer relations management systems in destination marketing. Whilst it may have been appropriate for a global survey of this nature the poor response rate (the usable response rate

was 5.2%) mitigated against the use of such a method in the current study. Murdy and Pike (2012) even offered a prize to encourage respondents to return questionnaires. A response rate such as this might be acceptable or even laudable in some circumstances but the current research sought to obtain richer and more detailed information than could be obtained through a questionnaire and a much better response rate to interview requests was achieved than Murdy and Pike (2012) managed with their questionnaires. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016) have found that managers prefer to be interviewed rather than respond to a questionnaire. One reason for this is that personal assurances can be given over the way that the interview content will be used. Furthermore, the researcher valued the opportunity to pose follow-up questions on the basis of the interviewees' initial responses. This would be difficult if not impossible had questionnaires been used.

Content analysis alone was the approach favoured by Proctor, Dunne and Flanagan (2018) but their study focused purely on online content. The current study is grounded in the individual perceptions of DMO chief officers and key stakeholders protected by anonymity and online content analysis would not have produced sufficiently rich data. Consequently, online content analysis was rejected as an approach.

Konstanki (2011) conducted interviews (and also issued questionnaires). It is not entirely clear what form Konstanki's interviews took save that they involved open-ended questions but it seems likely that these were unstructured interviews. Unstructured interviews are likely to be loosely based around a unifying topic or topics but the actual questions vary from respondent to respondent. Structured interviews involve putting the same set of questions to each and every interviewee.

Structured interviews lend themselves to quantitative research as any variations in responses can be attributed to 'true' or 'real' variables rather than the context of the interview (Bryman and Bell, 2015). Unstructured interviews and structured interviews were both considered for the current study but it was felt that semi-structured interviews would be preferable to either but would combine the advantages of both. Semi-structured interviews involve asking the respondents several standard questions which, on analysis, allow comparisons to be made and then following up those standard questions with others depending on the respondents' answers to the standard questions or to their particular circumstances or expertise. These follow-up questions can also be analysed. The researcher felt that semi-structured questions were much more conducive to reflexivity than structured questions as they would require a responsiveness on the part of the researcher in composing follow-up questions and thus learning *in* experience.

3.3.3 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews afford the opportunity to invite respondents to expand on their initial response and to probe the meanings contained in interview responses. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016) believe that this is very relevant when the researcher's philosophy is interpretivist because in such a situation a great deal of emphasis is placed on the understanding of the meaning that respondents ascribe to phenomena. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016) view semi-structured interviews (or in-depth interviews) as the research method of choice where there are a large number of questions to be answered, where open-ended questions are involved and where the questions are complex. Semi-structured interviews were the research method chosen by several authors in this field (e.g. Elbe, Hallen and Axellson, 2009,

Hanna and Rowley, 2011, Giles, Bosworth and Willett, 2013, Wang et al, 2013, de Noronha, Coca-Stefaniak, and Morrison, 2017 and Kennelly, 2017) and this provides a further rationale for the choice of this technique for this study. The current study was exploratory in purpose and it involved the collection of qualitative data through the use of semi-structured interviews with a judgemental sample of place marketing stakeholders and place marketing practitioners.

3.3.4 Sampling

The initial research design involved interviewing senior executives from Marketing Cheshire (the DMO that is the principal subject of this research) and also key stakeholders of that organisation in Cheshire and Warrington. At a meeting with the Chief Executive of Marketing Cheshire (who was very enthusiastic about the research project) before the interviews had begun, the researcher was told that there were no longer any senior executives in the organisation as the former chief executive had recruited them to his new organisation in Liverpool. This was a major setback to the researcher as it seriously (although very briefly) prejudiced the fundamental research design. The Chief Executive of Marketing Cheshire suggested that instead of interviewing senior executives of Marketing Cheshire, who did not exist beyond herself, the researcher could instead interview DMO chief executives across England. This had great appeal as an alternative but there was a problem. How would access be achieved? According to Easterby-Smith et al (2018) it can be very difficult indeed to gain access to organisations without some form of introduction especially at chief executive level. Here the Chief Executive of Marketing Cheshire was able to help; she would send prospective interviewees an introductory e mail on the researcher's behalf. This would lend credibility to the

researcher's request and in most cases this route resulted in valuable access to a number of very senior individuals. This process is known as a snowball sampling and it proved to be a very significant factor in gaining access to key individuals. According to Saunders (2012, p.43) ''where potential interviewees are easily identifiable but difficult to access, such as organizations' chief executives, using snowball sampling can allow these people to be reached''. All the interview participants in this study were chief executives, chief officers, chairs of organisations or board members. The researcher was also able to use his own contacts to gain access to additional interview participants who were all key stakeholders of Marketing Cheshire.

The actual sample selection process was an example of purposive or judgemental sampling in which the researcher judged that a potential interviewee possessed the seniority, experience and insight to contribute to answering the research question and meeting the study's aims and objectives (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). In order to be included amongst the DMO or NTO practitioner sample interview participants had to be chief executives/chief officers of DMOs or NTOs that had particular relevance to the study. To be invited to be interviewed, participants from organisations that were amongst Marketing Cheshire's key stakeholders, had to be at chief executive or director level. These parameters represented the inclusion criteria for the study. Exploratory studies are used to gain insight into topics that have yet to be described in detail (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). In the case of this project there was little or no published data concerning the effects of the new Government Tourism Policy (Penrose, 2011) on destination marketing organisations. The decision to use judgemental sampling was made because such a sampling

method is appropriate for an exploratory study and because the researcher was able to select suitable subjects from a list of Marketing Cheshire's key partner organisations (stakeholders) that existed in the public domain.

3.3.5 The interview process

The initial task was to draw up a series of standard questions. Five questions were devised from the outset. A pilot interview was then conducted with a university academic who had recently completed a doctorate in a subject area related to local authority destination marketing. The interviewee in the pilot study had previously been a local authority tourism manager and he thus had expertise in the subject area (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). As a result of the pilot interview slight modifications were made to the standard questions. The pilot interview was conducted on 8th August 2014.

Once a prospective interviewee had been identified they were sent an e mail. In some cases, the first e mail was from the Chief Executive of Marketing Cheshire introducing the researcher and the study. On other occasions the initial e mail was sent by the researcher using the LJMU e mail system so that the prospective interviewee was aware that it had come from a university e mail system in the interests of the researcher's credibility as a doctoral student. The prospective interviewees were then invited to be interviewed by the researcher. If there was a positive response from the prospective interviewees the researcher e mailed them again attaching a participant information sheet and a consent form. The e mail made it clear that the interview could not go ahead unless the consent form was signed by the prospective interviewee. This e mail also suggested times and dates when the interview could be held and the details

were negotiated with the prospective interviewees or their personal assistants. All interviews took place at the participant's place of work. The interviews were conducted between 13th August 2014 and 12th April 2017.

Fifteen interviews were recorded in addition to the pilot interview. Seven of the interview participants were DMO chief executives or chief officers, one was the chief executive of a National Tourism Organisation (NTO) and the rest were chief executives or directors of organisations from Cheshire and Warrington, all of which were key stakeholders of Marketing Cheshire. Five of the interview participants were women and the other ten were men. Two recording machines were used in each interview to record the interviews and prior written consent for the interviews to be recorded was obtained in every case. In addition to the fifteen interviews that were recorded one further individual agreed to be interviewed and signed the consent form. An interview was conducted with this individual but the recording process failed due to human error on the part of the researcher. It was deemed unethical to include this interview in the results although field notes were taken during the interview. Several other potential interview participants did not respond to initial e mails or broke off contact later and were therefore not interviewed. All the interviews except one were conducted in person with only the researcher and the interviewee in the room. Meeting in person permitted a degree of rapport and trust to be established before the interview proper began (Easterby-Smith et al, 2018) and this encouraged openness and candour in the responses to interview questions. On only one occasion the interview was conducted via Skype. This was the interviewee's preference. The researcher had offered to travel to meet the interviewee but this would have involved a round trip of several hundred miles. By that point the researcher had broadly enough data for the research

project so he happily acceded to the request for a Skype interview. Although the Skype interview saved a lot of time and money it was less satisfactory than an in person meeting in terms of establishing a rapport before the interview questions began.

It was fortuitous that original plan had to be dropped as senior executives within the same organisation might have been more constrained in what they were prepared to say. DMO CEOs in this research were generally candid in their interviews. It was recognised that some would have had media training and that they were thus capable of answering questions but actually saying very little in actual fact. The researcher had of experience of engaging in dialogue with media trained individuals and where necessary would follow up interview responses with requests for examples. Very often discussions continued, often for some time, after the recording machines had been switched off but confidentiality was always respected in such situations. Interviews were continued until saturation occurred and no new themes were emerging (Saunders, 2018).

The interview questions were designed to provide the data required to answer the research question and to fulfil the research aims and objectives. The interviews generally lasted between 30-45 minutes and in total they provided some 40,000 words of transcribed data. The interview questions worked well which vindicated the use of a pilot interview. The day after each interview an e mail was sent to each interview participant thanking them for the interview and seeking their agreement as to how they would be anonymously described in the research.

All the interviews were transcribed by the researcher. This was a time consuming process but it was ultimately beneficial. It might have been possible to pay somebody to undertake the transcriptions but if that had happened the researcher would not have been able to immerse himself in the data to the same extent and accuracy in reproducing what was actually said might have suffered. Dragon voice recognition software was used initially to assist the transcription process but it was not found to be as accurate in transcribing the researcher's voice as it might have been or much quicker overall. The use of Dragon software was abandoned in favour of transcription entirely by hand. Once the transcriptions had been completed it was time to analyse the collected data.

3.3.6 The analysis process

The researcher had originally intended to use Miles and Huberman's work to inform analysis as he had previous experience of using it but he found that the third edition of Qualitative Data Analysis (Miles, Huberman and Saldaña, 2014), which was published long after the deaths of the first two authors was a less accessible book than the previous two editions and it appeared to be geared very much towards using software for analysis purposes. Denzin and Lincoln (2018) acknowledge the very considerable growth that has taken place in the use of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) in interview research. Although they recognise that the use of such software may facilitate a feeling of control on the researcher's behalf Denzin and Lincoln (2018) see dangers in delegating key areas of analysis to computer programmes if analytical skills are taken away from people. These authors argue against what they refer to as the 'McDonaldization' of qualitative research and the predictability this brings in a field which is concerned

with 'contextual experience' and 'emergent meaning' (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018 p. 590). Denzin and Lincoln argue that qualitative research cannot and should not be contrived to be predictable and that qualitative research is the preferred approach when factors are not constant and controllable. Bryman and Bell (2015) refer to equivocation over the use of CAQDAS. One of the concerns that they recognise is the ease with which coded data may be quantified and the attendant risk that qualitative research will colonised by the validity and reliability criteria used in quantitative research. A second concern is that CAQDAS may result in the fragmentation of data which may lead to an interruption of the flow of interview transcripts being lost. Easterby-Smith et al (2018) point to the risk of CAQDAS diverting the attention of researchers in the direction of the software and away from the actual analysis that needs to be undertaken. Consideration was given to the use of Nvivo (data analysis software) to analyse the data in this study but the researcher was disappointed to learn that he would still need to identify initial codes. The use of Nvivo was rejected in favour of conventional analysis as the latter would entail and require immersion in the data. This was a good decision as immersion in the data proved to be a vital factor in its analysis. As the interviews were conducted and transcribed over a long period of time it was very beneficial to read the transcripts over and over again in order to be familiar with the content.

3.3.7 Template Analysis

Alternative methods to the Miles and Huberman approach that had previously been used by the researcher were pursued and it was decided to use Template Analysis (King, 2012, King and Brooks, 2016). As King and Brooks (2016, p.13) state: "Template analysis is a qualitative research method" but it is not aligned to any one

methodological approach or underpinning philosophy (King and Brooks, 2016). Template analysis is a form of thematic analysis. Its key strength is that it balances a strong structural element with the flexibility which allows it to be tailored to the needs of a particular study. It is normally used to analyse individual interviews but it can be applied in other scenarios too. Template analysis is predicated on the development of a coding template which is repeatedly revised as more data is analysed. Unlike some other forms of thematic analysis, template analysis does not require the coding levels to be set in advance of the analysis. In template analysis there is no fixed number of coding levels with the coding hierarchy and this means that the researcher can develop the most levels of themes where the data is richest (King, 2012). A particular feature of template analysis is the use of a priori themes. A priori themes may be developed at an early point in the research in accordance with the key concepts or perspectives on which the research project is based. However, it is recognised within the technique that as the analysis progresses one or more a priori themes may need to be modified or discarded (King, 2012). Within the current research study a priori themes existed to the extent that certain themes implicitly informed the choice of questions e.g. finance and funding, partnership and the future of DMOs. These a priori themes were not analysed until all the interviews had been completed and more themes were added as the data was being analysed. In qualitative research themes can be defined as: "the recurrent and distinctive features of participant's accounts … that characterize perceptions and/or experiences, seen by the researcher as relevant to the research question of a particular study" (King, 2012, p. 430). Three principals were applied to the definition of themes in the current work:

1. The term 'theme' involves repetition. A single isolated mention of an issue or subject in one transcript cannot constitute a theme although if it were mentioned several times within one transcript it could be considered to be a theme.

2. Themes are not independent of the researcher and they should not therefore be taken to be objective 'facts'.

3. To have utility themes must be relatively distinct from each other although some overlap is permissible.

<div align="right">(King, 2012)</div>

Coding is the process by which themes are identified and labelled. Within this study nine first level themes were identified and these were given a specific colour and a number. Some second and third level themes were also identified within the nine first level themes. The coding template and further details about the coding process can be found in the Analysis chapter. A clear advantage of the hierarchical template analysis approach is that on completion it provides an ordered structure for the discussion chapter.

3.3.8 Validity and reliability

Conventional notions of validity and reliability do not readily apply to research based on qualitative data since this implies an objectivity which cuts across the largely interpretive perspective of qualitative research. This means that in exploratory studies, especially in those conducted from a phenomenological perspective, objectivity is served by disclosure and reflection of and on the subjective aspects of the research and some authors term this approach auditability. The goal in this instance is to achieve transparency (Sim & Wright, 2000).

3.4 Conferences and presentations

In addition to extensive reading throughout the course of this research study the researcher attended international academic conferences across Europe where he presented his work in association with this thesis (more details can be found in the final chapter of this thesis), was questioned on it by leading international academics and gained much valuable insight into his own work and the work of others. The researcher also attended conferences in the UK such as 'Destination Marketing: Best Practice and Paradigms in a Fast Changing World', at Sheffield Hallam University in March 2015, the 'Place branding: it's not just the logo' conference that was held in Liverpool in June 2018 and 'Bringing big data to small users' the Institute of Place Management's conference that took place in Manchester in July 2018. In addition, the researcher also attended a number of presentations by individuals such as Philip Cox, Chief Executive of Cheshire and Warrington LEP at University of Chester, Warrington Campus in May 2016 and also in October 2017, Chris Brown, Director of Marketing Liverpool, at Liverpool John Moores University in July 2017 and Professor Mark Saunders at Liverpool John Moores University in April 2018.

3.5 Meetings with Chief Executive, Marketing Cheshire

A number of meetings between the researcher and the Chief Executive of Marketing Cheshire took place over the course of the study. Towards the end of the study a further two meetings took place between the researcher and the Chief Executive of Marketing Cheshire in June and November 2018. The purpose of these meetings from the researcher's prospective was to seek an update on any new developments to ensure the accuracy of the thesis.

3.6 DBA journal

Throughout the whole DBA 'journey' a handwritten note book was kept as a journal, to record key milestones, field notes and any other information that might make a useful contribution to the thesis.

3.7 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to provide an elucidation of the premises on which the research was based. In the interests of transparency (and therefore reliability and validity) the research process has been described in detail and the chapter's narrative has confirmed the inductive, subjective, qualitative, interpretivist and social constructivist nature of the research. The next chapter will report the study's results and will provide an analysis of the findings.

Chapter Four - Results and Analysis of Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter is concerned with the reporting and analysis of the results of the study's interview transcripts. Immersion in the data and familiarity with it were seen to be essential prerequisites which needed to be undertaken before a thoroughgoing analysis could be made of the data that would enable key themes to be identified. In order to assist with this process, the interview responses are first explored in this chapter on a question by question basis. Quotations from the interview transcripts are incorporated here to evidence the results and to inform the preliminary analysis. The full transcripts of the pilot interview and the fifteen subsequent interviews can be found in the appendices. In this chapter the results are reported and are subject to initial interpretation and analysis. The key themes that emerged from the interview transcripts are identified towards the end of the chapter. The issues arising from the analysis and their implications may be found in Chapter 5 Discussion of Findings.

The interview participants

After the pilot interview had been conducted and analysed some minor changes were made to the interview questions. There were fifteen interview participants in the study. They included the chief executive of a national tourism organisation, DMO chief executives/chief officers and key stakeholders of Marketing Cheshire all of whom were directors of organisations, including members of the board of Marketing Cheshire.

The interview participant's coding and their designations are shown in the following table.

Interview participant's code	Designation
P1	Chief executive, national tourism organisation
P2	Chief executive, DMO
P3	Director, DMO
P4	Chief executive, DMO
P5	Chief executive, DMO
P6	Chief executive, DMO
P7	A senior and experienced member of the public sector in Cheshire and Warrington
P8	Executive Chairman of a retail organisation with its headquarters in the Cheshire and Warrington sub-region
P9	Board member, Marketing Cheshire
P10	Chief executive, DMO
P11	Managing director, major tourist attraction
P12	Director, major attraction, Cheshire
P13	Destination management partnership manager
P14	Executive director, DMO
P15	Chairman of a major sporting club and public sector chief executive

Table 5 - Interview participant's coding and designations

4.2 Standard question Q1. 'What business would you say that you are in?

This question was introduced after the pilot study. The question was intended to serve two main purposes. First, it would provide context to the responses to the subsequent questions by allowing all participants to articulate what business they were in and thus declare their interest in and qualification to express their opinions over the subject matter. Secondly it would enable practitioners (DMO chief officers/executives) to describe their own business area in their own words. This was partly because there is divide amongst academics over how to describe the work of DMO's (destination marketing, destination management, place marketing, place branding, city branding, city promotion etc.) and partly because it was felt to be important to give practitioners a voice in describing their own business area as this does not often occur in the extant literature. The same standard question was posed to all interview participants. As this was the opening question and it was anticipated that participants might have been somewhat apprehensive over what questions they were going to be asked, the question was delivered in as gentle and respectful manner as possible in order to try to put the participants at ease. The particular formulation of the words was selected as it was less aggressive and interrogative than the simpler and more direct, 'What business are you in?'

Responses to the first interview question are interesting as this question cast revealing light on the DMO chief officers'/executives' perceptions of the business that they were in. The question also revealed the diversity of sectors that the other senior level respondents represented as key stakeholders in the economy of Cheshire and Warrington.

Three of the 8 chief officers/executives responded to this question by stating that they were in the destination management business (P5, P13 and P14) and two responded by saying that they were in the destination marketing business (P2 and P4). One spoke of being in the attraction business.

> P3 – Erm, very much the world of attraction, so it's the business of attraction, for us it's er, attracting economic success for the city, city region, whether that be in visitors, whether it be in conference visitors, whether it be in students, whether it be in inward investment, so we see ourselves very much in the business of attraction.

Another chief executive referred to 'persuading people'.

> P6 - I think nowadays we're in the business of persuading people who don't currently live in Cheshire to come and, erm, either visit Cheshire, consider it for investing, erm, investing in as business people or to study

The remaining DMO chief executive spoke in organisational structure terms.

> P10 – We are a modern age business collective, so we are a community interest company but I tend to think of it as a collective of small, medium businesses to work to generate business for them but also wider benefits for Cornwall (……indistinct).

Obtaining practitioners' perceptions as to how they describe the business that they are engaged in assists in providing a better understanding of how best to describe this sphere of activity in the light of the different terms favoured by academics. Almost all of the DMO chief executives/chief officers described themselves as being in the business of destination marketing or destination management and none referred to destination branding, place branding, city branding, city promotion or any other similar term that is frequently used by some academics to describe DMO practice.

NTO chief executive

The NTO chief executive provided a complex response to this question.

> P1 – Well –um- simply we're in tourism and um – eh- that of course covers a multitude of disciplines which is quite difficult really. Increasingly tourism is being called the visitor economy because I think has a – it seems to have a greater resonance and relevance to the disparate parts of industry. They know that they are dealing with visitors whomever they may be or from where they may come.

Public/private sector directors/chief executives

All the public/private sector directors/chief executives were from Cheshire and Warrington and all held very senior roles in their respective organisations although they generally tended to understate their seniority when asked what business they were in. Two of the interview participants were current board members of Marketing Cheshire who went on to become interim chairs of the organisation and another

participant held a very important ceremonial and representative role in addition to his business interests.

The responses to Q1 'What business would you say you were in?' were as follows.

P7 - Well I work for the Cheshire and Warrington Local Enterprise Partnership.

P8 – Erm, I'm a retailer

P9 – My business, I'm er, er in the management of a convention complex

P11 – Erm, we are, are a, well, a number of different hats on, depending on who you are. We are a technically a conservation and education charity. So a not-for-profit organisation erm, but we're also a commercial enterprise and er, we need to be a commercial enterprise to maintain er, what we do here at the zoo and so er, you could say that..and some people describe us as a visitor attraction as well. So it depends on who you are er, will depend on what sort of business…well it varies really.

P12 – Erm, primarily manufacturing, er, but it expands on that, so its manufacturing, retail and tourism.

P15 – Erm, well I would say that I'm in a range of businesses actually. Erm, I'd say first of all that I'm in the private sector because I'm involved as the chairman of a major sporting club based in Warrington erm, secondly I'm erm, involved in the public sector erm, in the leadership of the local authority erm, and I also have involvements in the charitable world, I am a trustee of the National Football Museum and I have a few other private sector business interests outside of the immediate area in which I spend most of my time.

By virtue of their response to the first question two of these respondents (P11 and P12) had a well-defined interest in tourism and the visitor economy and the responses of two of the others suggested that they might have an implied interest in business tourism or sports tourism (P9 and P15). Apart from this the above respondents' answers to this question tended to suggest that they had a stakeholder interest in the general economy of Cheshire and Warrington which went beyond a narrow interest in tourism alone.

4.3 Standard question Q2. 'What can the private sector and the local place or destination marketing organisation do for each other in partnership?

This was a quintessential question in the context of this study as it related to the core issues of public and private financing and destination marketing governance. The Government Tourism Policy (DCMS, 2011) heralded a move away from the public funding of DMOs and anticipated the resultant gap being filled by the private sector. This begs the questions of whether the private sector is both willing and able to fill that gap. If a smooth transition from public to private sector funding and governance had been in evidence it might have been revealed in the interview participants' responses to this question. In practice, little recognition of the changing dynamic between the public and private sectors was articulated by the interviewees.

Responses to this question tended to be diverse and fragmented. A number of examples of partnership working were provided but clear statements of optimal partnership operating arrangements were not the norm in responses to this question. There was general acceptance of the need for partnership between the public and

private sectors amongst the DMO chief executives but this seemed to be a somewhat nebulous concept.

NTO chief executive

'Now tourism is essentially about the private sector we want to drive business through the private sector to boost the economy – but because – um – one is reliant on infrastructure issues that have so much to do with the public sector there has to be a conjoined approach to that destination management. Um – so I think the best thing that the private and public sector can do at a local level is establish the brand that they are aspiring to be, to market the brand, but to deliver the brand'.

In making this statement the NTO chief executive is recognising the need for DMOs and the public and private sectors to work together. This partnership approach is necessary because although business needs to be driven mainly in the direction of the private sector providers the visitor experience is impacted upon by transport and other infrastructures and by the presence or absence of litter etc. These elements are all within the public sector's domain.

DMO chief officers/executives
The clearest examples of DMO chief officers recognising the importance of the public and private sectors coming together in partnership in the study are below.

P2 – 'They don't, they don't work in isolation and I think what's clear is that you can't, neither can do the job by itself. Erm the public sector could do a job but

wouldn't without the engagement of the private sector erm, know that that job was being effective or was the right job, or doing the right things erm and the private sector wouldn't be able to generally come together in a joined–up way to deliver effectively brand marketing for the destination. I think it's that sort of dual, joined-up, joined-up approach which is successful or should be at the heart of success within destination marketing. It needs both that is'.

P5 – 'I think the destination management organisation is the glue that sticks the public and private together. So I think the private sector is critical, they are at the coalface. They deliver tourism on the ground. They are, they represent the reasons that people come to a destination in the first place. Er, and they provide the services and facilities that a tourist needs to have a good experience when they're in a particular place. But I don't think that the private sector who have to focus on their bottom line, their viability, their profitability erm, can be the glue that sticks the whole destination together and presents it to the consumer in a way that they would want to buy it'.

P6 – 'Erm, well increasingly those are the main partnerships that are being formed and the answer is, they can do an awful lot together'.

P5's went beyond the concept of public and private partnership and describes the role of the DMO as providing the 'glue' that binds the public and private sectors together. This introduces the DMO role as that of a facilitator and it hints at the leadership role that the DMO role can provide.

Two of the DMOs represented by P4 and P10 receive no direct local authority funding. For P4 the local authority was merely another potential revenue stream which is evidenced by the following quotation,

P4 - 'we look at the public sector as a potential client'.

DMOs in this situation may have enjoyed a more conjoined relationship with their local authorities in the past but the relationship is now radically changed and therefore for them Standard Question Q2 may have a different meaning as they have evolved into organisations that are no longer reliant on local authority funding and they are no longer subject to the strictures of local authority influence.

Public/private sector directors/chief executives

Responses to this question by this group were more fragmented and less focused. This may be because partnership working is not core to their organisation's existence as it generally is in the case of DMOs.

P7 – 'There's clearly a, and there has been for the last five years, a massive reduction in public sector funding for a whole host of activity. And one area that's been er adversely affected by that reduction in public expenditure has been the amount of money that's been made available for place marketing'.

P8 – 'There is an awful lot of competition, there are an awful lot of places where consumers can go and purchase goods and it's in my interests they should purchase them in Cheshire so, we er, it's very important that they can encourage people to come in to the county and to purchase their goods not necessarily in the two major cities. Er, as far as what we can do for them is concerned, I struggle a bit more with that one, I'm not sure that I'm going to do

a lot for them er, with my retailing hat on but what I think er, is important is that the towns of Cheshire erm, are known to consumers'.

In addition, P8 made reference to the 'glue' that binds everything together in saying that,

> P8 – 'I think it's absolutely vital that Marketing Cheshire is part of the glue that keeps Cheshire together'.
>
> P9 – 'Well I think that's something that's being discovered I think that because such a huge amount of destination marketing organisations have existed pretty much exclusively funded by public funds even if they haven't been directly public funds they've been dressed up as you know their, their source has nearly always been public funding and I think that a slight point on that is that the private sector may very well have an expectation that the public sector should, should pay'.
>
> P11 – 'Ok, well we erm, from a Chester Zoo perspective would assume that destination marketing organisation or destination management organisation would help promote us as a zoo, would help promote us both here in Chester, in Cheshire, sub-regionally and in the UK as well as internationally and probably would be able to provide us with contacts and open doors for us that we wouldn't be able to open on a, on a single basis. That's probably number one'.

It is interesting that P8, a respondent who was neither a DMO chief executive or board member also made reference to the local DMO providing the 'glue' that binds everything together'.

P11's viewpoint as expressed above is rather narrow and is focused on the specifics of what the DMO can directly do for the CEO's organisation. The attraction in question is named and the linkage is specific. The DMO's role is seen as being to promote the attraction rather than to generically promote Chester, Cheshire or Warrington.

In contrast with this narrow view P15 saw the optimum relationship between the public and private sectors as one of symbiosis.

> P15 –' Well I think it er, should be a symbiotic relationship and the DMO really should deliver the needs and the aspirations of the private sector businesses around place promotions and place shaping, are the two things that I would say'.

P15 subsequently elaborated on this and suggested that genuine partnership had not always been at the forefront of DMO thinking.

> P15 – 'My experience of DMOs, because in the past I've been a sponsor of DMOs at a regional level, is that erm, they're not all as in sync with the needs of the businesses as they are to represent and profile and present in the right sort of way'. This comment suggests that a reappraisal of the nature of partnership could enable DMOs to better serve the needs of their private sector partners.

It should be noted that the use of the phrase 'local place or destination marketing organisation' in Standard Question Q2 did generate some response as it became evident that a small number of participants preferred the term 'destination management organisation' and that was the way that they referred to their own

organisations. This was particularly the case with P5 and P14. In general, it seemed that the concept of partnership between the private sector and DMOs held more meaning for DMO chief executives/chief officers than it did for DMO key stakeholders.

4.4 Standard question Q3. 'What do you see as the main challenges to an effective partnership between the local place or destination marketing organisation and its partners?

This question did not elicit a very satisfactory response in the pilot interview as the respondent felt that the question was too similar to the previous one and that the answer had already been given to that question. However, it was judged that this response was something of an aberration and it was decided not to change the question as a result of the pilot interview. This decision was vindicated when no difficulties with the question were encountered in the interviews proper.

The purpose of this question was to enable interview participants to identify any challenges to partnership in the business environment and to suggest any elements that could be improved. The inclusion of the term, 'if anything' permitted participants to express the view that nothing could be improved. In practice all respondents spoke of potential enhancements.to partnership working.

DMO chief officers/executives

Three of the DMO chief officers/executives saw multiple challenges to partnership working.

P2 – 'I think erm, generally there are, there are lots really and I think there are erm, yes…it goes in scales really. There are some, there are some fundamentals around understanding, a common agenda and agreeing a common agenda, a common approach to marketing the destination. That might be anything from understanding what are the most important markets to be attracting to the destination or what are the most effective messages in attracting those people to that destination, right down to the tactics used in campaigns and, you know, so I think that the challenges are at all levels'.

P3 – 'Well err, a number, there's a number of associated issues with that. I think it's about ensuring that you have the right, the right skillsets, the right mechanics, the right levels of innovation and creativity erm to ensure that that fundamentally you can behave a bit like a private sector agency that would have to go out and win business. So destinations have to be run as a business, not so much as a support mechanism'.

One interview participant spoke of common challenges but also others that were specific to the place.

P5 – 'Erm, there's a lot of challenges but I think the challenges, there will be some very common ones and then there are some that are particular to the place'.

A further three DMO chief officers/executives were very clear in highlighting funding and, in particular, reducing public sector funding as one of the key challenges facing their DMOs.

P6 – 'Never getting quite enough money to do something really well. I came from a background where campaigns were better funded, the well, the better funded a campaign is the more ambitious you can be, and often the better results you can achieve'.

P13 – 'Erm, the challenges to the partnership can be around funding. I think that's one of the key ones that we find, in the increasingly absent local authority funding erm, we have to look for other sources of income'.

P14 – 'I mean one of the biggest challenges facing us is not just losing public sector funding but also losing private sector funding so it's making sure that you are actually erm, delivering what both parties need and that you're working effectively in that partnership and kind of brokering the, the, the expectation levels and being clear about it'.

NTO chief executive

This interview participant was very explicit in identifying the key challenge to partnership working.

P1 'Money – (laughs) – quite simply'.

Public/private sector directors/chief executives

The existential threat that Marketing Cheshire was experiencing at the time was recognised by P8 and two other interview participants from this group saw funding as the main challenge to effective partnership.

P8 – Er, well in the case of Marketing Cheshire I think the real, the biggest challenge is whether Marketing Cheshire will continue to exist er, it clearly isn't financed in the same way as its opposite numbers in Manchester and Liverpool

and erm, it struggles because of our three local authorities to come up with a coordinated message erm, and the danger is that if we are erm, seen as separate organisations then we will erm, we will suffer and I think it's absolutely vital that Marketing Cheshire is part of the glue that keeps Cheshire together and enables it to erm, have a certain critical mass which makes it a relevant player in the north-west.

P11 – 'The main challenge at the moment is funding'.

P12 – 'Er, well there's a cost to it isn't there'?

P15's view was that strategy was the foremost challenge.

P15 – Erm, I think er, clearly the first thing is strategy which involves taking into account the needs, wishes and aspirations of the partners who wish to be involved with the DMO.

Despite the issue that arose in the pilot interview this question proved to be satisfactory in the interviews proper and some rich data was obtained.

4.5 Standard question Q4 'What, if anything, could enhance partnership levels?'
This question sought to investigate potential solutions. The question was intended to reveal potential ways forward during a period of transition for DMOs. As the question was put to all interview respondents it offered the prospect of enhancement solutions from a wide range of stakeholder perspectives.

This question again included the term, 'if anything' to enable the interview participants to express the view that nothing could be improved. In practice, virtually all respondents were able to identify potential enhancements to partnership working.

DMO chief officers/executives

A variety of opinions were expressed by the DMO chief officers/executives in response to this question but finance, funding and funding related issues loomed large. The role of leadership was mentioned several times and was implied in a reference to stakeholder engagement and one participant highlighted the need for a clear destination management plan.

> P2 – 'The biggest thing that makes a difference is being able to come to the table with a budget…..'

> P3 – 'Well a lot of it comes down to, to er, effective leadership…..'

> P4 – 'Trying to get the public sector, er, to see the real value of the work we do and the benefit we can bring to the local economy. Erm, obviously tourism is a non-statutory function and although there is a responsibility for the economy, erm, they can be very selective about where they spend their money. Inevitably at the moment money is getting tighter and tighter by the minute and that has direct effect on what we can actually deliver for the greater good if you like across all our activities'

> P5 – 'I think recognition from central government that tourism is a serious sector could really, really enhance partnerships at the local level. I think the Westminster scepticism and suspicion really of something called the visitor economy and tourism trickles down and I think it, erm, has an impact at a local

level, erm, and not just in terms of the amount of funding there is or support for the sector'.

P6 – 'I tell you what would be really fantastic in Cheshire, would be to identify somebody who is from the private sector but who really has the respect of the public sector and who could act as a ring master, work with me to herd everybody together up to a common cause because the, the coalition breaks up very, very easily as soon as anything beyond a specific activity is, is being mooted. And, you know, that could come from somewhere like the LEP…..'

P10 – 'Effective, I mean it's one thing you've got to work on, we're young, is effective stakeholder engagement'.

P13 – 'Erm, in our instance one of …a very, you know, sort of basic or fundamental thing is more resource'.

P14 – 'I think it's a clear plan'.

NTO chief executive

Interestingly this participant at first alludes to finance and then refers to destination leadership.

P1 'Well (sighs) – em- (laughs) – back to money again, of course. Some form of seed core funding to draw together the disparate bits of money that might be available from the private sector. But actually, it's about having a vision. And it's about having great destination leadership'.

Public/private sector directors/chief executives

Responses to the question from this group were diverse but the question certainly raised some passions, particularly from P9 when referring to local authority

representation on the Marketing Cheshire board. Open and transparent decision-making was highlighted (P7) and the nature of relationships within partnerships was mentioned by P9 and P15. One interview participant (P8) spoke of a desire for more consideration of the needs of business generally as opposed to tourism business, which in academic parlance, could be construed as the advocacy of place marketing over destination marketing.

> P7 'I think there has to be open decision-making, open and transparent decision-making in those partnerships, especially in public-private partnerships erm, and then also if people don't like what's going on they should be allowed to leave and there shouldn't be any stigma attached to that'.

> P8 – 'I mean to the extent that Marketing Cheshire is, I mean Marketing Cheshire as I see it is largely for the tourist agenda, I'd like to see it working for the business agenda as well and erm, for it being a marketing organisation to encourage more people to come in to Cheshire erm, frankly to spend money'.

> P9 – 'Partnership is all very much about erm, having relationships and it's fundamentally, what is our common goal? So it's having a very clear deal on the table, I do this, you do this, you know, I pay you this much, in return I get this much, or whatever, erm, so I think that partnershipping, it's massively over-used word and often it's used to obfuscate a very harsh erm, kind of contractual relationship, so are you contractor, are you partner, are you whatever, I mean there is a way of making that work and that might be that actually you're partners and factual stakeholders but all that kind of relationship needs to be defined and needs to be very clear erm, my view is very private sector in that if the public sector ain't got no skin in the game, the public sector don't get no shout and, and I feel very strongly about that given the current situation within

you know the Marketing Cheshire board where you know the local authority representatives are generally grossly unhelpful, incredibly myopic and are just about making sure that they get some value for their money but absolutely have no vision beyond the boundaries of their own little administrative district and it saddens me hugely'.

P11 – 'Erm, I think the second one that I just mentioned. If, if it suddenly becomes a priority or starts to become more of a priority for the government that's when the private sector starts to prick its ears up and get interested'.

P12 - 'Erm, maybe a bit more communication'.

P15 – 'In the past I think DMOs have been very public sector led and orientated. I think there's nothing wrong with that. I'm not the sort of person who thinks, public sector bad, private sector good but I think increasingly the relationship has been enhanced by the fact that you've got more private sector people on the boards of the DMOs and more of the funding from the DMOs depends upon a good, purposeful and understood relationship based on performance by results from the private sector'.

The responses to this question were varied but many ideas were expressed which suggested that the DMO chief executives/chief officers and the key stakeholders were all interested in enhanced partnership relations.

4.6 Standard question Q5 'What is the future of place or destination marketing organisations?

This was the last of the standard questions. By asking an informed group of DMO chief nofficers/executives and DMO key stakeholders this question it was hoped that

a picture would emerge that could inform future strategy and which would also cast light on whether or not the private sector was willing and able to fill the gap created by reduced public sector funding of destination marketing.

DMO chief officers/executives

In general, the DMO chief officers/executives were in agreement about the challenges facing DMOs and that the business landscape was changing rapidly. There were allusions to previous funding models (P2, P3, P6, P10 and P13) and to the public sector legacy (P2, P6, P10 and P13). There was also a sense that a survival of the fittest scenario would prevail (P2, P4, P5 and P13). Collaboration between DMOs was mentioned (P3) as well as place marketing (P5).

> P2 – 'Erm, erm. Going forward, the funding scenarios and the landscape as it is at the moment separates the wheat from the chaff really. I think there's going to be almost a sort of falling back to, to an older approach really where established resorts, established destinations will continue to survive because they've got an infrastructure and an ambition or understanding of key stakeholders and a desire to work together. And then on the other hand there's those destinations that haven't got the traction there with the private sector or haven't got the scale that's necessary to continue the ambitions that were set out with the public sector money'.

> P3 – 'Well I think there's a reality that erm , that the, the role of the destination marketing organisations was set up when we could fundamentally plough our own furrow and that created a degree of, of strong competitiveness and potentially not enough collaboration. I think the models going forward will see cities certainly working more closely together for collaborative reasons,

retaining the fact that we have a competitive element but working more in collaboration'.

P4 – 'I think they've got a future providing they can fund themselves'.

P5 – 'Well I think that place marketing organisations are probably fine because I think that the one thing that the private sector is happy to contribute to and sees direct return on investment for is promotion. So I think in terms of destination marketing agencies, I think, erm, the future is probably more positive than destination management agencies and I think it's a possibility, although I don't know, erm, that those of us engaged in destination management and we are because our destinations require that we are involved in management i.e. we don't have enough product, or the right product to take to market therefore we have to manage the destination and development it as much as we have to promote it but those areas that don't need to do that so much, erm, and have similar organisations to mine er, couldn't be blamed for actually becoming destination marketing agencies (laughs) because that's where the private sector investment is likely to come from'.

P6 – 'Well it's very bleak at the moment. Er, I think in the past with the regional development agencies, they were probably over generous in terms of tourism and destination marketing and people got used to really quite generous sums of money and quite high staffing levels. What's happened in the space of three years has been a ridiculous lurch in the other direction, much worse than the recession, so my core, my public sector funding has gone down 92% in, erm, three years. Right, well three and a half, three and a half years, into the third, into the fourth financial year, 92%. Now, you know, I know we've had a recession but people's, you know, 92% is a huge number and I think it's, it's a

reaction to the fact that in the past these organisations were fairly fat and a bit lazy and a bit unimaginative and it was a bit of a zero sum game in that they all got money so basically all they had to do was to keep the wheels turning and it's gone completely in the other direction now, completely starved of anything yet they've also got public sector liabilities in terms of expensive people and pensions which are very, very difficult'.

P10 - 'But I think that what we've got to look at them as, is I think they became quite intellectual in the RDA era of big DMOs and all of this and I think that they forgot about the individual businesses. It became a bit. 'parents know best'. So what we've got is 950 rebellious teenagers and our job is to persuade them that this is what they want erm, from not dictating, this is what you need. If you want to sell somebody something you don't sell it on need you sell it on want'.

P13 – 'Erm, (laughs). I think it's going to be erm, very, I think nationally it's going to be a very fragmented picture. I think historically people were used to having some form of tourism board that probably did a bit of marketing, a bit of quality work, erm, you know, a bit of product development, erm, but they were, they were fairly similar across the country. I think the future across the country is going to be a very fragmented approach, something that is relevant to the local area, rather than being, you know, a national model, or something that's the norm across the country'.

NTO chief executive

The NTO chief executive predicted a varied future for DMOs but, perhaps surprisingly, for one who led a national tourism organisation he saw more of a future for a place marketing as opposed to a destination management approach.

P1 – 'I think it's a – it's a varied future for many and I think the standard tourist board moniker or a destination management organisation just for tourism is if not in doubt it's not going to be the typical model. I think it'll involve partnerships who are also picking up quality of life issues, investment issues. Because if you are from a marketing point of view promoting an area for any one given reason, often those messages bleed across into other disciplines so if it's somewhere to live that's nice it's somewhere to visit that's nice, you know'.

Public/private sector directors/chief executives

This group of interview participants produced a very varied response to the question about the future of DMOs and there was relatively little common ground in their responses. P7's response focused on the arrangements that were in place at that time with Cheshire and Warrington LEP. P8 expressed the view that the existence of an organisation like Marketing Cheshire was very important despite the financial threats that it was under. This respondent would have like to see Marketing Cheshire directing its activities towards inward investment into the sub-region. P9 saw a 'precarious' future and this participant attributed a lot of the blame to local authorities pursuing narrow agendas. The view expressed by P11 was that DMOs in the future would need to be private sector led but with continuing local authority involvement. Above all they would need to be streamlined and effective. P15 was the only one of the interview respondents to mention Brexit. Brexit is likely to have a major influence on attitudes to DMOs as the need to promote destinations internationally is likely to assume a much greater importance in the post-Brexit era. The Brexit referendum took place on 23rd June 2016 and the interview with P15 was the only one to have taken place since that date.

P7 – 'Well the model that er we've taken in Cheshire and Warrington is that we've appointed er, Marketing Cheshire to do the erm, really to undertake the LEP's PR, marketing and social media activity. Er, that was done on a commercial basis so we're paying for that activity. Er, we have a proper contract in place er, that'll be reviewed after six months erm, that is very much around doing the PR activity for the local enterprise partnership erm, the local authorities through a separate contract, through three separate contracts, we've got three unitary authorities. They've each got their own er, contract with Marketing Cheshire to do specific pieces of work but we don't have a budget that allows us to overtly, and er, well yeah, overtly, promote Cheshire and Warrington er, either within the UK or overseas as a er, as a er, business destination'.

P8 – Well, I mean, again, I'm, you're asking me, I think they're very important is the answer to that. I do think it is, it is really important erm, that Marketing Cheshire erm, it's important to the whole commercial success of the county erm, and it is, it is troubling, I have spoken to their chief executive on a number of occasions and she always seems to be concerned about erm, the reductions in income, largely, I understand, this is public sector income that she largely gets although of course she has an organisation that is financed as well by the private sector so it's a slightly hybrid organisation erm, but certainly public sector income has been going down I understand for them and er, I think that's a shame. I think it is really important to have an organisation that shouts from the hilltops what we doing erm, there are lots of advantages for companies erm, coming into Cheshire, for example, and one of the things I'd like maybe should be tacked on to them is erm, is the whole subject of inward investment.

P9 – 'Well I think in the current climate, precarious, I would have said erm, because the public sector funding in most parts of the country, I'm sure that's not everywhere, is being continually eroded and where in Cheshire, for example, you've got three local authorities who fiercely want to be independent and show no signs whatsoever of cooperating as a fixed entity and as a ratepayer in Cheshire I find that absolutely offensive. You know, there is just…the world does not begin and end with Warrington's boundary, or West Cheshire's boundary or East Cheshire's boundary'.

P11 – 'Future, erm, they, I think the future is erm, well they need to become streamlined, very efficient, very effective at the same time. Erm, private sector led but I think the local authorities and the public sector will need to maintain their allegiance and be very much part of what's going on even if they're not core funders any longer'.

P15 – 'Erm, interesting question post-Brexit. I think Brexit is a big, big issue. You know, do we become an island, an unconnected island or are we part of wider European/global set of issues. I think that question's unanswered erm, erm. I do think you've got to take account of changes in the market place, erm, erm, places also change and go through different renaissances. Manchester over twenty years, Liverpool in particular over the last erm, ten years. Places change, people have to change with the nature of the market they (indistinct). Erm, but essentially I don't believe that the public purse is going to step up to the plate like it did in the past so I think, you know, that DMOs have now got to be much more performance and outcome, output orientated than they've been before. That will probably be the most important change and people will expect

more of a commercial advantage as a result of the relationship with the DMO than they've ever had before'.

The responses recognised the challenges that DMOs faced but there was some optimism about the future especially if change could be embraced. Some respondents saw more future in place marketing than in destination marketing.

This concludes the analysis of the standard questions.

Interview respondents were also asked follow-up questions which were largely based on their previous answers or particular circumstances related to the place where their DMO operated or the business that they were in.

The following table lists these follow-up questions and summarises the responses to the questions.

4.7 Responses to follow-up questions

The follow-up questions were all posed on an individual basis. The nature and wording of the questions frequently depending upon the individuals' response to the previous standard questions. At other times questions were constructed around the individual's particular knowledge, interests or organisational circumstances. Given the contextual need to include both the individual question and the response to the question in this instance it was felt most appropriate to present the data in a tabular format.

Interview participant	Follow-up questions and summary of responses Q - refers to Question and R – Response (verbatim)
P1	**Q - What issues do you see with the nature of promoting or marketing a product that you can't actually own, as it were?** The response didn't directly address the question but a case was made for a national strategy. The diversity of the English product offering was also highlighted.
	Q- In your response to the first question, you spoke about the experience economy. I wonder to what extent do you feel that the marketing or promotion of places or destinations is becoming the marketing of events. Events were seen as essential elements in the experience economy. They could be used either tactically or contextually but in either case uniqueness was the key.
P2	**Q- If I can ask you, what do you see as the principal differences between a destination marketing organisation and a destination management organisation?** The interview participant clarified the difference between these two designations and went on to say that in his view there couldn't be many genuine destination management organisations in the country, whatever they called themselves. P2 felt that destination management partnerships was a more meaningful term.

	Q- So how do you measure success for your organisation?
	This was a combination of measures which depended on the audience e.g. no. of visits to the website or no. of bookings etc..
P3	**Q- You mentioned destination and product, how do you discriminate between the two?**
	A distinction was drawn between the brand and the product but the interview respondent felt that these should coincide as much as possible so that the destination remained competitive and distinctive. In order for this to happen it was important for some control to be exercised over the product development of hotels and restaurants etc. to avoid homogenisation.
	Q- How would you describe your current organisation is it public or private, private or public?
	A description of an organisation in transition was given in this response.
	R. 'Well I would say that we are quasi-public so we are, we've been, we have certainly been much more of a public orientated organisation. You know we are now moving into a more dynamic commercial facing organisation and I think that for us the reason why that has been a little bit more delayed in its transition is because of the European funding arrangements here because

	European funding has been extended here for longer than it has in other destinations. We've kind of allowed that to still continue to create the mould and is that comes to an end which it certainly is doing next year then fundamentally we have to reinvent so it's about moving, it's about having a very strong commercial and very strong public sector leadership liaison but it's about then being, bringing that to life by through the, using that to basically win the hearts and minds of the private sector so our journey is very much on that approach'.
P4	**Q- What kind of sectors your members or partners come from? Are they across the board?** A diverse range of businesses were cited including hotels, B&Bs, caravan sites, camping sites and other accommodation providers but also international attractions, countryside sites, some churches and town council tourism groups etc. The common denominator being that these members perceived themselves to have a tourism interest. This particular DMO also undertook consultancy work for a variety of non-tourism businesses e.g. website development and management.
	Q- And how is that organised from a company structure perspective? A single entity operates as the parent company and all employees are under contract to that company. Beneath this there are

	subsidiary companies e.g. a marketing company which doesn't contain the word 'tourism' in its title and a tourism services company with no geographic identity so that it can sell tourism services outside the area that the DMO serves.
P5	**Q- The government's 2011 tourism policy does draw the distinction between destination marketing and destination management organisations and it signals a desire to move towards destination management organisations. What would you say is the principal distinction between the two terms?** The response to this question acknowledged that the term 'marketing' embraces product (as exemplified in what is known as the marketing mix) but the respondent argued that this was not widely understood. R- 'I think destination marketing is, if you take marketing in its fullest sense, then it should be about product as much as it should be about promotion. I don't think that most people interpret marketing, destination marketing in that way though. I think it's what they are calling, what they really mean is destination promotion. Now I'm a marketeer by trade so for me marketing means the whole thing. It means product as much as promotion but I don't think that's true of most people and I don't think it's true for private sector businesses operating in the visitor economy. They see marketing purely as promotion so that's why we have this confusion possibly between

	destination management and marketing. I'd be quite happy to call myself a destination marketing agency if marketing was defined in its truest sense but it's not so I would say that we are a destination management agency and the difference between what we do and what others do is that we engage with a very, very wide range of people that aren't involved in promotion of place, that are actually involved in the product'.
	Q- How are your partners composed in terms of sectors and the size of businesses? R – 'Some 450 diverse partner organisations including hotels, B&Bs, hostels, university accommodation providers etc. comprise the primary stakeholders and in addition there are about 150 organisations who are linked to the visitor economy but whose business is not entirely dependent upon it e.g. taxi companies and some restaurants'.
P6	**Q- Are there any precedents for the type of organisation that you've outlined, that could be the future?** In response to this question two example organisations were cited. The view was expressed that many DMOs were considering downsizing into a much smaller and almost 'virtual' organisations in order to save salary and other costs.
	Q- What is meant by a private-public partnership?

	Public-private partnerships represent a relatively commonplace business structure arrangement. At the time the DMO in question described itself as a private-public partnership which was a very uncommon term. This question sought to clarify what was meant by this term but the response was not very specific.
P7	**Q- Can I ask you what you see as the difference between destination marketing and place marketing and destination management, destination marketing, place marketing perhaps?** The interview respondent saw these terms as having little beyond semantic value. What really mattered was the focus of the activity i.e. was it directed solely towards tourism or did it serve the wider economy of a destination.
	Q- What would you see as the optimum relationship or arrangement between a local LEP and a destination marketing organisation, if any at all? The response to this question described the relationship that then existed between Cheshire and Warrington LEP and Marketing Cheshire. The view expressed was that the precarious funding that underpinned both organisations mitigated against any stronger or deeper arrangement.
P8	**Q- What could be done to attract more talented young graduates into Cheshire?**

	This interviewee was aware that there were a high proportion young graduates in Cheshire but not necessarily in the Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects that were sought after by leading employers. In a follow-up clarification the interviewee was advised that the reason for asking the question was that many talented young graduates now exhibit a preference to live in cities. The respondent defended Cheshire and Warrington as a centre for business. It was pointed out that 17 major corporations have located their head office in Manchester and that Warrington is not far behind with as many as 16 major corporations based there. This interview participant saw the Cheshire and Warrington sub-region as a bridge between the city and the countryside.
P9	**Q- Terminology can sometimes get in the way with this subject area. What do you see as the difference between destination marketing and destination management organisations?** R- 'Just a name', was the initial response to this question. The respondent followed up by saying, 'I don't, I think it's, it's just you know, this month's label. It's kind of changed and I think that you could with all these things, that's actually a feature of public life. That's oh, do you know we're changing our name because we….and here's the money, so today you're a this, tomorrow you're at - it's all utterly irrelevant, it's actually the objectives and the clarity around them, the purpose of the organisation which matters, not

	what you're called although you do have to describe yourself appropriately so people can understand'.
	Q- To what extent do you think that the prospects for Cheshire are tied up with the prospects for Manchester and Liverpool? This respondent saw the prospects for Cheshire and Warrington as being inextricably linked to the prospects for Manchester and Liverpool.
P10	**Q- To what extent are you involved in the whole visitor economy agenda in terms of inward investment and all the rest of it and to what extent is it tourism alone?** The organisation in question was only involved in promoting tourism but the respondent argued that this approach might be short-sighted and that the organisation could potentially operate within a wider place marketing agenda.
P11	**Q- Can I ask you whether in your former role as chairman of the DMO you found any conflicts between the public and the private sector which inhibited any progress?** The differences between the public and private sectors were manifest in the speed of decision-making. The private sector was capable of making faster decisions whereas the public sector needed the approval of various committees before a decision could be made. Political uncertainty also dogged the public sector

	but this was not the fault of the officers. There was also conflict between elected members and officers over who was actually running the public sector organisation.
	Q- My final question is, who do you think should be the type of people who should be the board members of a DMO?
	A complex and detailed answer was provided to this question. The chair should be a relatively senior but totally independent person from a private sector organisation linked to the visitor economy and resident within the area. Other board members should represent local authorities but have a non-executive role. Other board members could represent the local (Business Improvement District) BID company and possibly the chamber of commerce. Other board members could have specific expertise such as digital marketing or finance. Ideally there should not be more than 10 members of a DMO board.
P12	**Q- What can the local place or destination marketing organisation do to facilitate partnership between, effectively, partners?**
	This may not have been the most satisfactory question as it bore too much similarity to one or two of the standard questions. However, it did produce a satisfactory response.

	The respondent felt that DMOs could bring partners together and that could encourage those partners to find common ground which could provide synergistic benefits.
	Q- What trends do you see in leisure in Cheshire? The response to this question stressed the importance of family entertainment.
P13	**Q- Can I ask, is your current organisation public sector, private sector or some hybrid in between?** This question generated a complex answer. R - 'Yes, chamber of commerce is the official over-arching organisation which is a company limited by guarantee, Lincolnshire Chamber of Commerce. I am employed by the chamber of commerce as is one of my colleagues. And all of the VisitLincoln activity sits within the chamber of commerce so we could be a project, if you like, within the chamber of commerce. From the business point of view we, there's no, we don't hide it but there's no obvious connection with the chamber of commerce necessarily and certainly from a consumer point-of-view we have out completely own brand and can feel, you know, delivery of activity. So we have an executive committee which is chaired by a private sector business and that all happens outside the chamber of commerce's board meetings or anything else. So that group of people essentially manages the direction of the VisitLincoln partnership'.

	Q- Is the scope of the organisation restricted to tourism or the visitor economy or is it wider than that? Although this respondent's organisation's activity was currently restricted to the visitor economy she saw potential wider opportunities in place marketing. 'At the moment obviously it's restricted to tourism and the visitor economy but it's focused on that but I think the opportunity going forward is, as many other destinations are doing, is to be, to look more broadly at the place marketing agenda'.
P14	**Q- To what extent do you think that the marketing of, or the management of destinations is becoming the marketing or the management of events?** The respondent felt that events could play an integral part in promoting a destination, citing the Bath Christmas Market. This successful annual event apparently began as an initiative to fill empty bedrooms in the city. However, DMOs were not necessarily best placed to run events except in the case of very large DMOs. The hosting of business events could also play an important role.
	Q- In destination terms, are wild boar an advantage or a disadvantage? This was a tangential question. In the area that the respondent represented feral wild boar have generated some controversy.

	In general terms this respondent felt that any wild animals that provided differentiation for an area were a distinct advantage.
P15	**Q- What role can private sports clubs have in promoting destinations?** This question was asked because the interview participant was the chairman of a major sporting club and also held a very senior leadership role in the local authority which was home to that professional sporting club. The respondent felt that sporting clubs can have a very important role in generating awareness and identity for places. The respondent observed that on a global basis, if you said that you were from people will tend to think of Manchester or Liverpool because of the football clubs associated with those cities. The local economic contribution of hosting two Rugby League World Cup games was also cited. In addition, a link was drawn between the local club doing well and the local happiness quotient. It was even suggested that this could even have an effect on productivity because if the local team were doing well people felt happier and may therefore work harder.

Table 6 - Follow-up questions and summary of responses to questions

4.8 Identification of discussion themes

As stated in the Methodology and Methods chapter the researcher made a decision to use Template Analysis as developed by King (2012) and King and Brooks (2016) to analyse the data. Arriving at the selected template of discussion themes involved an iterative process. 'A priori' themes (King, 2012, p.429) prompted by the research question informed the researcher's standard interview questions and these formed the basis of the initial template. The a priori themes that were identified were DMO finance and funding and DMO governance. The original template was produced and the interview transcripts were examined for references to these themes. Recurrence on at least two occasions was determined to be the minimum requirement for inclusion as a top-level theme although by the end of the process all the top-level themes occurred in multiple transcripts. Some top-level themes were then sub-divided into second and (sometimes) third level hierarchical sub-themes. The criteria for the inclusion of second and third level themes was less strenuous and although they had to be hierarchically linked to a first-level theme on occasions a single mention in the transcripts could qualify them for inclusion. All the top-level themes were given a single colour-coding and these and second level and third level themes were identified within the colour code of their top level theme on copies of the transcripts to ensure that a comprehensive analysis had been undertaken. One of these colour-coded transcripts is included in Appendix 2 to illustrate the process. The colour coding used was as follows:

1. Funding and finance, Yellow

2. Leadership, Bright Green

3. Governance, Turquoise

4. Partnership, Pink

5. Destination marketing and destination management, Dark Yellow

6. International, Grey (50%)

7. Cheshire, Red

8. Warrington, Teal

9. Future of DMOs, Grey (25%)

The initial template was subsequently revised four times throughout the analytical process to better refine the themes for discussion. Examples of the revisions included the relegation of 'Brexit' to a sub-theme. 'Brexit' had originally featured as a top-level theme as it was judged to be a sufficiently important issue to justify such a ranking. Several participants had mentioned EU funding and this was seen as justifying the inclusion of 'Brexit' as a theme. However, King (2012, p. 431) makes the point that 'the term 'theme' implies repetition' and that 'it should not be applied to a single isolated instance where a view is expressed'. All the interviews save one took place before the date of the UK's Brexit Referendum on 23rd June 2016 (bbc.co.uk, 2018) Participant P15 in the final interview described 'Brexit' as a 'big, big issue' but as this was the only specific mention of 'Brexit' in the formal interviews it was decided that it could not be included as a top-level theme and consequently in the later iterations of the discussion theme template 'The implications of Brexit for DMOs' appears as a sub-theme under Theme 6 The International Context.   Similarly, 'Cheshire' and 'Warrington' did not appear as themes in the early iterations of the template but these two place names are absolutely central to the study and as they were both mentioned by several interview participants they were both included as top-level themes in their own right. In later templates a sub-theme entitled 1.6 Funding, finance and impact

was replaced with 1.6 LEPs as several respondents had referred to these organisations. In the final template 1.2 Positive aspects of public sector funding and 1.3 Negative aspects of public sector funding were replaced with 1.2 Pros and cons of public sector funding and 1.4 Positive aspects of private sector funding and 1.5 Negative aspects of private sector funding were replaced by 1.3 Pros and cons of private sector funding. In each of these cases it was felt that the 'positive' and 'negative' tags were too polarised and binary in nature. The fifth and final iteration of the discussion themes is presented in Table 7 below.

DISCUSSION THEMES 5th iteration 25/7/18

1. FUNDING AND FINANCE

1.1 Reduction in public sector funding

1.2 Pros and cons of public sector funding

    1.2.1 Short-termism and political change in local and central government

    1.2.2 Parochialism in local government priorities

1.3 Pros and cons of private sector funding

    1.3.1 Dominance and expectations of big players

    1.3.2 Corporate return on investment

1.4 LEPs

2. LEADERSHIP

2.1 The importance of leadership

2.2 Leadership challenges

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3. GOVERNANCE

3.1 The implications of changed funding on corporate governance

3.2 Heterogeneity of DMO business models

3.3 Identity and transformation issues

4. PARTNERSHIP

4.1 The impact of reduced public funding on partnership

4.2 Implications for stakeholders

5. DESTINATION MARKETING, DESTINATION MANAGEMENT AND PLACE MARKETING

5.1 The role of DMOs

5.2 Who owns the destination?

5.21 Legitimacy of DMOs

5.3 Place marketing

6. THE INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

6.1 Implications of Brexit for DMOs

7. CHESHIRE

8. WARRINGTON

9. FUTURE OF DMOs
9.1 DMOs in the digital era

Table 7 - Discussion themes (fifth and final iteration)

4.9 Summary

This chapter began with a detailed examination of the responses to the standard questions and the follow-up questions. The analytical process then moved on to identify and code the themes that occur within the data. Nine top level themes were identified and these were:

Funding and finance, leadership, governance, partnership, destination marketing and destination management, international, Cheshire, Warrington and the future of DMOs. Discussion of these themes will provide the basis for the next chapter.

Chapter Five - Discussion

5.1 Introduction

The fifth and final iteration of the Template Analysis of the results (King, 2012, King and Brooks, 2016) identified nine top level themes together with sixteen second level themes and five third level themes. The top level themes that were identified were: funding and finance, leadership, governance, partnership, destination marketing, destination management and place marketing, the international context, Cheshire, Warrington and the future of DMOs. These themes will be examined and discussed in turn in this chapter.

5 .2 Funding and finance

Although funding and finance did not specifically feature in any of the standard interview questions it was identified as one of the two a priori themes (King, 2012, King and Brooks, 2016). The critical importance of this theme was underlined by the fact that every single one of the interview participants referred to funding and finance at some point in their interviews. This theme emerged as by far the most dominant theme in the research and it also generated a number of second and third level themes. This is apt as the research question that this thesis seeks to answer is fundamentally predicated on funding and finance. Funding and finance are also strongly linked to the aim of the study.

The dominance of the theme of funding and finance in the responses reflects its importance in the perceptions of the interview participants and it highlights the relatively light coverage that this topic receives in the extent literature. Insightful reference to funding and finance is made in Pike (2016) and Coles et al (2014) discuss

the funding of DMOs in some detail. Heeley (2015) devotes a sub-section of one chapter in his book to Finance and Partnering but this is not a central component in his work. In general terms funding and finance is a neglected area in the pertinent literature and as this theme features so strongly in the interview participants' responses this reinforces the earlier observation that a considerable gap is present in the relevant literature.

5.2.1 Reduction in public sector funding

This second level theme evoked responses from eight of the interview participants (four DMO chief officers/executives and four public/private sector directors/chief executives). This was therefore a topic that resonated with the majority of interview participants.

In some cases, the reported reduction in public sector funding was dramatic and radical. As previously noted, P6, a DMO chief executive spoke of a 92% reduction over three and a half years. This severe reduction in public sector funding is endorsed by Heeley (2015). P6 attributed this partly to public sector largesse in the past,

> 'I think it's, it's a reaction to the fact that in the past these organisations were fairly fat and a bit lazy and a bit unimaginative and it was a bit of a zero sum game in that they all got money so basically all they had to do was to keep the wheels turning and it's gone completely in the other direction now, completely starved of anything yet they've also got public sector liabilities in terms of expensive people and pensions which are very, very difficult'.

Apart from testifying to the reduction in public sector funding this response also refers to the higher salaries that sometimes prevailed in the public sector at this time and to higher pension costs and public sector terms of employment.

Speaking in October 2014, a DMO chief executive (P5) reported that;

> P5 - 'after next year there's no money coming from central government, for the first time since 1969. There is no central government funding coming into the delivery of tourism services in a destination. It's all at the local level'.

Interview participant P15, the chairman of a major sporting club and a public sector chief executive offered valuable insight into this issue in several comments made during the course of the interview.

> P15 – 'The fact that the DMOs now are more and more private sector funded has probably switched things much more closely to a needs-led environment but in the past, and this is my view, there was some gap between the ambitions and the objectives of a DMO and the business needs and objectives of a private sector organisation but I think because now there's little public money, there is still some public money though I understand, often on a commission basis for a particular product or a service, there is, I think, more of a closer alignment now because of the private sector funding and the private sector led and mainly private sector funded DMO' .

> 'Erm, coupled with the fact, DCMS have cut back enormously on the amount of funding they're putting in to tourism'.

> 'in many ways DMOs are now very much now dependent on either commission services from the public sector or subscription income and a high level of performance from the private sector that they're representing'.

'I don't believe that the public purse is going to step up to the plate like it did in the past so I think, you know, that DMOs have now got to be much more performance and outcome, output orientated than they've been before'.

The picture that is painted in the data is one in which the previously generous funding of DMOs by the public sector has largely disappeared. This accords with some accounts in the literature (Coles et al, 2014, Heeley, 2015, Pike, 2016). The interview transcripts do provide evidence that some limited public funding is still available but any such funding is not awarded automatically and it is often subject to a competitive bidding process. It is also suggested that the era of substantive public funding of DMOs may have been accompanied by a limited requirement to demonstrate accountability in terms of the needs of the private sector and that this is now a changed situation with DMOs having to be much more accountable, particularly to their private sector partners. For some DMOs the reduction in public sector may have been so severe that it presented an existential threat for many DMOs and their survival came to depend upon their ability to produce alternative revenue streams. Some of those who were unable to do this did not survive as organisations. This situation provided a classic example of the need to display organisational ambidexterity. DMOs had traditionally received most of their funding from the public sector and their response to this was to undertake largely exploitative operations by continuing to act as they had always done in the past. The changed funding environment required them to seek out alternative funding possibilities and therefore to operate in a much more exploratory manner (Scott et al, 2017). The exposure of this (relative) gap in the extant literature with regards to finance and funding is one of the main contributions of the current research and it provides the basis upon which theory can be built (Saunders et al,

2015). The dramatic reduction in public sector funding has created a compelling need for DMOs to either downsize or to create alternative revenue streams. Adaptation to the new business environment involves dexterity as DMOs have to transition from predominately exploitative activity in the direction of a more exploratory approach. Such a transition strongly outlines the need for organizational ambidexterity.

5.2.2 Pros and cons of public sector funding

Several of the interview participants saw the main advantage of public sector funding as providing a key starting point in attracting private sector funding. P2, a DMO chief executive, made the following comment:

> 'The biggest thing that makes a difference is being able to come to the table with a budget and I think erm, I've worked in organisations where there was no marketing budget but there was an expectation to deliver marketing so you then have to go out and bring partners to the table to come up with a, a common investment plan and a common budget that they can all sort of contribute to and then the organisation can deliver on their behalf. That job is made much easier if you can go to the table and say I've got x amount will you match it or will you contribute to it to help build the pot. I think that's the biggest learning that we'll take out of, this is effectively the third year of a three-year programme that we've been delivering where we've been awarded a sum of money to deliver marketing activity and in having that sum of money as a starting point we've levered significant additional public and private sector resources into those marketing activities'.

P2 added:

'but in bringing the private sector to the table around tourism marketing I think that the job's made easier if you got some money on the table in the first place'.

P11, the managing director of a major visitor attraction, alluded to the reduction and uncertainty surrounding public sector finance and by so doing this respondent pointed up the pertinence of the concept of organisational ambidexterity to DMOs as they transition from being largely public sector funding entities to pursue a more commercial and private sector path (Junni et al, 2013, Scott et al, 2017b, Stokes et al, 2015, Weber and Tarba, 2014).

'So that's probably the biggest challenge, not knowing what the funding is. Not knowing how long it's going to last and trying to replace that funding with either private sector funding or finding alternative ways of making what was traditionally a DMO that was there to give advice and to help, support and all those other things that I mentioned earlier but now actually starting to become a commercial animal themselves in selling product to actually make money to keep the organisation going and that's probably the biggest challenge'.

The above viewpoints which essentially lament the reduction in public sector funding contrast markedly with the position adopted by P3, a DMO director, who stated:

'So in one regard the, the reducing of public sector resources is, can either be seen as a negative or positive. I tend to look at it in our context as being a positive'.

However later in the interview P3 states that the destination in question is still enjoying continuing European funding and therefore the cuts in public funding that others have experienced may not yet have arrived when the interview was conducted.

> 'You know we are now moving into a more dynamic commercial facing organisation and I think that for us the reason why that has been a little bit more delayed in its transition is because of the European funding arrangements here because European funding has been extended here for longer than it has in other destinations'.

This comment suggests that the future may hold greater challenges for P3 and P3's organisation and this may test the organisation's ambidexterity and commercial agility. Most of the existing literature (to the extent that it mentions funding at all) generally takes the view that funding from the public purse is a good thing and that the threat of any reduction in that funding is lamentable (Coles et al, 2014, Heeley, 2015, Pike, 2016). Replacing public sector finance with funding from the private sector receives scant attention in the literature even though such reductions have occurred in many parts of the Western world.

5.2.21 Short-termism and political change in local and central government

As previously reported P11, the managing director of a major visitor attraction, viewed the short-term nature and uncertainty of local public sector funding as the biggest challenge faced by the local DMO. Pike (2016) recognises the challenge of short-termism and the difficulties this imposes on DMOs who seek to develop long-term strategies.

P11 was also acutely aware of the implications of political change for the local DMO.

'Erm, as I just mentioned, Cheshire's quite unique. Three different councils, erm, if we just take East Cheshire and West Cheshire and Chester erm, both of which until May were led by Conservative, Conservative group and now we've got a Labour group in West Cheshire and a Conservative group in East Cheshire, all with different priorities and now all three of them with different funding models, funding DMOs in different ways but, importantly, actually decreasing their funding erm, for obvious reasons'.

The three different councils that P11 alludes to are Cheshire West and Chester, East Cheshire and Warrington borough councils.

To be successful a DMO really needs to adopt a long-term strategy which all stakeholders (or at least the key stakeholders) can buy into. Such a strategy needs to transcend party political divides and be robust enough to withstand political change. On the other hand, if local public sector funding of a DMO is withdrawn or dramatically reduced, it can be argued that there should be a commensurate reduction in the influence of the local authority on DMO operations. P9, a Marketing Cheshire board member, makes this point very strongly (see quotation on p. 151 in the Results and Analysis chapter).

Issues such as litter collection, local amenities and the transport infrastructure do exert a considerable influence on the visitor economy and on the quality of life within an area. As Pike (2016) observes, DMOs may have some limited influence over these matters but they certainly do not control them. However, local authorities have either

a direct or indirect role in the provision of these services and therefore they are stakeholders in the success of a destination. As a result, their views can never be entirely dismissed. Nevertheless, there is a logic in a reduction of local authority influence on DMO operations (or board membership) in circumstances of reduced local authority funding.

5.2.22 Parochialism in local government priorities

This was recognised as an important challenge by P5, a DMO chief executive.

'I think that one of the other big challenges is parochial, it's about parochialness and the host communities that welcome tourists. I think the most destinations however small, one village, one dale, one tiny little corner of England would really like its name in lights a lot of the time and considers themselves to be a national, world beating brand that just hasn't been realised yet'

P5 went on to say:

'Whereas in actual fact the consumers' geography knowledge is completely awful and, erm, you know, one small dale, one small village, er, is never going to trigger a visit, it's going to be a much bigger offer and a bigger experience, a bigger collection, a bigger cluster of experiences, facilities, services and attractors that are going to actually generate that but for a destination management agency coping with a very local perspective can be really quite challenging when you're trying to build a destination that people will buy'.

P9, who is a member of the Marketing Cheshire board, had particularly strong views on the issue of parochialism on the part of local authority representation on the Marketing Cheshire board (see quotation on p. 151 of Results and Analysis chapter). A contrasting position is adopted by P15, the leader of a local authority, who made a very valid point.

> 'Some places have different needs and different opportunities. Erm, so, for instance, Warrington is a rather different place than Chester in terms of the offer. So the offer in Chester is around more of a tourism offer, in Warrington while there is some small tourism offer, you know, it's mainly around business marketing and business leisure'.

These comments aptly illustrate the difficulties of operating a DMO across several different local authority boundaries.

5.2.3 Pros and cons of private sector funding

Some conflict of interest between DMO activity and private sector expectations was recognised by P2, a DMO chief executive.

> 'Often the destination marketing organisation in pulling together lots of partners is taking a long-term view and brand-building, or brand, brand promoting, sort of proposition really so some of the activity won't have immediate returns or will have returns that are not as immediately apparent to the individual business. So, for example, maintaining your profile in the national press, brand recognition, brand awareness is something that clearly businesses benefit from but trying to understand that sort of immediate effects of that activity is more difficult. That's where I think erm ….. some of the main challenges in marketing

are around that sort of erm, sort of immediate return on investment for the private sector versus the brand building, brand awareness sort of activity that us, that destination marketing organisation delivers really'.

This commentary suggests that the time horizons of the DMOs and their private sector partners are not aligned as well as they might be.

P3 saw competition from other parts of the public sector as presenting a threat to DMO funding from the private sector.

'The real danger of that at the moment is that there's going to be lots of approaches from lots of different public sector agencies all looking to get commercial income from the private sector and that could distort significantly, you could drive the private sector into a little bit of a bunker from the point of view that this is all getting to be a bit too much of an ask. The private sector have only so much money themselves and the private sector as an industry whether it's in tourism or anything else some parts the private sector do well in some parts of it don't. So it's not an inexhaustible amount of money within their coffers to basically divert into destination partnership working'.

P4, a DMO chief executive, described an uncomplicated relationship with the private sector. These were the arrangements that were in place for a DMO that received no public sector funding.

'Our job is to deliver to the members' value for the membership fee and value for any additional monies that they spend with us in terms of supporting campaigns. So it's a very straightforward relationship. Erm, they pay us

money, they expect a rate of return, a commercial rate of return on that money. We deliver against that, they renew, they stay with us. If they don't I get called to account, so that's the relationship with the private sector'.

Given the dramatic reductions in public sector funding this DMO business model might be expected to become more widespread in future. However by citing differences in the private sector perspective, P5 queries whether such a business model could actually work (see quotation on p.141 of the Results and Analysis chapter). .

P6, a DMO chief executive who had experienced a 92% reduction in public sector funding in recent years (Heeley, 2015) saw more financial potential in the private sector.

'The business one is probably the best, the one that's best funded'.

The differing perspectives expressed above may to some extent represent the differing worldviews of the DMO chief executives/officers but they may also be accounted for by the different local circumstances surrounding DMOs in different parts of England. P7, a senior and experienced member of the public sector in Cheshire and Warrington, saw two roles for the private sector: one in terms of scrutiny of marketing activity and the second in terms of the funding of that activity.

'So it's more imp…, it's absolutely essential that money is now spent wisely and to best effect and given that it's the private sector that needs to fill that void both in terms of the offer and hopefully in terms of helping to fund the er, the marketing activity then clearly the place, clearly it's only right I believe that the private sector should have a say that er, in how that smaller pot is invested. So

I think er, the private sector's got two roles really one it got to make sure that that money is invested to its best effect given that they'll be the beneficiaries, they, you'd like to think that they should know and then secondly, wherever possible they should be contributing to that pot to ensure that, that there is at least an adequate resource er, which can be invested er, by way of place marketing activity'.

P11, the managing director of a major tourism attraction, expresses some circumspection over the private sector's ability and/or desire to fill the gap caused by the reduction in public sector funding in saying:

'it's not necessarily the case that the private sector has got the money to replace the public sector money or the desire to actually, to do that'.

The exploration of these issues lies at the heart of the rationale behind this study.

Expecting the private sector to pay for things that were previously provided free-of-charge by the public sector was seen as another barrier by P13, a destination partnership manager.

'The nature of Lincoln and Lincolnshire and the sort of hinterland of this area is that we're made up of very small businesses and erm, those very small businesses generally don't have marketing budgets or the skills and expertise necessarily erm, to be able to contribute to our work. Erm, historically businesses have seen lots of benefits coming from public sector funding like websites that offer free listings for everybody or like brochures that offer free listings for everybody and the private sector hasn't been expected to pay for

that. Now actually that type of activity if it's going to be delivered, the income has to come from somewhere and that's not the public sector but it's quite difficult to get the private sector to change their mindset and to start paying for things that in some instances they have not had to pay for, for a number of years'.

It seems clear from the above comments that it is by no means certain that the private sector is ready and willing to fill the gap in funding caused by the withdrawal of public sector finance. In order for that to happen DMOs will need to demonstrate a (sometimes) unaccustomed agility and responsiveness to the needs of the private sector. This has implications for the leadership of DMOs (Scott et al, 2018).

5.2.31 Dominance and expectations of big players

The contrasts between a big city DMO and a smaller or heritage destination were highlighted by P5, a DMO chief executive. The financial advantages of dealing with a much smaller number of wealthier dominant players in a big city were observed as were the raised expectations that such organisations might have.

'And I think if you're a big city the challenges can be very different because you will be having much bigger businesses, much bigger players with deep pockets but much higher demands maybe of a destination management agency or a place making agency'.

P10, a DMO chief executive, spoke of the balance that is required in dealing with partners and stakeholders from different sized organisations.

'And also you've got to get the balance right between being there for the small, medium guys but still working with the big guys so it's not just seen as the big guys running everything. So that dynamic, if you don't get that dynamic right, the small guys ….(indistinct) 950 members, there's probably 50 big ones and 900 small ones, so it's managing that dynamic'.

P11, the managing director of a major tourism attraction, identified the third-party promotion of that specific attraction as the highest priority (see quotation p. 143 in Results and Analysis chapter).

On the basis of this evidence it does appear that DMOs do need to achieve a balance between the needs of its partners and stakeholders to ensure that the biggest players do not exert undue influence.

5.2.32 Corporate return on investment

The priority that the private sector places on return on investment was noted by several of the interview participants.

As P2, a DMO chief executive, observed:

'So undoubtedly the private sector wants to see a return on their investment. That's why they, they put money into marketing activity, erm so they want to see tactical marketing activity that delivers immediate or short-term results'.

The imperative to see things from the private sector perspective was recognised by P3, a DMO director.

'So we think there is a definitive place but it has to be based around added value not aesthetics erm and sometimes, you know, the public sector have used funding as the catalyst for that thing rather than actually the results they can produce. So it has to be something that's going to pay the you know, to drive a private sector business to think actually by doing this I'm going to get a better return on my investment by doing it on my own. It has to be in that sort of logic not because we need to be seen to be supporting something. It has to be because it fits into a business purpose'.

P13, a destination partnership manager, was also conscious of the need for the private sector to see a clear return on their investment.

'And so there's quite a balance and they need to see a return on their investment that they might make to the destination organisation'.

P13 added:

'The other challenge is absolutely, I touched on it before but the private sector want to see a return on investment and where we do have the slightly larger brands and particularly hotel chains where you've got Q Hotels or, er you know, some of the bigger chains. They want to see a direct return on investment and it's often very difficult for us at destination level to make the direct correlation between the marketing, or product development, awareness, all the other work that we're doing with the visitors that actually come to the destination and because we're not offering, we don't sell any product, then that return on investment is quite difficult to prove in terms of sales because we're not selling

anything, we're not doing the transaction erm so I think, yeah, that can be quite

challenging for us to be able to report back on the benefits to our partners'.

There was some recognition of the private sector's requirement to see return on investment by DMO chief executives/officers (all the interview respondents quoted in this third level theme were from this category) and in order to attract more private sector funding that may require a slightly different response from DMOs. The extent to which this might be a problem is presently unclear as many DMOs are still in the process of transformation from a largely public sector funded model to a largely private sector funded one.

5.2.4 LEPs

LEPS were mentioned in different contexts by different respondents.

P6, a DMO chief executive, saw the local LEP in a potentially very positive light (see quotation on p. 150 of Results and Analysis chapter).

P7, a senior and experienced member of the public sector in Cheshire and Warrington, described the work of the Cheshire and Warrington LEP and its relationship with Marketing Cheshire in some detail. P11, the managing director of a major visitor attraction in Cheshire, mentioned LEPs on numerous occasions.

P13, a destination partnership manager, mentioned the local LEP but this respondent acknowledged that although the local LEP included the visitor economy in their strategy, engineering projects were given a much higher priority and that the DMO had yet to witness any real benefits from being included in the local LEPs strategy.

'Whilst it's seen that the LEP, for example, or the LEPs, we have a Greater Lincolnshire LEP, should be bidding for money, they've got the visitor economy in their strategy. Erm, actually, what's tended to happen so far is that they're very interested in engineering projects, you know, wind turbines on the estuary because they can count jobs that are created, they can see the outputs of whatever they might be making or manufacturing and the visitor economy is, is, quite different to that. It doesn't have the same hard outputs that engineering and manufacturing and things do have. So whilst the LEPs are playing a role in the visitor economy here we're yet to see any direct outputs or any real, you know, meaningful activity'.

P14, the executive director of a DMO, mentioned LEPs but this was merely in the context of the different funding regimes that prevailed in different areas of England and Wales.

The majority of mentions of LEPs or the local LEP came from informed respondents in Cheshire and Warrington. It is therefore perhaps not surprising that Marketing Cheshire and the Cheshire and Warrington LEP merged soon after most of the interviews in this study had been conducted. Such an arrangement is uncommon amongst DMOs in England and such a merger presents both challenges and opportunities with opportunities being at the forefront.

5.3 Leadership

Leadership was specifically mentioned or alluded to by five of the fifteen interview participants although the use of the term was not always in the context of DMO activity. Examples of the comments are shown below.

> P3, a DMO director – 'And you therefore basically have to have that, that, that sort of leadership really to inspire private sector and the public sector to work together because they believe that actually they er, the delivery of that is going to be more effectual than doing it in individual partners'.
>
> P15, chairman of a major sporting club and a public sector chief executive – 'I'm erm, involved in the public sector erm, in the leadership of the local authority'.

All the participants who were interviewed were chief officers/executives and organisational leaders so all might be assumed to have leadership capabilities and to have a general awareness of the role of leadership in the pursuit of organisational objectives.

5.3.1 The importance of leadership

The role of leadership in the context of DMOs was articulated clearly by P1, the chief executive of a national tourism organisation, who said:

> 'But actually, it's about having a vision. And it's about having great destination leadership. Because I look up and down the country and see where destinations do it well it's about having great leadership in those destinations. Somebody with a vision, somebody with a dynamism. Somebody with an influence to encourage people to work behind one plan and to one vision and

to one aim -um – and so I think that the trick in it is to establish the vision, the plan and the leadership'.

When asked for examples of destination with good leadership, P1 replied:

'um well I think that a lot of the parts of the country have done it well, Durham do it well I think, Liverpool do it well and there's been a single drive in Liverpool to seek the cultural development of that city and that in turn has transformed the visitor product- em- it's transformed the image of that city and I think there's a really good example there. There are other parts of the country that do perhaps from a more modest standing places like Wiltshire who have one plan which looks not only at what needs to be done today and tomorrow but takes a future view of where the developments need to come to increase the potential of that area. So, yeah, there are good examples. There are good examples. Em- but again there's many examples come down to being energetic and visionary individuals'.

The importance of leadership was also recognised by two DMO chief executives.

P2, a DMO chief executive -. 'I mean clearly there are other things like having a competent team, having a clear vision having a, erm, a strong leadership'

P3, a DMO director – 'And you therefore basically have to have that, that, that sort of leadership really to inspire private sector and the public sector to work together because they believe that actually they er, the delivery of that is going to be more effectual than doing it in individual partners'.

Leadership assumes another level of importance in the face of reduced public sector funding given the need to demonstrate organisational ambidexterity and to transform DMOs from a previously exploitative approach to a more exploratory focus (Scott et al, 2017b). In circumstances where the extant leadership of the DMO is too wedded to the former approach this may require a change of leadership (Scott et al, 2018).

5.3.2 Leadership challenges

The particular challenges faced by Marketing Cheshire in straddling the areas of three different local authorities were recognised by P9, a Marketing Cheshire board member (as previously reported) and by P11, the managing director of a major tourist attraction.

> P11 – 'because we're quite unique, relatively unique in Cheshire (Themes 7 and 8), having three different authorities working ...all with different timetables and priorities led by different leaders, some from different parties er, often means it, we need an organisation like the DMO to be able to pull together or try to pull together a single strategic approach to um, the visitor economy and tourism'.

P2 and P5 (both DMO chief executives) expressed that it was much easier to obtain buy-in from the private sector if you already had some public funding and that the relative absence of this created another leadership challenge. As P5 said:

> 'It's very easy to bring people round the table if you got some carrots to put on the table. When you've got no carrots except your own existence and what charisma and personality you have to bring a partnership together, erm, it's much more difficult to do'.

The challenge of forging new and enhanced partnerships with the private sector in the absence of public sector funding will prove to be a formidable obstacle for many DMOs (Scott et al, 2018).

5.4 Governance

Governance is a pertinent theme here because a potential response to the reduction in public funding is radical change in the operating structure of the DMO to reflect the new circumstances (Coles et al, 2014, Heeley, 2015, Kennel and Chaperon, 2013, Pike, 2016). Changes to the funding route and method of funding e.g. local authority grant aid to an increased reliance on private sector membership fees point up the need for organizational ambidexterity as the organisation needs to move from an essentially exploitative approach to one that is much more exploratory in nature.

Several of the DMO chief executives/officers interviewed, notably, P4, a DMO chief executive, P10, a DMO chief executive and P13, a destination partnership manager, led organisations with DMO business models that differ from the norm. All three of these organisations operate with little or no local authority funding but were formerly closely linked to the local authority. Organizational ambidexterity (and suitable circumstances) was required to effect these changes.

> P4 – 'As a company we are actually owned by our membership, our membership, our private sector, so they are private sector tourism businesses'.

P4 described a complex corporate structure.

> 'The way its structured is, the parent company is, is the body. So all the employees are employed by the parent company. So whether they are IT

people, whether they are marketeers, whether they are destination experts, they are all employed by the parent company. We then have subsidiary companies that are best described as flags of convenience so, for example, we have a marketing company that doesn't have the word tourism in its title and it's a pure commercial marketing company wholly owned by the parent company and also a not for profit company. We then have another company that will sell tourism services out of county and therefore that particular company has no geographic identity so we're selling our expertise across the border into other counties where it wouldn't be politically appropriate for us to go in as our destination company and sell their services. All the money, it's a shared VAT number, all the money comes into a single bank account and is used to support the organisation and deliver our core function of destination marketing'.

P10 led an organisation of a slightly different kind, which this interview participant described as a 'modern age business collective' (see quotation on p. 136 of Results and Analysis chapter).

In response to the question, 'is your current organisation public sector, private sector or some hybrid in between?', P13 replied:

'Yes, chamber of commerce is the official over-arching organisation which is a company limited by guarantee, Lincolnshire Chamber of Commerce. I am employed by the chamber of commerce as is one of my colleagues. Erm, and the, all of the VisitLincoln activity is erm, you know, it sits within the chamber of commerce so we could be a project, if you like, within the chamber of

commerce. Erm, from the business point of view we, there's no, we don't hide it but there's no obvious connection with the chamber of commerce necessarily and certainly from a consumer point-of-view we have our completely own brand and can feel, you know, delivery of activity. So we have an executive committee erm, which is chaired erm, by a private sector business and that all happens outside the chamber of commerce's board meetings or anything else. So that group of people essentially manages the direction of the VisitLincoln partnership'.

The arrangements described above are thought to only apply in one English city.

5.4.1 The implications of changed funding on corporate governance

P4's (a DMO chief executive) organisation was entirely independent of local authority funding and as a consequence this respondent saw the public sector purely as a potential client (see quotation on p. 142 of the Results and Analysis chapter).

P4's organisation possessed a distinct commercial advantage.

> 'We, because we are a not-for-profit company, we are in a position where we are able to make less profit on our activities than we would if we were a normal fully-fledged commercial company paying shareholders dividends and directors bonuses. So it does mean that we can be cost competitive'.

Having previously described the organisation in question as a 'modern age business collective', P10, a DMO chief executive, then clarified the voting structure:

> 'so it is a co-operative but it's not a co-operative where everybody has a vote because you'd then just end up with more arithmetic going against you'

P11, the managing director of a major tourist attraction, had previously chaired a DMO where public sector funding had been withdrawn completely.

> 'I was also, erm, before coming up here, I was the chairman of Devon DMO er, for a period of time and that moved from being a, an organisation very similar to Cheshire to a virtual, a virtual board purely made up of erm, the private sector with public sector observers because the funding disappeared to, to zero'.

The situation described above was a typical situation in which organizational ambidexterity been must have been required. In the light of this experience the interviewer asked P11, 'what type of people should be board members of a DMO?'.

> P11 – 'Erm, it should be led and chaired by a relatively senior, totally independent private sector organisation but a private sector organisation that's probably heavily linked to the visitor economy or one of the key drivers of the DMO and somebody who (indistinct) lives within the DMO area. Erm, and then around that person er, I would say, probably two or three similar independent non-exec directors, representation from the local authority or local authorities depending on the area and then probably representation from other similar er, organisations, I mentioned earlier, if there's a BID company within the area, a strong chamber of commerce within that area. If there's a, I'm trying to think of other, if there's any other sorts of organisation, any other business organisation within that area er, and probably, er have er chief executive or a manager who becomes the or is the go-to person for that particular area who has got fingers in lots of pies and knows what's going on. Er, I think it's ideal, it doesn't need to be a massive board, you know, I would say probably no more than ten people

and at the very, very most er, the Marketing Cheshire board at the moment is around about ten, twelve people but I've worked in boards in the past where there have been about eighteen, twenty people er, er strong erm yes I think that's probably the biggest make-up and then probably erm, probably one or two people who've got specialisms in particular areas like digital marketing or any areas where there is some weakness, you know, as well as someone whose got a very strong finance background who can help within audit and accountancy'.

The board structure described above has a strong private sector bias. The structure described includes local authority representation but the private sector would provide the majority of board members.

5.4.2 Heterogeneity of DMO business models

As P1, the chief executive of a national tourism organisation, acutely observed, England offers many different and varied destinations that are often in close proximity.

P1 - 'But the most difficult thing in the world for anybody in charge of the national organisation is to be presenting some sort of homogenous same product. It's great to be able to say the Lake District is different from the Peak District that Cheshire is very different from Wiltshire and that Bath is very different from Bristol. That's the strength of the English product'. Just as the 'product' offering is different throughout England, the research revealed that responses to the changing business environment in terms of DMO governance throughout England is also different.

Each of the DMO chief executives/officers tended to refer mainly to the situations prevailing in their locations but some did refer to examples from different parts of the country where the business environment was different.

P3, a DMO director, saw a future in which city DMOs dominate a changed landscape with much less public sector funding. This future involved more collaboration between cities but it also involved cities taking more responsibility for the promotion of their hinterlands. This could prove to be the death knell for DMOs in more rural areas.

> P3 'Destinations have to, as I said earlier, have to run as a business and they have to put their energies in where the best returns are going to come from and where their best ambitions can be realised rather than hoping that they can create a whole series of returns on things that is not valued by private sector partners. So I see a big change in landscape coming up. I think the cities, the core cities, the bigger cities are in a better place potentially take advantage of that but, but they have to take advantage of it and they have to do things in different way to how they operated in the past otherwise they too will have difficulties'.

P5, a DMO chief executive, picked up on the different challenges that rural and heritage destinations faced. Rural areas receive relatively little attention in the literature where the focus is largely on cities and nations (Giles, Bosworth and Willett, 2013). Despite the presence of a number of urban developments Cheshire is a predominately rural area.

> 'if you are in a small, if you are in a rural destination or a heritage destination, erm, then you haven't got the business base that can provide some of the

finance and the expertise but on the other hand the expectations may not be quite so high'.

P13, a destination partnership manager, felt that whereas a relatively standard DMO business model had prevailed in the past this was unlikely to be the case in future (see quotation on p. 155 of the Results and Analysis chapter).

Given the inherent differences in the offering of different places it is hardly surprising that a prescriptive, one-size-fits-all business model is unlikely to succeed in all parts of the country (Bell, 2014, Fyall, 2011).

5.4.3 Identity and transformation issues

One potential response to the funding crisis might be to restructure in the light of the changed business environment. The most dramatic change could entail closing down the existing organisation and creating a phoenix organisation. If the leadership remained the same such a radical approach would necessitate skills in organizational ambidexterity.

P6, a DMO chief executive, explained some of the reasons why a phoenix organisation might provide a panacea.

> P6 – (referring to DMOs) said, 'yet they've also got public sector liabilities in terms of expensive people and pensions which are very, very difficult'.

P6 added,

'from a business point of view, really what you want to do is close the business down and open it up the following day in a completely different way, more virtual, much more flexible (indistinct), challenge the whole concept of a full-time job, because I'm not sure permanent, full-time, should be words, and even, my, I'm now doing four days a week, simply because the company can't afford it. Well I'd be really happy to do 7 days out of 10, and, and I'd pretty, do a pretty good job on that because other people here could be doing their jobs, you know, er, and, so that's probably the next challenge, to challenge the notion that these are all full-time jobs and you could put together a group of say 6 to 10 people and maybe another group of 4 to 6 freelances and with the money that the private sector would give you and any residual funding that was flying around'……'and you could probably run a reasonably effective destination marketing organisation with that budget'.

The formation of a phoenix organisation was even accorded a timescale by P6.

'I mean I'm looking, I was looking at what is quite a significant moment in the autumn of 2016 when a key contract comes to the end and we can also leave this building. I think that would be a really good time to shut down the organisation and start it with something else. It's just a really good moment'.

Marketing Cheshire's actual response to the radical reduction in public funding was to merge with the Cheshire and Warrington LEP (Pike and Page, 2014, Pike, 2016). In tandem with this Marketing Cheshire developed new revenue streams and successfully demonstrated organisational ambidexterity in doing so. As long as current revenue streams prevail there is no compelling need to create a phoenix

organisation. The phoenix DMO organisations that have been created reflect the differing local circumstances that obtain in different areas of England but the identification and exploration of these different structural approaches to DMO governance has enabled Marketing Cheshire's options to be evaluated in the light of these radical alternative solutions.

5.5 Partnership

Partnership was a very common theme. This was not at all surprising as the word 'partnership' occurred in three of the standard questions. The content generated on the theme of partnership was sufficient to generate two second level themes.

In the main there was broad agreement amongst the interview participants that the public and private sectors within a destination needed to act in partnership. This point is very well made in the literature (Cox and Wray, 2011, Elbe, Hallén and Axelsson, 2009, Hankinson, 2010, Hanna and Rowley, 2011, Heeley, 2015, Horlings, 2012, Kemp, Childers and Williams, 2012, Klijn, Eshuis and Braun, 2012 and McCamely, Gilmore and McCartan-Quinn, 2011). Some of the sentiments expressed by the interview participants are below.

> P1, the chief executive of a national tourism organisation – 'At a local level people experience places, people go to places. Um – they go to destinations, so the private and the public sector – I genuinely believe they need to come together as one to deliver a great experience for visitors when they are in a destination. Now tourism is essentially about the private sector we want to drive business through the private sector to boost the economy – but because – um

– one is reliant on infrastructure issues that have so much to do with the public sector there has to be a conjoined approach to that destination management. Um – so I think the best thing that the private and public sector can do at a local level is establish the brand that they are aspiring to be, to market the brand, but to deliver the brand. So that as a marketeer that you are it's about practising what you preach. It's about delivering the promise so that the public and private sectors, if they say this is a very contemporary visit or a rural visit with a very high quality that has to be the marketing edge but so to do they have to deliver the promise'.

P2, a DMO chief executive:

'They don't, they don't work in isolation and I think what's clear is that you can't, neither can do the job by itself. Erm the public sector could do a job but wouldn't without the engagement of the private sector erm, know that that job was being effective or was the right job, or doing the right things erm and the private sector wouldn't be able to generally come together in a joined–up way to deliver effectively brand marketing for the destination. I think it's that sort of dual, joined-up, joined-up approach which is successful or should be at the heart of success within destination marketing. It needs both that is'.

P15, the chairman of a major sporting club and a public sector chief executive:

'Well I think it er, should be a symbiotic relationship (between the public and private sectors in terms of destination marketing/management).

There were however some variations on the broad theme. For instance, P13 related that the private sector was the main deliverer of destination marketing and

management within the area (as it is practically everywhere) but that strategic partners existed within the public sector.

P13, a destination partnership manager:

> 'So the private sector is actually erm, is the main deliverer of destination marketing and management for the area and it pulls together strategic partners within the public sector'.

DMO chief executives/officers who operated independently of their local authorities, such as P3, P10 and P13 did not refer to their local authorities as partners and they instead spoke of other private and occasionally public sector organisations that they were in partnership with.

Two of the interview participants expressed some cynicism over the concept of partnership.

P7, an senior and experienced member of the public sector in Cheshire and Warrington, implied that 'partnership' was an overused term.

> P7 - 'There's lots spoken about partnerships isn't there? Yes, buckets of the, there's more books written on partnerships than you could get, than would more than fill this room'.

P9, a Marketing Cheshire board member, also felt that partnership was an overused and often inaccurate term (see quotation on p. 150 of the Results and Analysis chapter).

Partnership is an attractive word and it implies a harmonious and potentially ideal arrangement but it can often also obscure hard commercial realities and contractual requirements.

5.5.1 The impact of reduced public funding on partnership

P6's (a DMO chief executive) organisation had apparently suffered more than many from a reduction in public sector funding in the order of 92% over a period of three and a half years (Heeley, 2015). Despite this the organisation had still been able to engage with partners to host various initiatives including the events alluded to below.

> P6 - Erm, as an example, provided that the destination marketing organisation has a good contact database within the private sector which is not always obvious; they may have tended to concentrate on just the hospitality sector. If like us you've, you've, erm, constantly tried to develop corporate partners in other sectors, erm, you can do an awful lot so, for example, you can create unique events, with unique companies. So a company National Nuclear Labs, which is, erm….It isn't actually in the private sector. It's a government agency but it's sort of private-ish but it certainly works for a lot of private companies like Sellafield and Nuvia and (indistinct) Energy and ourselves teamed up last year to create a unique nuclear conference, the only one of its kind in the UK and to attract people to come and visit this region, which is the biggest nuclear cluster in Europe and it was a profitable exercise for both of us, so it was a consortium of the company, Marketing Cheshire and a little bit of specialist PR, we managed to put, and Warrington & Co, the local regen. board, we managed to put together a profitable event where everybody made some money and you could repeat that if you have the manpower, you could probably do that 4 or 5

times a year if you had the right private sector partners. In the hospitality sector, the main thing you can do is club together to create campaigns that will shed a spotlight on your destination for particular reasons. So an example of that would be the campaign that will surround the Christmas market in Chester where we've probably got up to 8 partners from the cathedral, to the zoo, to the racecourse, to the business improvement district, erm, I'm trying to think, the hoteliers, quite a big consortium, clubbing together to create a campaign to create the desire to come and spend from half a day to 2 days exploring Chester at Christmas. And I would argue that virtually none of that money is coming from the public sector at all now'.

The above examples provide evidence of successful partnership working in the almost complete absence of public sector funding.

P11, the managing director of a major tourist attraction, detected interest from the private sector in large-scale central government initiatives and a growing interest from the LEP in the visitor economy. This growing interest from the LEP in the visitor economy was arising from the recognition that an attractive place to visit might also be an attractive place to live. An attractive place to live is an important starting point in the development of a city's or a sub-region's economy.

P11 - 'If, if it suddenly becomes a priority or starts to become more of a priority for the government that's when the private sector starts to prick its ears up and get interested. Erm, you know, stuff recently about Northern Powerhouse and you know the Chancellor's interest in what's going up in Manchester has definitely started to prick up the ears of a number of private sector organisations

within the north, you know, especially around the visitor economy. I think the second one would be er, to try and enhance by actually proving or showing how important the visitor economy is to private sector organisations within er, within Cheshire so they can see a direct correlation to er, driving the visitor economy and their bottom line, I think is really important. Clearly an organisation like ours, we see the DMO as extremely important to us because it helps us to deliver the visitor numbers that we need to be able to maintain erm, our operating surplus and maintain the zoo as it is and allow us to grow and invest in the future. Erm, I think also, erm, a better er, understanding of the visitor economy from the local enterprise partnerships er, I think is really important and, you know, when the LEPs, what four years ago, something like that, four years ago. When the LEPs were formed four years ago, or whatever erm, the visitor economy really didn't feature in their agendas, that much, and LEPs were going for big scale manufacturing, digital, all those sorts of bits and pieces and I think it's only actually now that a number of LEPs including Cheshire are actually realising that in order to be able to develop the county where or a LEP area, where there is, where it's a good place to live, work, you need a strong visitor economy behind that. No one wants to go and live in a county or a city which is bland and has got nothing really to do erm, so erm, the LEPs are extremely important and I think that the LEPs will continue to be even more important as we move on to the current Parliament, the current government er, period of time. So, I think they're probably er the two, the only obvious one is to be able to restore funding erm, er the DMOs. I haven't really mentioned that because I can't see that happening. It's not going to happen so let's not, you know, money's always going to make things better in many respect for DMOs

but it's not going to happen so erm, er, we need to put that to one side. I think the only other one that's linked to that one is somebody finding a perfect solution to how do we deliver DMO activity er, within a particular area with no core funding from government erm, and, you know, various DMOs trying to do, have different models in doing that but I don't think that any ones massively succeeded in the present environment'.

P11's observations about LEP's increasing awareness to promote the destination as a good place for bright and talented people to move to and reside in may present an argument in favour of place marketing as opposed to a singular focus on tourism alone (Quinn, 2013)

5.5.2 Implications for stakeholders

P6, a DMO chief executive, felt that the key to success in the face of reduced public sector funding lay in the DMO's ability to connect with private sector partners. This was more likely to happen where there was a broad and successful industrial base. P6 provided an example of stakeholder cooperation that was far removed from a traditional tourism offering.

> P6 - 'Chester, Cheshire is quite blessed in this respect in that we have a wide range of successful companies in lots of different industries. If you only have one industry like, let's say you are in Cumbria and you only have nuclear, you might be a bit stymied for partners and we also have a wide range of, kind of, leisure offerings. A wide range of leisure partners too. Having said that there are other places that have even, probably even better like Bath, I think, when they do have a very, very large range of potential private sector partners to go

out. So, hopefully, things can be done, erm, the other thing that obviously we do ask the private sector for is to sponsor new ideas that we have and if they are synergistic with what that partner wants. Good examples of that would be the science festival that we ran last year with about nine private sector sponsors, all in the science industry, biotech, nuclear, consultancy, erm, property, those sort of people. Erm, but we see in other sectors, partners like MBNA in Chester, who are very, very active in community events and cultural events'.

P7, a senior and experienced member of the public service in Cheshire and Warrington, was interested to know if there were any areas where public sector funding had been withdrawn and the private sector had successfully stepped in to fill the gap. If this was the case P7 queried whether there was any role for the public sector in place marketing.

P7, a senior and experienced member of the public sector in Cheshire and Warrington - 'So I think it will be interesting to see if, if since the er, since 2010 when a lot of private, sorry, when a lot of the public sector money was withdrawn are there any sub-regions where there isn't any public sector backing for place marketing activity and has the private sector filled the void?, and if so has it been done successfully?, in which case you'd argue does the public sector need to undertake that role at all?

P13 pointed out one of the negative aspects of local authority involvement as stakeholders in DMO activity.

P13, a destination partnership manager - 'So it's quite a challenge there, a bit of a learning curve really to get them to understand that we're not promoting a

local authority, we're promoting a destination and the things that people can experience within that destination. Erm and yeah, quite often that can mean that local authorities, as an example, may expect to see their logos, or may expect to see something specially for their area and we try to very much steer away from that approach in terms of our marketing activity because that's not very sensible to the visitor'.

When dealing with the private sector P13 was also very aware of the need for increased accountability in return for private sector funding.

P13 – 'We must be in a position where we say actually that's exactly what you're paying for and get some really good, you know, robust monitoring erm, procedures in place'.

P13 was able to report significant success in engaging the private sector.

'But actually the local businesses have come together and kind of said, we want to do something and we want to work in partnership'.

The interview participants' responses above suggest that if the right proposition is made the private sector can be receptive in giving support to DMO initiatives and this suggests that the reduction in public sector funding of DMOs does not necessarily sound their death knell.

5.6 Destination marketing, destination management and place marketing

The terminology used to describe the practice of promoting places or destinations and the description of the organisations tasked with this role are contested both by

practitioners and by academics. As an academic, the terminology that you use is enough to place you in one of at least two camps. The use of the term 'destination' is associated with academic literature from the tourism field whereas terms like place branding, place promotion, city branding and city promotion are used by academics who adopt a business and management perspective. Neither of these 'camps' has previously engaged greatly with practitioners in the field (Hanna and Rowley, 2012, Kavaratzis, 2015) and for this reason, in this study, it was felt apposite to ask senior practitioners what business they saw themselves as operating within in the hope that this would allow the study to use the same or similar language to practitioners. When asked what business would you say that you are in?, three DMO chief executives/officers said that they were in destination marketing and a fourth mentioned destination marketing but not destination management later in the interview. By contrast, three of the DMO chief executives/officers said that they were in destination management and in addition the chief executive of the NTO referred to destination management rather than destination marketing. This then represents a generally even split between those DMO chief executives/officers who said they were engaged in destination marketing and those who said they were in destination management. P5 and P13 were particularly keen to express that they were in destination management and not destination marketing. Other respondents offered interesting perspectives on this subject. For example, when asked, 'what do you see as the principal differences between a destination marketing organisation and a destination management organisation? P2, a DMO chief executive responded:

> 'Erm. Well it's class reform I think. I think, sort of in my mind marketing organisations market the destination and management organisation has a much broader remit so may well have responsibilities for street cleanliness or

wayfaring or car parking or toilets or a whole range of different sorts of things that make up the destination. I think erm, I can't think that there are many destination management organisations in the country.   They may call themselves that but when it comes to their influence and their sphere of responsibility they're probably much more in the marketing camp that in the management camp. I think that's not to say that management organisations can't exist. I sort of suspect that what we have is destination management partnerships in destinations and you know, sort of, we have one of those here in Bath where I'm not responsible for everything in the city that concerns the visitor economy but there is a network or a partnership of individuals or organisations. Some of those lie with, the responsibilities lie with the council, others lie with the business improvement district, others lie with ourselves as a marketing organisation providing tourism information and between those sorts of organisations those people have some sphere of influence on that management partnership which makes the destination work and the key to success without really is how well the partnership communicates and works together   to deliver effectively lots of different slices of cake which come together to be a round, to complete the destination management sort of whole'.

When asked to distinguish between destination marketing and destination management, P5, another DMO chief executive responded:

'I think erm, destination marketing is, if you take marketing in its fullest sense, then it should be about product as much as it should be about promotion. I don't think that most people interpret marketing, destination marketing in that way though. I think it's what they are calling, what they really mean is

destination promotion. Now I'm a marketeer by trade so for me marketing means the whole thing. It means product as much as promotion but I don't think that's true of most people and I don't think it's true for private sector businesses operating in the visitor economy. They see marketing purely as promotion so that's why we have this confusion possibly between destination management and marketing. I'd be quite happy to call myself a destination marketing agency if marketing was defined in its truest sense but it's not so I would say that we are a destination management agency and the difference between what we do and what others do is that we engage with a very, very wide range of people that aren't involved in promotion of place, that are actually involved in the product. So we have very strong relationships with the planning department in the local authority who can influence to a very great extent what is and what isn't built here. Er, er, we have very strong, er, links to the institutional partners in the destination, not because we want their money to help promote, although we would like that, but because they own and manage large parts of the physical product, the university, cathedral, you know, a lot of our destination, is institutionally owned and developed and managed. Erm, and none of them have tourism as their core business. The university doesn't, necessarily, does it? Neither does the cathedral, er, neither do any of the landed estates in the area and yet that is our product. Erm, so I would say the distinction is between true marketing and marketing effectively. Does that make sense?'.

When asked what was the difference between destination marketing and destination management organisations, the response of P9, a Marketing Cheshire board member, was:

'Just a name'.

P9 went on to say:

'I think it's, it's just you know, this month's label. It's kind of changed and I think that you could with all these things, that's actually a feature of public life. That's oh, do you know we're changing our name because we….and here's the money erm, so today you're a this, tomorrow you're a that erm, it's all utterly irrelevant, it's actually the objectives and the clarity around them, the purpose of the organisation which matters, not what you're called although you do have to describe yourself appropriately so people can understand'.

The study established that DMO chief executives/officers were roughly split in half over whether they described themselves as being in destination marketing or destination management. Pike (2016), a practitioner turned academic is particularly disparaging about the use of the term 'destination management' and he advances a number of valid reasons why this term is a misnomer and why 'destination marketing' is a much more appropriate designation. On the other hand, Morrison (2019) favours the term 'destination management' and he states that this designation is becoming more popular than 'destination marketing', which he sees as forming only a part of destination management. Unfortunately, the evidence that Morrison (2019) cites in support of this claim does not stand up to scrutiny. With the exception of

place marketing there was no support for the use of any other term such as place branding, place promotion, city branding or city promotion.

5.6.1 The role of DMOs

P15, the chairman of a major sporting club and a public sector chief executive, felt that the role of DMOs needed to change as a result of the reduction in local authority funding. This would require DMOs to pay closer attention to the needs of the private sector. For many this would involve a change of focus.

One would hope that a closer focus on the needs of the private sector would encourage that sector to value DMOs more and to be better prepared to make a financial contribution to them. However, achieving such a focus will require the application of organizational ambidexterity on the DMOs behalf.

5.6.2 Who owns the destination?

This can a rather awkward question for a DMO. The destination is certainly not owned by the DMO. In addition, as Anholt (2009) has observed, the place or destination that is being promoted by a DMO isn't actually for sale. In fact, DMOs 'do not have control over the product, the image, story, the media or the message', (Morgan, Pritchard and Pride, 2011, p. 67). As a result, the promotion of destinations differs from the promotion of products and from the promotion of most services. In the light of this Morgan, Pritchard and Pride see the DMO' principal role as being to act as the 'steward' of the destination's reputation (Morgan, Pritchard and Pride, 2011, p. 67), even though they acknowledge that the destination's reputation will exist irrespective of anything the DMO does. It was noted in the Literature Review that two of the world's

most successful tourist destinations, Rome and Venice are not supported by DMOs (Heeley, 2015) because there is no compelling need to promote these cities. However, in the case of Venice, in particular, there is increasing concern over tourist numbers and there may be a need for a DMO type organisation to try to manage tourism numbers better in order to reduce environmental damage and the strain on the city's resources. Amsterdam is a city with around 800,000 residents that attracts some 18,000,000 tourists per annum. Many of the 800,000 residents have become exasperated by the influence of the tourists in the city and some have complained that it's now difficult to order a coffee in the city centre in Dutch because the people who work in the city centre cafes (to serve the tourists) don't speak Dutch. Even though they are greatly outnumbered by the tourists the residents have votes and the tourists don't. This has meant that the local politicians have to take account of the resident's views if they wish to be elected to office. Amsterdam Marketing, the local DMO, no longer tries to attract more visitors to the city and instead they seek to manage the visitor numbers over the whole of the year (van der Avert, 2018) .

5.6.21 Legitimacy of DMOs

Given the reduced local authority funding of DMOs, the probable declining influence of the public sector on DMO operations and the development of private sector organisations who offer similar services to DMOs, for example, 'thebestof' UK franchises (https://www.thebestof.co.uk/, 2018), it may be legitimate to query the legitimacy of DMOs in seeking to promote destinations and to enquire about the source of their authority to promote the destination. Sometimes legitimacy is implied when DMOs are described as 'official' as in 'the official DMO for…….'. This was a term used by P2, a DMO chief executive, in the research and the word 'official' or

'officially' appears on many DMO websites, for example, Marketing Cheshire state that, 'We are officially the tourist board, but no longer specialise in tourism alone' (marketingcheshire.co.uk). The 'official' status of DMOs may be called into question if and when their linkage to local authorities becomes is weakened.

5.6.3 Place marketing

Destination marketing and destination management are terms that are most often associated with tourism whereas place marketing is used to denote promotion across the whole live, study, invest and visit agenda so that the latter term embraces the promotion of all the aspects of a place in order to attract visitors, residents, students and investors. Place marketing therefore includes tourism but is not limited to attracting tourists (Quinn, 2013).

Several respondents referred to place marketing. When asked to outline the differences between destination marketing, place marketing and destination management, P7, a senior and experienced member of the public sector in Cheshire and Warrington, responded:

> 'Ok. I think er well it all comes down to semantics er, my own personal view is destination marketing (inaudible) perhaps if we drop the titles and talk about the different types of activities. I think you can talk about promoting a location er, as a, as a destination for er, tourism, so it's a sort of it's, it's a visitor destination activity. Trying to bring people in not just for days but for overnight stays er, that may be around the traditional tourist attractions. I think more and more there's now moving into business tourism, the likes of what Liverpool has done with the conference centre and indeed with the arena as well. Er, the conference centre is trying to bring business tourists to er, into Merseyside.

Now is that erm, is that business activity, which you may expect, for example, a local enterprise partnership to think about or is it tourism activity? I think that the areas become grey or the edges become blurred so erm, but I think certainly er, traditionally it's been around promoting erm, a location to er, er, as a part of a visitor economy erm, traditionally around tourism as a leisure activity, now more around or now I think the role of business marketing er, and the business destination is becoming an increasingly important part of that. Is that the role of the destination marketing organisation? Well it depends what the partners want. I guess in Liverpool er, it'll be the arena and the conference centre, who'll be driving that really quite hard. Whether they do that as part of a sub-regional activity I don't know. It would be interesting to see. I guess there's no one size fits all but as long as it's being done effectively and efficiently er, should we worry? Er, as I say the edges are becoming more and more blurred and do organisations which have been traditionally looking at the visitor economy do they then promote the er, the sub-region or the region to a, for inward investment? Er, again I think that's a slight different activity. I always bear in mind that the general rule of thumb is that if you want to undertake er, inward investment on a limited budget don't think about bringing in overseas investors, work with the existing foreign-owned companies and try and get them to invest more where they already are. So with strictly limited budgets I think that is a completely different type of activity so that with inward investment activity you should really focus about working with your existing foreign-owned companies rather than trying to attract more. It sounds great, let's all go off for a trip to Seattle for a week, sounds fab but it's high risk and it's high cost. So I think er, again, you may decide that er, an organisation such as Marketing Cheshire,

such as whatever, Visit Liverpool, they have a role to play, they may well do but make sure you, you, it's all properly er, structured, if they have a role to play then that's fine but again it'll come down to individual, to individual locations to sort that out'.

P5, a DMO chief executive, saw a more certain future for place marketing than for destination management.(see quotation on p. 154 of the Results and Analysis chapter).

In places with a diverse industrial base where tourism is not the main employment sector, such as Cheshire and Warrington, place marketing may offer scope for development.

5.7 The international context

The interview participants made relatively little mention of international marketing or promotion in their interview responses. This may be partially explained by a comment that was made by P1, the chief executive of a national tourism organisation. P1 explained that domestic tourism is the main driver of tourism in this instance.

> P1 - 'But I think tourism is somewhat hidebound by the fact that people see it as being just international visitors. A tourist is almost a default position of being somebody that comes from a city and whilst they are a legitimate sector they are not the major driver of tourism in this country - it's domestic tourism that is the major driver of tourism'.

Coming from a source such as this such a comment carries considerable weight but the fact that international markets were rarely mentioned by the interview participants, and especially the DMO chief executives/officers (only two of these made any reference to an international perspective), could be seen as evidence that DMOs are apt to be inward-facing and are not as entrepreneurial as they might be, at least in an international context. In this respect DMOs in the UK are assisted by the fact that English is the main language spoken in the country and English is commonly spoken throughout the world. This may help to generate a preference to primarily use English as the language of marketing communication and to neglect the use of other languages to promote destinations. For instance Visit Britain has identified that in 2016 China ranked number one in the world for international tourism expenditure, that Chinese visitors rank Britain highly for both tourism and British culture (third out of forty-nine countries) and that Chinese visitors appreciate Chinese language 'support' such as Chinese signage, Mandarin-speaking staff and Chinese television channels (www.visitbritain.org). Chinese visitors to the UK increased to 337,000, 29% in 2017 compared to 2016 If Chinese visitors are to be attracted to Britain language 'support' should also extend to DMO websites and marketing communications.

In fact, in 2017, the U.K. hosted some 39 million overseas visitors and they spent £24.5 billion. This was a record both in terms of the number of visitors and their expenditure (www.visitbritain.org). These figures strongly emphasise the need for DMOs to adopt an international approach especially in destinations where tourism features strongly in the local economy.

P3, a DMO director, recognised international good practice in the promotion of an 'attack' brand which benefits from much greater international recognition and awareness than the surrounding municipalities. This could be seen as evidence of a more international perspective which might relate to the specific characteristics of the destination in question.

> P3 – 'Well, I think you can look at a number of brands, you know, examples that we look at in Stockholm and Oslo and others where they, where the brand is recognised as being Stockholm and Stockholm represents the municipalities around it. In Stockholm I think there is around 23 municipalities who buy into the Stockholm brand. But they fundamentally know the Stockholm will represent their interests and it's a kind of done thing because they know they can't compete'.

P3 also made a comparison between New York and Liverpool in order to make a point.

> P3 – 'So it tells us on the journey that we've a long way to go so because if I go to New York I'm not surprised. I've got a different, my mindset is of a different place. I'm looking for something really, I'm looking for best practice, I'm looking for things that are at a higher level. Liverpool is not in that place at the moment, Liverpool satisfies, sometimes people are surprised and go away with a great opinion but actually, that's not enough anymore'.

P8, the executive chairman of a retail organisation with its headquarters in the Cheshire and Warrington sub-region felt that international opportunities existed for Cheshire that were not being exploited as well as they might be.

P8 – 'I'm not quite sure whose brief it is to encourage inward investment in Cheshire but there are just so many advantages for incoming businesses to have the benefits of the cities and the benefits of the countryside, fantastic transport etc., etc., great schools and my guess is that most people in Tokyo, Singapore or Buenos Aires have never heard of Cheshire. Erm, and er, my guess also is, although I don't know if they go into their British Embassy, in whatever country it may be, I guess is that there would be an awful lot of stuff about why you should invest in Manchester and I guess there's very little about why you should invest in Cheshire. Erm and I think we need to do a better job with that. At the end of the day it, it comes back to finance and somebody's got to pay for that to happen. Erm, but there is a job to do erm, to promote the county'.

P11, the managing director of a major visitor attraction, felt that the role of the local DMO should include the international promotion of his particular major visitor attraction (see quotation on p. 143 of the Results and Analysis chapter).

P14, a DMO executive director, mentioned international destinations in the context of explaining the benefits of a conjoined approach to destination management as opposed to mere promotion.

P14 – 'It's a bit like New York isn't it, you know, nobody wanted to go to New York twenty years ago or whatever, everybody wants to go to New York today because they're turned the whole place around and that wasn't just clever marketing. That was actually a destination approach led by the mayor to make the place look cleaner. Same with Barcelona. Barcelona has just jumped up

because of the kind, the development that it's done. And that's not just about marketing. I mean Barcelona's looking now at trying to reduce the number of visitors'.

The relative lack of an international context was a feature of the interviews. However, this was not recognised as the interviews were being conducted as if it had done so it would have been likely to have provoked follow-up questions. This identification of this second level theme proved to be a vindication of the research methods and the analysis process as it first emerged during these stages in the research.

If the DMO chief executives'/officers relative reticence on international markets was reflective of their perceptions of the markets they were targeting, then current tourism figures suggest that there may be internationals markets that can be exploited. The opportunities that the UK offers to the international tourism market are not well covered, possibly because the UK tourism market receives over 80% of its revenue from domestic visitor spending (Morrison, 2019).

5.7.1 The implications of Brexit for DMOs.

If it was surprising for the interview participants in general and for the DMO chief executives/officers in particular to have made so little mention of international markets then it was even more surprising that only one of the interview participants, a local authority chief officer, made reference to Brexit. Brexit is the term used to describe the U.K's (or Great Britain's) exit from the European Union. Prior to the referendum on 23rd June 2016 (www.bbc.co.uk) and since then the media has been saturated with references to Brexit on a daily basis. In the light of such saturated news coverage it is a considerable surprise to find that only one interview participant referred to this

signal change in the international status of the U.K. that is scheduled to take place on Friday 29th March 2019 (www.bbc.co.uk). There is a substantive explanation for the almost complete lack of reference to Brexit in this research project's projects in that all but one of the interviews was conducted before the Brexit referendum took place and the one interview that did contain reference to Brexit took place after the referendum. The outcome of the referendum came as a considerable surprise to many and this may be why the topic was not raised in any of the interviews conducted prior to the referendum. However, it should be noted that when the researcher held meetings with the chief executive of Cheshire and Warrington LEP in November 2017 and with the chief executive of Marketing Cheshire in June 2018, the subject of Brexit loomed large in the conversations.

The sole comment on Brexit in the interviews by P15, the chairman of a major sporting club and a public sector chief executive, was in response to the question, 'What do you see as the future of place or destination or place marketing organisation'? P15 saw Brexit as being a 'big, big issue' (see quotation on p. 158 of the Results and Analysis chapter).

It is difficult to disagree with P15's position. At the time of writing Brexit is undoubtedly a 'big, big issue' as negotiations with the European Union continue. That situation has prevailed for more than two years and it is not set to be resolved until some indeterminate point far into the future.

It is not the purpose of this study to express a view on the merits or otherwise of Brexit. However, whatever one made of the Brexit referendum result or the subsequent

political machinations most people would surely agree that in the light of Brexit the U.K. needs to sell itself abroad in as effective a manner as possible. This is a compelling need both within the EU and outside the EU and this need encompasses both tourism, inward investment and the wider economy. Brexit therefore provides DMOs with an enhanced *raison d'étre* and a rallying point to justify increased public and private funding. DMOs should not squander the opportunities that Brexit is currently providing. The topic of Brexit has dominated the UK media for several years now but academic literature related to tourism and Brexit is practically non-existent. This may be explained by the relative newness of the topic and the time that it takes for publications to be accepted, amended and published but at the time of writing (May 2019) it is over three years since the Brexit referendum. The other major factor is that the outcome of the Brexit process has still not been resolved.

5.8 Cheshire

As was explained in the Introduction chapter Cheshire is now a ceremonial county and is divided into two local authorities. These are called Cheshire West and Chester and East Cheshire. A degree of parochialism and possibly even conflict between these local authorities was referred to by some of the interview participants. P6, a DMO chief executive and P9 a Marketing Cheshire board member made the following comments.

> P6 – 'In Cheshire there's a little bit of a kind of East West divide but less so the private sector, that tends to happen in the public sector'.
>
> P9 – 'You know, there is just…the world does not begin and end with……..West Cheshire's boundary or East Cheshire's boundary'.

P11, the managing director of a major visitor attraction referred to the local authorities' different timetables, priorities and leadership. P11 also observed that, in addition to Cheshire West and Chester and East Cheshire, the local DMO's geographical operating area additionally extended over a third local authority. This interview participant was alluding to Warrington.

> P11 – 'we've got erm, visitor economy elements within Cheshire West and Chester Council because we're quite unique, relatively unique in Cheshire, having three different authorities working ...all with different timetables and priorities led by different leaders'.

P6, a DMO chief executive, only made reference to Cheshire (rather than Cheshire and Warrington) but that reference extended beyond the tourism agenda to include persuading people to study, and invest in Cheshire as well as to visit the destination (see quotation on p. 136 in Results and Analysis chapter).

P9, a Marketing Cheshire board member, made the point that DMO activity revolved around raising awareness relating to a geographical area and that Cheshire was a less well known 'brand' compared to nearby cities such as Manchester and Liverpool.

> P9 - 'I think it's very much about raising the profile of an area so that when you are trading you can actually, you know, people have heard of you. A place like Cheshire is quite hard to do that because it's not a erm recognisable brand in the way that some of the major cities are for example but you know Cheshire is known'.

Levels of awareness of Cheshire amongst Marketing Cheshire's target markets may not be as high as Manchester and Liverpool enjoy but awareness of Cheshire is likely to be much higher than awareness of much more recent entities like Cheshire West and Chester and East Cheshire if only because you need to be able to locate Cheshire in your mind before you can compartmentalise it into West and East divisions. The fact that Cheshire existed for some 1100 years gives it a considerable advantage in awareness terms when compared to local authorities that have only been in existence since 2009. Cheshire West and Chester and East Cheshire should realise that they have more prospect of promoting themselves as significant parts of Cheshire rather than as individual local authorities. As P6, a DMO chief executive, points out:

> P6 – 'Cheshire's not really big enough to be split in three, erm, certainly not up against the likes of Manchester or Liverpool'.

However, it does appear that some equivocation continues to exist over the role of Marketing Cheshire. Should it promote Cheshire only or Cheshire and Warrington? If it is the latter why is Warrington not represented in the name Marketing Cheshire, which is the effective brand name of the organisation? This equivocation is exemplified by the map of 'Cheshire' (which also includes Warrington) that Marketing Cheshire makes available for download on the Visit Cheshire website. The map appears in the Literature Review but it is reproduced again below for the reader's convenience.

Figure 5 - (Visit Cheshire, 2018)

Marketing Cheshire has recently introduced a new strapline; 'Chester, Cheshire and beyond'. The 'beyond' in this strapline introduces deliberate ambiguity. It could refer to Chester, Cheshire and Warrington. Alternatively, it could refer to North Wales, Liverpool or Manchester and it might position Chester as a good place to stay to explore a wider hinterland. However, it is interpreted 'Chester, Cheshire and beyond' is an innovative introduction that captures the nature of destinations as seen through the lens of tourists and others. When considering visiting a destination tourists or other visitors are much more concerned with the attractions or amenities that are on offer than they are with local authority administrative boundaries. Shakespeare's Country and Hadrian's Wall Country are brand names set up to attract tourists to specific heritage destinations but Shakespeare's Country and Hadrian's Wall Country cannot be defined on any map.

5.9 Warrington

Warrington was mentioned much less than Cheshire by the interview participants and it is possible that some of the participants were not aware that Marketing Cheshire's remit extends beyond the boundary of the ceremonial county of Cheshire.

P8, the executive chairman of a retail organisation headquartered in Cheshire and Warrington, testified to Warrington's economic success.

> P8 – 'I mean I read somewhere recently that there are 17 head offices of major corporations in Manchester and I think I'm right in saying that there are 16 in Warrington. So the differences aren't as big as people think. There's obviously been a huge amount of investment into Warrington in the last couple of years, so it's the biggest growing town in the country. Erm, Walmart have just made their biggest investment in Europe in Warrington'.

Perhaps the most telling comment about Warrington was made by P15, a public sector chief executive.

> P15 – 'Erm, so, for instance, Warrington is a rather different place than Chester in terms of the offer. So the offer in Chester is around more of a tourism offer, in Warrington while there is some small tourism offer, you know, it's mainly around business marketing and business leisure'.

This is a truism but the significance of this statement in this context is that if Marketing Cheshire restricts itself largely to the promotion of tourism it will have little resonance to Warrington which is focused on business marketing and business leisure rather than tourism per se. This situation could have (and still might) result in Marketing Cheshire and Warrington following divergent paths in terms of promotion and indeed

this situation, in part, led Warrington Borough Council to cease to provide any funding for Marketing Cheshire as it had done in the past. However, the merger of Marketing Cheshire and the Cheshire and Warrington LEP may lead to an increased emphasis on the promotion of Warrington in addition to the main business of promoting Cheshire because the remit of the LEP extends across the whole of the sub-region.

5.10 Future of DMOs

As the phrase 'the future of DMOs' features in the last of the five standard questions that was put to the interview participants this first level discussion theme received detailed coverage in the Analysis chapter.

Actual responses to the reduction in public sector funding of DMOs have included the creation of phoenix organisations such as those in Lincoln where the local chamber of commerce plays a leading role and in Cornwall where a form of business collective has emerged. In Shropshire the DMO is owned by its private sector membership and the public sector is viewed as a potential client.

Marketing Cheshire's response to a dramatic reduction in public sector funding has taken several forms. These include entering into a merger with the Cheshire and Warrington LEP, an increased engagement with the private sector, the creation of a new sub-brand (Chester, Cheshire and beyond) and a sharpened approach to qualifying for whatever public sector funding that becomes available on an ad hoc basis.

It does appear that the weakest DMOs disappeared when the deepest public sector financial cuts began to bite although some new organisations with different structures

and revenue streams emerged in their place such as those referred to in the next to last paragraph. The existing DMOs have weathered significant financial headwinds and the strongest of these are now on operating on a strengthened financial footing. The next phase may well witness some consolidation in the market wherein the stronger players take over some of the functions of their weaker neighbours in situations where there are potential economies of scale.

5.10.1 DMOs in the digital era

The digital era has already wrought many changes in consumer behaviour and in commercial practice and it is very likely to continue to do so far into the future. Scott et al (2017a) have described how these changes have impacted on DMOs and in particular how the balance of power between organisations and their consumers has altered in favour of consumers. User generated content (UGC) via social media has become extremely important in its influence over destination choice because consumers trust the expressed opinions of their perceived peers much more than they trust traditional corporate promotion (Munro and Richards, 2011, Yeoman and McMahon-Beattie, 2011, Sevin, 2013, Fortezza and Pencarelli 2015, Oliveira and Panyik 2015, Roque and Rapuso 2016, Li, Robinson and Oriadne, 2017, Scott et al, 2017a, Fortezza and Pencarelli, 2018). The existence of so much UGC and its influence on consumer behaviour does pose a question mark over the continued relevance of DMOs in the digital age. P6, a DMO chief executive, referred to the dominant role that large technology players had taken in traditional DMO markets, often by providing platforms for UGC.

'And, erm, the other reason things are bleak at the moment is that brands like Google, TripAdvisor, Booking.com, have eaten into revenues that we

previously thought were ours and also have made partners unable to pay twice for the same sort of services'.

Fortezza and Pencarelli (2015) found that DMOs were largely failing to respond to the digital challenge. P6 provided a partial explanation for this.

'There are some people who are still working in destination management organisations, who frankly, don't have the right skills for the future and it's really difficult'.

Despite the above observation some NTOs such as Visit Sweden and Tourism Australia were exemplars of good practice in the use of social media according to Oliveira and Panyik, (2015).

Digital marketing can provide more quantifiable metrics than traditional marketing and the benefits of this were explained by P4, a DMO chief executive.

'So, for example, every entry on a website that we operate, we run several websites for the destination, provide trackable statistics, so we are able to respond to individual members and say you've had so many views on your entry on our website, you had so many direct links through to your own website from our web platform and we are able to relate that back to the membership fee so we can give them a price of so many pence per click through to their own website'.

The importance of digital marketing and social media to DMOs was recognised by P11, the managing director of a major tourist attraction, who said.

P11 - 'there's a lot that can be done through a er, through a very clever website erm, you know, very clever use of social media of Twitter, Facebook erm, what have you which can deliver a very similar message to probably that that DMOs did ten, fifteen years ago when they were extremely strong. You don't need to have a team of twenty, thirty people doing things now, you can have a very small team of people that still deliver the same thing'

The critical role of social media in DMO activity was also observed by P15, the chairman of a major sporting club and a public sector chief executive.

P15 – 'Some DMOs, I notice, are very good with social media, some aren't so good.'

There is no doubt that the digital era has brought additional challenges for DMOs at a time when its funding has been severely constrained. Surmounting the digital challenge and with it the relevance challenge is now one of the greatest issues for DMOs. This is a subject that receives widespread coverage in the literature (Munro and Richards, 2011, Yeoman and McMahon-Beattie, 2011, Sevin, 2013, Fortezza and Pencarelli 2015, Oliveira and Panyik 2015, Roque and Rapuso 2016, Li, Robinson and Oriadne, 2017, Scott et al, 2017a, Fortezza and Pencarelli, 2018). Given its prominence in the literature it was somewhat surprising that there was relatively little response on the subject from the practitioners in the study, particularly in response to the question, 'What is the future for destination or place marketing organisations? That digital marketing did not feature strongly in the interview responses suggests that this important issue may be something that DMOs are currently neglecting.

5.11 Marketing Cheshire appoints a new chief executive

Throughout nearly all of the duration of this study Marketing Cheshire had the same chief executive but in June 2018, the post of Chief Executive, Marketing Cheshire was advertised (Appendix). The salary for the post was advertised at £75,000 per annum. This may have been perceived as a rather modest salary for such a post. No appointment was initially made and the existing chief executive remained in post until November 2018 when a new chief executive joined the organisation. The new appointee was the existing Deputy Chief Executive of the Cheshire and Warrington LEP. It was announced that the new Chief Executive at Marketing Cheshire would be taking on the new role in addition to retaining his post as Deputy Chief Executive, Cheshire and Warrington LEP, which will forge a further merger of the two organisations (Chester Chronicle, 2018). A conversation between the researcher and the former chief executive revealed that in June 2018 approximately 70% of Marketing Cheshire's activity was linked to tourism and 30% was linked to business. The appointment is strategically significant as it will provide Marketing Cheshire with new opportunities to increase the percentage of the work that it does related to business (place marketing) and to reduce its relative focus on tourism (destination marketing). Such a transition will provide a further requirement for organizational ambidexterity.

5.12 Gaps between the literature and the interview participants' responses

The content in this Discussion chapter has highlighted the differences between the extant literature on destination management and the main issues as described by practitioners. It underlines the lack of attention that is given to the practitioner perspective in the literature The content in this discussion chapter has highlighted many of the differences between the issues that occupy the minds of leading

practitioners with those covered in the literature. This underlines the lack of attention that is given to the practitioner perspective in the literature (Hanna and Rowley, 2012, Kavaratzis, 2015). These differences and the resulting gap is most apparent and notable with regards to funding and finance where the importance of the issue for practitioners is not nearly matched by the coverage that this topic receives in the literature. The reduction in public sector funding has implications for DMO governance, for example, if the public sector is contributing less to DMO operations, should it be afforded less DMO board representation and should the private sector receive commensurately more representation. Potential changes in the governance of DMOs is not an issue that features at all prominently in the literature. Leadership was mentioned by many of the interview participants and this topic is discussed fairly widely in the literature pertaining to destination marketing, place marketing and place branding etc.. Conversely, digital marketing in the context of DMOs does receive widespread coverage in the literature but it did not feature nearly as strongly in the interview respondents' responses.

It was notable throughout the interview process that the DMO chief executives/chief officers made very little or no attempt to justify the existence of their organisations and to provide a rationale for their role. It was as if the assumption was made that DMOs had a right to exist and that such a premise did not need to be justified.

5.13 Organizational ambidexterity

Organizational ambidexterity has two components: an exploitative approach where the organisation essentially harvests existing resources and markets (essentially doing what you've always done) and an exploratory approach which requires attention to

potentially new resources and markets. To some extent all organisations need to be alert to both these approaches. However, faced with a dramatic reduction in their traditional funding (the public sector) the need to engage in exploratory activity has become particularly pertinent for DMOs. Different types of organizational ambidexterity are recognised in the literature (Birkinshaw and Gibson, 2004). One of these is structural ambidexterity in which different business units deal with exploratory and exploitative functions. Most English DMOs do not have sufficient staff for this to be a viable possibility. A second type of organizational ambidexterity is contextual ambidexterity under which individuals exhibit ambidexterity in their daily work exemplified by a willingness to seek out new approaches, a capacity to make linkages and a cooperative nature. Creating a culture which fosters contextual ambidexterity is the responsibility of senior management. The appointment of a new Chief Executive at Marketing Cheshire who also has a senior role within the Cheshire and Warrington LEP brings with it opportunities for Marketing Cheshire to move away from a focus on destination marketing (tourism) and more in the direction of place marketing (which includes tourism but which is also concerned with attracting bright talented residents, students and also investment). This will require a degree of organizational ambidexterity and possibly a rebranding of Marketing Cheshire. The potential role that organizational ambidexterity may have in branding is discussed in the Conclusions and Recommendations chapter. The challenge of embracing organizational ambidexterity is perhaps one of the greatest challenges that DMOs have faced in recent years. This points up the importance of the theory of organizational ambidexterity in the context of contemporary DMOs in England.

5.14 Summary

This chapter has been informed by the three levels of themes that were identified through the analysis of the interview transcripts. These themes were presented in a table towards the end of the Analysis chapter. These themes have been discussed at length in the current chapter and inferences and implications have been noted. At the end of the chapter it is observed that the DMO chief executives and chief officers who participated in the interviews did not, in the main, defend the organisations that they led on the basis of the value that they created. There was almost an assumption that the DMOs in question had a 'right' to exist per se. Such an approach failed to make a strong case for the existence of DMOs and without such justification their effectiveness could be called into question.

Chapter Six - Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

This chapter begins by examining the objectives one-by-one followed by the research question to ascertain whether these have been met. It then proceeds to examine the study's contributions to theory and to practice before turning to the study's recommendations. Several recommendations are made. Areas for further research are then identified and the chapter ends with an identification of the study's limitations.

6.2 Conclusions

6.2.1 Objectives and research question

At this point in it is apposite to return to the objectives that were set out in the Introduction chapter and to the research question to examine whether the study has achieved what it set out to do.

6.2.2 The first objective was:

'To explore the perceptions of DMO chief executives and chief officers with regard to DMO partnership working, the reduction in public sector funding and the future of DMOs'.

In order to deliver this objective semi-structured interviews were conducted with the chief executives and chief officers of eight DMOs distributed throughout England as well as with the chief executive of an NTO. These chief executives and chief officers provided their expert views on partnership working, the reduction in public sector funding and on the future of DMOs. The results of the interviews have been

commented upon extensively in this and the last chapter. Objective one has therefore been met.

6.2.3 Objective two was:

'To explore the perceptions of key DMO stakeholders in Cheshire and Warrington with regard to DMO partnership working, the reduction in public sector funding and the future of DMOs'.

Delivering this objective involved conducting interviews with six key stakeholders. Engagement with key stakeholders is a vital component in DMO activity. Illuminating expert opinions were generated in response to the interview questions and these have been analysed and discussed in detail in this and the preceding chapter. The interviewees were asked five standard questions and subsequent follow-up questions which were often informed by their responses to the standard questions or to their particular areas of expertise. Consequently, objective two has been met.

6.2.4 Objective three, the final objective was:

'To explore the strategic dynamics and options open to a particular DMO in circumstances of reduced public sector funding'.

The particular DMO in question is Marketing Cheshire. The exploration of the strategic options open to Marketing Cheshire has been informed by the interviews with DMO chief executives and chief officers throughout England, by the interview with the chief executive of the NTO and by the interviews with the key stakeholders in Cheshire and Warrington. The transcripts of these interviews have been analysed and discussed in

this chapter and in the preceding chapter and the strategic options have been articulated. Specific recommendations can be found in a subsequent chapter. These processes have resulted in the achievement of objective three.

6.2.5 Aim

The aim of the research was:

'To examine the contemporary challenges and future opportunities for English destination marketing organisations with particular reference to Cheshire and Warrington'.

A thorough examination of these contemporary challenges has been made through the research process and future opportunities have been identified. The research has, therefore, achieved its aim.

6.2.6 Research question

The introductory chapter sets out the research question that this study aims to answer. The research question is:

How can a place or destination marketing organisation engage with its key stakeholders in order to operate effectively in dynamic circumstances of reduced government support?

The study has shown that the answer to this question is that DMOs need to recognise that, for a number of years over the last decade, they operated in a relatively fixed, stable, certain and predictable environment, which could be termed an organizationally

ambidextrous exploitative environment. However, the radical changes in funding, structuring and the general business environment have created a context of flux and unpredictability. These changes mean they are now immersed in an organizational ambidexterity explorative experience (Scott et al, 2017b). This dynamic will be elaborated and expanded upon in the following section.

6.3 Contribution to theory

Organisational ambidexterity requires an organisation to be able to engage in both exploitative operations, which essentially entail doing what it has always done and exploratory operations which involve establishing new and innovative forms of actions including revenue generating activity (O' Reilly and Tushman, 2013, Smith, 2016, Stokes et al, 2015).

In the case of Marketing Cheshire organisational explorative ambidexterity has been demonstrated and experienced by the merger with Cheshire and Warrington LEP, the establishment of a new sub-brand, Chester, Cheshire and Beyond and by the additional revenue streams that have been created in response to the dramatic reduction in public funding that the organisation experienced. The principal evidence in support of this organisational ambidexterity is simply that the organisation has survived the existential threat that it was under from an almost complete reduction in local authority funding. Despite the threats it has suffered Marketing Cheshire is continuing to operate successfully. This has principally occurred as a result of strategically agile management.

The study has also shown that different circumstances, opportunities and threats prevail in different parts of the country and different regional contextual solutions may therefore be appropriate such as those in Shropshire and Cornwall (where an organisation independent of the local authority has been formed) and in Lincoln, (where the chamber of commerce is at the fore). Other destinations have developed their own unique survival solutions and most have survived, if not prospered. The key to survival throughout has generally been the ability to demonstrate and practise organisational ambidexterity. Shropshire Tourism claimed to be the first DMO to operate outside the aegis of local authorities. It has a complex structure and it provides chargeable services such as website design to a wide variety of clients. It treats local authorities in the same way that it treats any other customer or client. Visit Cornwall benefits from a very large membership scheme as a result of the substantial number of small-scale independent businesses linked to tourism in the county. The chief executive is highly experienced and he is particularly skilled in generating publicity for Cornwall and for his organisation. Visit Lincoln is a community interest company that has managed to foster strong relationships with its stakeholders. It is a 'lean' operation which is linked to the local chamber of commerce rather than the local authority. Indeed, one of its strengths is that it is not constrained in its activities by local authority boundaries.

It is believed that Scott et al (2017b) was one of the very earliest publications to apply the concept of organisational ambidexterity to destination/place marketing. That publication was based on the evolving current field research. The application of the concept of organisational ambidexterity to destination/place marketing in England represents this study's contribution to theory. That contribution has been made by

recognising that the circumstances that DMOs found themselves in (of a dramatic reduction in public funding) following the publication of the Government Tourism Policy (Penrose, 2011) placed them in a classic organizational ambidexterity dilemma. Previously they had been engaged in largely exploitative activity (doing what they had always done) but after the publication of that document they had to find new revenue streams to address the shortfall in public funding, to conduct radical restructuring or even to consider closing down and emerging as a phoenix organisation. All these options required strategic agility and an exploratory focus.

6.4 Contribution to practice

One of the main distinguishing features between a DBA and a PhD is the need for the former to make a contribution to practice. The contribution to practice that this study makes is twofold.

First, there is the contribution it makes to DMO practice and especially to the practice of Marketing Cheshire. Indeed, the recommendations that this study makes are specific to Marketing Cheshire although some of them may find resonance with other DMOs. Some preliminary findings were shared with the previous chief executive of Marketing Cheshire who left the organisation in November 2018. There is some evidence to indicate that key recommendations e.g. for the organisation to transition from mainly promoting tourism to promotion across the whole visit, live, invest and study agenda and for Warrington to be more actively promoted, are already being implemented. It was the previous chief executive's stated intention to invite the researcher to present his findings to the board of Marketing Cheshire on completion

of the research. As the previous chief executive has now moved on an offer to do that will be made to the current chief executive.

The second contribution that this study makes to practice is in respect of the researcher's teaching. The researcher teaches Tourism and Leisure Management, International Tourism Management and Events Management students. For some years now the researcher has been incorporating the outputs of the current research study into his teaching of modules such as International Marketing and Business Events and in respect of dissertation supervision. This contribution is expected to continue into the future.

6.5 Generalisability and transferability

As this was a qualitative study there were no expectations that the outcomes would be generalisable. However the study's findings, conclusions and recommendations are transferable in that they have the potential to influence theory and practice beyond the geographical areas of Cheshire and Warrington and beyond Marketing Cheshire's sphere of influence.

6.6 Recommendations

The research study has provided the data for clear recommendations to be made in respect of Marketing Cheshire. These recommendations are not advanced in a prescriptive manner; rather they are presented as primarily strategic possibilities and they are offered for consideration in the interests of a sustainable future for Marketing Cheshire.

6.6.1 Brand audit of Marketing Cheshire

In June 2018 the post of Chief Executive, Marketing Cheshire was advertised and in November 2018 a new chief executive took up his post. Anyone taking up a new position should initially take time to 'walk the job'. To familiarise themselves with the organisation, its resources, its capabilities, its staff and its markets. Assuming that acclimatisation has now been accomplished by the new chief executive it would now be an opportune time to undertake a brand audit of Marketing Cheshire. A brand audit may help the organisation to define its purpose. Importantly, this would help the brand to be better understood in relation to the explorative organizational ambidexterous environment. The response of brands to changes and market dynamics represents a balance between offering messages of exploitative stability and credibility yet also offering explorative novelty and ongoing renewal. It is important to establish where the sub-region's competitive advantages lie and to understand its strengths and weaknesses in the perceptions of its target market(s) in order to create coherent messages that consumers can relate to. This will need to be approached with an open mind and a willingness to adopt new exploratory approaches.

The kind of information that a brand audit could focus on is as follows (Stubbs, 2011):

<u>Awareness</u>

What level of awareness of Cheshire and Warrington exits in the perceptions of the target market(s)? To what extent is awareness the issue or is there a more fundamental problem at work e.g. the extent to which Cheshire and Warrington are conjoined in the minds of the target market(s)? Organizational ambidexterity may also be applied to the DMO's markets. Some existing target markets offer much future

potential and these must continue to be exploited but new markets (in place marketing) are also likely to be developing and these present exploratory opportunities.

Attitudes and opinions

The knowledge that the target market(s) have of Cheshire and Warrington needs to be established along with the accuracy of this information.

Current and past promotion activity

Consideration needs to be given to the promotion has been undertaken in the past and to the promotion that is currently being undertaken. It is important to evaluate the success or otherwise of previous promotion. Effectiveness measurement metrics need to be employed. The positioning that has been adopted needs to be evaluated and an assessment should be made over its appropriateness in future in the light of the brand audit.

Aims and objectives

Marketing Cheshire and Cheshire and Warrington LEP's aims and objectives should be established and compared. There should be close alignment between the two sets of aims and objectives.

Political commitment

The commitment of local and national politicians to the aims and objectives of Marketing Cheshire and the Cheshire and Warrington LEP should be established and any work that needs to be done in this sphere should be articulated.

Competitors

The regional, national and international competition should be established and a SWOT analysis of these should be conducted.

Much of the information that could contribute to the brand audit may be already in existence but it is likely that additional research will need to be commissioned.

Following an audit Marketing Cheshire needs to develop an evidence-based vision and strategy that the three local authorities can buy into. That opportunity should be offered to them and they should be encouraged to buy-in and contribute financially to the new strategy However if that does not occur Marketing Cheshire needs to go ahead anyway but it should not alter a strategy that is evidence based. Throughout the course of the research, Marketing Cheshire did not appear to the researcher to have a clearly defined purpose or strategy. That is perfectly understandable and is probably desirable when you are fighting for survival but it can be a handicap going forward.

6.6.2 Cheshire and Warrington

Cheshire and Warrington as an entity lacks unity. It is something of an artificial construct. Practically the only-thing that unifies the sub-region is the Cheshire and Warrington LEP. One suspects that many of the residents of the sub-region would not see themselves as being residents of a sub-region and many might have difficulty in defining the boundaries of the sub-region without being prompted by its name. Other parts of the country have a more recognisable identity even if this does not conform to present administrative boundaries. Marketing Cheshire needs to direct attention to the cohesion and perceived shared identity of the sub-region.

6.6.3 Destination marketing to place marketing

Marketing Cheshire should become a place marketing agency rather than one that specialises in tourism. Tourism employs a significant number of people especially in Cheshire but it is not nearly as significant in respect of its financial contribution to the

sub-region in terms of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This may be because of the seasonal nature of tourism and the effect that has on employment and it may also be because many jobs allied to tourism are relatively low-skilled and low-paid. For most of the recent past Marketing Cheshire has focused largely on tourism and in June 2018 the chief executive stated that the ratio between tourism and business promotion was c. 70% tourism and 30% business. A change of emphasis from destination marketing to place marketing may have more resonance with Warrington. The common denominator between Cheshire and Warrington is that all parties have an interest in economic development and the promotion of the sub-region both as a whole and in its constituent parts will serve this objective. The transition from a destination marketing (tourism) focused organisation to more of a place marketing focus (embracing the whole visit, live, study and invest agenda) will also require organizational ambidexterity as will promoting Warrington more actively as it has different priorities to Cheshire.

In the business market, especially in respect of the 'invest' agenda there is more of a Business to Business (B2B) aspect than in the Business to Consumer dominated (B2C) tourism arena. It may be that there is less 'noise' in the business sector and that social media and co-creation is less influential. If so, it may therefore be easier to get the message across.

6.6.4 Collaboration with neighbouring DMOs

Collaboration with neighbouring DMOs offers opportunities. Liverpool has invested heavily in business tourism through the creation of the Liverpool Echo Arena and Convention Centre (ACC). This has been an outstanding success. A capital investment of £164 million has resulted in the ACC generating an economic

contribution of £1.4 billion to Liverpool City Region (Lechthaller, 2018). Many conference delegates appreciate the organised excursions that are offered by conference organisers since these enable them to better experience the conference destination. In addition conference delegates are often accompanied at conferences by partners who do not attend the conference but who may take advantage of conference excursions. Excursions to Chester and other parts of Cheshire could be offered to delegates attending conferences in Liverpool to take advantage of Liverpool's burgeoning conference business and to offer delegates a contrast to what Liverpool can offer. This could add value to Liverpool's product and it would accord well with Marketing Cheshire's new strap line, Chester, Cheshire and beyond. Business tourism tends to lead to repeat business as delegates often return to destinations that have offered a good conference experience as leisure tourists. Opportunities also exist to collaborate with DMOs in North Wales as Chester is a good location to stay when visiting Snowdonia and the North Wales coast.

6.6.5 Operating costs

Marketing Cheshire should keep a weather eye on their ration of operating costs to marketing budget (Heeley, 2015) as this is an important measure of effectiveness. If operating costs (including salaries and pension costs) take up the vast proportion of the organisation's budget, there will be little left to spend on marketing activity and this is the organisation's *raison d'être*.

6.6.6 The economic threat of large cities

Marketing Cheshire could counter the growing threat from the dominance of major cities (Liverpool and Manchester in Marketing Cheshire's case) by undertaking

geographical expansion into Shropshire and the Wirral either by acquisition, merger or strategic alliance.

This could result in additional revenue streams which would strengthen the organisation and make it more secure without much additional need to increase the headcount or overheads. However, the priority should be to reconcile the issues within Cheshire and Warrington (tourism marketing versus place marketing and to what extent to promote Warrington) before considering expanding into new territory.

6.7 Areas for further research

The recommendation for Marketing Cheshire to conduct a brand audit is, in fact, a recommendation for further research. At this point in time such an audit could provide valuable insight which could inform Marketing Cheshire's merger with Cheshire and Warrington LEP and which could help to smooth out and transitions that may be required. Organizational ambidexterity may also have wider scope to be applied to branding. In branding there is a need to distil an often extensive number of features into a simple, readily understandable proposition that consumers can relate to and associate with the brand. In doing so credibility and continuity can be assured by the retention of some of the content of previous promotional initiatives but by also introducing innovative new content. Achieving such a balance will require both an exploitative and an exploratory approach and hence organizational ambidexterity may also be applied to branding and re-branding exercises. The application of organizational ambidexterity to branding has received little or no coverage in the literature and this may present a rich opportunity for research.

If Marketing Cheshire moves to adopt more of a place marketing focus it will need to consider other factors beyond tourism. For places and destinations to be sustainable they need to attract bright talented young people to become residents. Many of Cheshire and Warrington's most profitable and productive sectors, for example, the pharmaceutical, nuclear and automotive sectors require graduates in science, technology, engineering and maths. These are known as the STEM subjects. Many talented young graduates are exhibiting a preference for city living, so cities like Liverpool, Manchester and even London represent Cheshire and Warrington's competition in attracting such residents. In the cases of Liverpool and Manchester the proximity may render it feasible to live in a major city but to work in Cheshire and Warrington. However, the feasibility of such an arrangement depends upon the viability of the transport infrastructure. Research should be conducted to establish the living and working preferences of bright, talented, young graduates to determine how Cheshire and Warrington's offering can be better tailored to meet their needs.

6.8 Limitations of the study

The subjects of the study were all either DMO/NTO chief executives/chief officers or else they were key stakeholders of Marketing Cheshire. DMOs have many stakeholders, some of whom, such as key stakeholders exert both power and influence. Other stakeholders wield power or influence and still others have little of both. Nevertheless, they are still stakeholders and their views carry weight. The current study did not include residents as such so it cannot anticipate what the ordinary person in the street thinks. This may be pertinent as there is a question mark over the legitimacy of DMOs since they do not own the destination and the destination is not for sale. Where does the responsibility for destination marketing/management or

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place marketing reside? Who owns the destination? Who has the right to decide how it is promoted? These are relevant questions.

As is frequently the case with research, and especially qualitative research, the results only reflect the stated views of the respondents in the study and their views may not be representative of all stakeholders. However, as the respondents were all key stakeholders their expressed views are likely to be influential.

Chapter Seven: Learning Reflection

7.1 Introduction

This final chapter is a personal account of the learning that has taken place over the duration of the author's DBA programme. In order to contextualise this chapter, it may be necessary to remind the reader that the researcher works as an academic (Senior Lecturer in Marketing and Management) as this is particularly pertinent to this chapter.

7.2 Reflection, reflexivity and the scholarly practitioner

Reflection and reflexivity are integral elements in DBA research as is independent scholarship and the development of a strong sense of self (Anderson and Gold, 2015). The development of this strong sense of self is such that, apparently, many DBA theses are written entirely in the first person (Anderson and Gold, 2015). However, it seems that many DBA candidates find writing in the first person to be counter-intuitive for two principal reasons. One is that the use of 'I' in the research does not appear to represent good practice and the doctoral researcher frequently has a familiarity with reading articles and reports in the social science arena that distance the researcher from the research. The second reason is that it can appear ego-centric to place the researcher as the 'I' in the middle of the research (Anderson and Gold, 2015). For a number of years the present author has reviewed papers for international academic conferences, for international academic journals and as a book and special issue journal editor. In this reviewer role there is an occasional requirement to review a conference presentation, a journal article or a book chapter that is written in the first person. This generally causes the present researcher some initial disquiet because 'it does not seem right' although any review of the work he undertakes will be based only on the quality of the work and not on whether or not the first person is used. As

a university academic of several years' standing this researcher can add that on many occasions over the last decade he has had to make the following comment on first year undergraduate assignments: 'Do not use the first person, 'I' , in academic writing unless you are asked to write a reflective piece'. Despite the above, however, in this chapter we encounter the above exception in which I am invited to write a reflective piece so I will use the first person from now on.

The focus of this chapter is the concept or notion of the scholarly practitioner.

In my early days as an MBA student I had a frustration with academic conventions. By that point I had many years' of experience in general management and although I gained a lot from studying for my MBA it seemed to me that university business schools were out of touch with what was happening in the real world. My own business experience told me that, if it hisses, if it wriggles and has a forked tongue it is a snake and if you do not act quickly it is going to bite you. In order to comply with conventional academic notions of rigour it seemed to me that you constantly had to seek more and more evidence merely in order to confirm what you knew already. To me that represented inertia and it meant that you were much more likely to become the snake's victim. At the time, my view was that in business one generally did not have time to reflect (Stokes, 2017) and that reflection was something of a luxury pursuit. I am more sanguine now and probably much more socialised into the academic environment but there is still a potential gap between business school education and professional practice. This thesis has demonstrated that a neglect of the views of practitioners and a lack of any real consideration of the implications for practitioners in academic writing is a feature of the place marketing and allied fields. Indeed, Kavaratzis has described

academics and practitioners as 'strangers in the night' (Kavaratzis, 2015, p. 266). Bartunek and Rynes (2010) have gone further and have suggested that this failure to address properly the implications for practice is widespread throughout management and business research literature. Although they note there is a requirement in many top level journals in the business and management field for research articles to state their implications for practice, no evidence in support of any assertions of is required. Bartunek and Rynes (2010) advocate that much more emphasis should be placed on genuine implications for practice in order to demonstrate that management research is capable of solving real world problems. Anderson and Gold (2015) acknowledge the potential gap but point to the number of doctoral researchers who are now conducting practice-based research, often within their own organisations. In Anderson and Gold's (2015) view, although DBAs are of relatively recent origin, they do have the potential to impact positively on the profession of management and to raise its profile by: "encouraging managers-as-students to use their experience, tacit knowledge and intuition to solve complex organisational problems" (Anderson and Gold, 2015, p. 107). Moats and McClean (2009) see scholar-practitioners as forming the bridge between research and practice. These authors appear to be making a powerful argument in favour of the DBA approach to management research and education.

Godwin and Meek (2016) explain how theory, research and practice are integrated within the Master of Public Administration (MPA) and Doctor of Public Administration (DPA) programmes at University of La Verne in the United States. The description of this integration is presented within the context of graduate public administration programmes in the United States although La Verne University has taken a slightly

divergent route from the mainstream. In the view of Godwin and Meek (2016) practice should ideally drive both theory and research. In pursuit of this ideal business school curricula should incorporate reflection and consideration of the ways in which emerging issues connect with management practice. At the University of La Verne the term 'scholarly-practitioner' is specifically incorporated into the DPA programme's mission statement as it is central to the ethos of the programme (Godwin and Meek, 2016). Many of La Verne's DPA students have substantive management experience and they bring a: "practice-to-theory perspective or even a practice-to-theory-to-research perspective". This is reflected in both a "reflection-on-action" and a "reflection-in-action" approach (Godwin and Meek, 2016, p.63). As one who was an experienced Chartered Marketer and general manager for many years before he became a full-time academic and DBA student I can relate strongly to this category of doctoral student.

In redesigning and replacing an existing EdD programme academics at Rossier School of Education, the University of Southern California needed to differentiate the EdD programme from the PhD programme offered by the same institution. The central premise of the new EdD programme was that it would produce scholar-practitioners who would be capable of drawing on "research, theory and critical thinking to solve important, contemporary problems of practice" (Rueda, Sundt and Picus, 2013, p. 254). There are differences between the Rossier School of Education EdD and the LJMU DBA (not least that it is a different award) but the guiding principle of producing scholar practitioners who are able to draw on their academic training at doctoral level to solve real world problems of practice is a shared goal. More than thirty years ago Bardach (1987) was concerned to clarify the relationship between what he termed

'scholarly knowledge' in public management and the 'wisdom' that capable practitioners possess. Bardach's (1987) paper is predicated on the notion that practitioner wisdom is both the starting point and the ultimate goal of scholarly research into public management. According to Robson and McCartan (2016, p.10):

> Real world research is a cornerstone of applied learning, evidence based policy and informed decision-making. It means that important organizational, practice and policy decisions are made from an informed perspective, ultimately leading to evidence based policy and practice, not practice based policy and evidence.

Robson and McCartan (2016, p. 3) believe that: 'real world research can shape the world as well as explain to us why the world is in the shape that it is in'. My own goal and aspiration is that this thesis can accurately be described as real world research.

Doctoral students who are engaged in practice-based research, often within the organisations in which they work, are frequently known as 'researching professionals' (Anderson and Gold, 2015, p. 106). This designation contrasts somewhat with the concept of academics being described as 'professional researchers' (Anderson and Gold, 2015, p. 106) and it manifests itself in the creation of professional knowledge which offers the prospect of contributing to real-life situations rather than abstract constructs. This potential contribution to the creation of professional knowledge presents a strong background rationale for DBA programmes. Anderson and Gold (2015) believe that DBAs offer the prospect of improving the profile of the management profession in a manner that business schools have thus far failed to achieve, through its contribution to the creation of a more thoughtful and questioning profession. However, Anderson and Gold (2015) recognise that any such changes make take a long time to arrive.

Anderson and Gold (2015) suggest that teaching and nursing provide examples of professions that were formerly thought of as being largely practical in nature and that

these are now graduate-only professions. Anderson and Gold (2015) cite (Short, Keefer and Stone, 2009) in arguing that human resource development (HRD) is a diminished profession because it now makes a subservient contribution to senior management practice and has become a staff as opposed to a line function. Part of the reason for this, Anderson and Gold (2015) argue, is that it is not underpinned by a clear and robust body of knowledge. Anderson and Gold (2015) believe that management in general faces a similar problem and that DBA programmes could help to broaden and deepen the knowledge base associated with management. According to Anderson and Gold (2015), DBA students as scholar-practitioners have the capacity to bridge the gap between research and practice.

Gold et al (2013) argue that there is a contradiction and a tension between the terms 'scholar' and 'practitioner' but that these elements can generate creativity. I have to say that I felt no great sense of conflict in developing this thesis probably because I do not work for organisation that I was investigating. On the contrary I found that the DBA gave me the opportunity to perform as a scholar-practitioner. I am a scholar by profession and developing the thesis enabled me to make a contribution to knowledge. One hopes that this process has generated creativity particularly in the contribution that the thesis makes to theory but the reality of that situation is one for others to judge. Anderson and Gold (2015) observe that creativity can manifest itself in the reflective accounts that many DBA students are asked to write as an integral part of their doctoral programmes. This is because the requirement for these accounts is usually deliberately presented without a defined format and the unstructured nature of the task can often result in creative and insightful writing. Again, one hopes that this is the case in this instance.

Anderson and Gold (2013, p109) suggest that one way that the notion of the scholar-practitioner can be approached is through Aristotle's term 'phronesis'. Phronesis is the way in which practical wisdom can be generated in the midst of competing or multiple values. The concept of phronesis considers how, although confronted by competing values, a person knows how to respond by exercising judgement over what is good or bad. It could be argued that phronesis was required to arrive at the recommendations in this thesis as those recommendations do stray somewhat from established practice. Phronesis is also a requirement in organizational ambidexterity, a strategic concept, which I have applied to DMO operational strategy in this thesis. Anderson and Gold (2013) make the point that business and management can draw on the experience of the nursing profession in the way in which that profession has been seeking to put scholarship at the heart of practice for a number of years. This is allied to a strong focus on reflective practice within the profession. This has particular resonance with me both from my own work and research experience and because my wife was a senior academic for many years in a university health and social care faculty. She was instrumental in introducing a strong research and scholarship ethos into that faculty through her editorship of three books and through her encouragement of doctoral research. Those three books enabled many members of the faculty staff to contribute chapters and become published authors. I have myself undertaken research within the NHS and when I worked in the pharmaceutical industry I was privileged to often witness the inclusive and philanthropic way in which reflection was used by nursing and medical staff in analysing patient's conditions.

Much DBA research is undertaken in situ within organisations and such research can invite questions over the independence of the researcher and the reliability and validity

of the research. Although the practice of "working *in* and *with* organisations" (Ellwood, 2015, p. 123) is commonplace within the social sciences and although this practice has contributed greatly to our knowledge of organisations; for the research to be valid, a level of detachment and independence from the organisation is required if bias is to be avoided. Researching in organisations, particularly where one is a senior manager who is responsible for implementing and even creating company policy, can make it very difficult to adopt the suitably detached and independent perspective that is required to undertake unbiased research.

Conducting in situ research may well place the researcher in an invidious position in which he or she is constrained by a need to comply with company policy and/or practice and where the questioning of assumptions may be frowned upon by the organisation's top management. Management consultants who are engaged by the organisation can appear to be somewhat detached from the organisation as they are not 'insiders' but nonetheless their access to key individuals may be restricted and they are frequently constrained by the contractual relationship that they have with the organisation and the fee that is payable for their services. Consequently, there can be a temptation for consultants to say what the organisation's senior management wants to hear.

In conducting the research in this thesis I was not subject to the constraints that are often experienced by in situ researchers or by management consultants. This is because I was not an employee of the organisation in question or those of its key stakeholders. This stance contributed greatly to my own independence as a researcher and to the validity and reliability of my research. I was able to engender

trust with my interview participants: this was sometimes assisted by the snowball sampling process and certainly as a result of the rigorous ethical process that was adopted. I found that I was largely accepted by my interview participants as something of a peer. This was partly because I spoke the language of DMOs (I knew what words like subvention meant and I was familiar with the acronyms that are common to the sector) as a result of my familiarity with the literature surrounding the subject area and with the content of key documents. My own long experience of engaging with local authorities and quasi-government organisations assisted and the experience that I had of management at both an operational and a strategic level all assisted. I dressed in a similar way to my interview participants and I was a similar age to many of them when I was conducting the interviews. I had long years of experience in negotiating high value contracts with very senior clients and the experience that I had gained in those situations helped me to develop a rapport with my interviewees and with others who contributed to the research. The downside of this is that as I was not an insider I had less scope to initiate change within the organisation. This could be seen as a limiting factor in terms of the practical contribution of the research. However, this is mitigated by the fact that the practical contribution that this thesis makes is twofold: there is the practical contribution to the organisation under study and there is also the researcher's practical contribution to his teaching practice.

Ellwood (2015) considers how scientific knowledge and practical knowledge can best be reconciled and considered together and he elaborates two approaches. The first of these approaches can be termed 'evidence-based management' (Ellwood, 2015, p. 124). Evidence-based management owes its roots to the better-established concept of evidence-based medicine and it effectively combines four information sources that

each contribute to management decision-making. These four sources are evaluated scientific evidence, practitioner judgement or experiential evidence, context (organisational evidence) and stakeholder perspectives (Elwood, 2015).

The second approach that Ellwood (2015, p. 125) identifies is termed as the notion that management research should be approached as a 'design science'. Ellwood (2015) argues that research should focus on what management *should* be rather than what it actually is. Ellwood (2015) suggests that this is the objective of most DBA research although he does concede that in this research most of the authors are addressing members of the academic community rather than practitioners. Ellwood (2015) notes that discussions of the nature of management research are apt to lead to an examination of the adopted methodologies but Ellwood (2015) argues that it is also important to focus on the skillset of the individual scholar-practitioner'.

It is my hope that the perspective that I was able to adopt in the current research coupled with the skills that I have acquired as a doctoral candidate and as an academic and published author have enabled me to develop appropriate skills under both of Ellwood's (2015) identified approaches to management research.

Ellwood (2015) reflects on the challenges of becoming a scholar practitioner over the course of the doctoral research journey and he cites specific challenges which can occur at any point. The first of these may be termed the transparency challenge. Ellwood (2015) observes that if the research process can at times appear to be confusing and ambiguous for the researcher it is likely to appear very much more confusing and ambiguous to stakeholders in the research.   Confusing the

stakeholders in the research is unlikely to contribute to the effectiveness of the research. This is not something that I was conscious of during my research or in my reflection on that research and it was not evident in participant's responses to interview questions or in the subsequent conversations that I had with them. Ellwood (2015) also refers to the building and maintenance of trust with research participants. The concept of trust has already been alluded to above and the degree of trust that I felt was generally generated between the researcher and the research participants appeared to be a strength of the research. Finally, in the context of becoming a scholarly practitioner Ellwood (2015) discusses the importance of reflexivity. Ellwood (2015) regards reflexivity as being an essential component in researching in and with organisations.   There is a compelling need to be aware of the interaction of the researcher's role and its effect on the nature and conduct of the research. In this context, I feel that my experience as an academic with the inherent need to communicate and become familiar with abstract constructs in that role helped me to understand the concept of reflexivity and to be conscious of my role as a researcher. Reflexivity is often inherent in the conduct of semi-structured interviews. The standard questions are put to all interview participants but the formulation of astute follow-up questions requires a deep understanding of the interviewees' position and 'political' role. For instance, in interview situations where I felt that the answer to the question that I was given was rather vague and unspecific, I followed up by asking for examples. This compelled the interviewee to either respond specifically or to decline to answer and risk appearing rude. It is my belief that I was able to formulate meaningful follow-up questions with my interview participants and rich data was certainly elicited in the process.

When I reflect on my doctoral journey, I am reflecting on more than 10% of my life. Those years have witnessed my marriage and the death of my father as well as many other personally significant events.

It is apposite here to reflect upon my reasons for opting to research for a DBA rather than for a PhD. In its Characteristics Statement Doctoral Degree (2015, p.5) the UK Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) whose role is to assure and oversee the quality standards of all higher education qualifications states that:

> All UK doctorates, regardless of their form, continue to require the main focus of the candidate's work to demonstrate an original contribution to knowledge in their subject, field or profession, through original research or the original application of existing knowledge or understanding.

Within the same Characteristics Statement Doctoral Degree (2015, p.17) the QAA also states that: 'Most doctoral examiners are looking for work that is original in nature, makes a contribution to knowledge in the subject and is of peer-reviewed publishable quality in that subject'.

Although some claim very much earlier origins many authors consider that the 'modern' PhD can be traced to nineteenth century Germany and particularly to the work of the Prussian naturalist Humboldt (Stewart, 2015). There is some dispute about the first introduction of the PhD award in England with one body citing 1917 (QAA) and another 1921 (Stewart, 2015). This disparity may be accounted for by confusion over the start date and the completion date of the award but it is widely acknowledged that the first award was made by Oxford University (Stewart, 2015). DBAs in the U.K. have a more recent history that derives from the introduction of professional doctorates into the country from the U.S.A. in the 1990s (Thorpe et al,

2015). DBAs reflect a growing awareness of the need for business schools to develop doctoral programmes that are more relevant to the practice of business and management than traditional PhDs.

One of my main reasons for electing to research for a DBA rather than a PhD was that it would mean engaging with another faculty within Liverpool John Moores University. At the time when I began my doctoral programme I was teaching marketing and management to undergraduate and postgraduate events management and tourism and leisure management students within the Faculty of Education, Health and Community.   My specialities of marketing and management and indeed the programmes that I taught on were slightly alien subject areas within my own Faculty and appropriate doctoral supervision might have been an issue. There was always a possibility that the programmes that I taught would be relocated into Liverpool Business School (Liverpool John Moores University's Faculty of Business). If that was ever to be the case, I thought that it might be beneficial to get to know some of the staff there. Liverpool Business School offered a DBA programme but my Faculty did not. Liverpool Business School is and was staffed with academics who specialise in marketing and management and that contrasted with my own Faculty. I am still in the Faculty of Health, Leisure and Community but the programmes that I teach on are being relocated into Liverpool Business School in September 2019. In the recent past I have led two modules on Liverpool Business School's MBA programmes and throughout the current academic year I have delivered undergraduate modules there.

During my MBA programme my cohort were organised into action leaning groups. They were international in nature and they were composed of individuals from a

number of different disciplines. That arrangement worked well and I gained a lot from it. My hope was that something similar might occur with Liverpool Business School's DBA programme. By contrast, a PhD seemed to offer a more lonely journey. The concept of the dual contribution to both theory and practice that is implicit in a DBA programme also appealed to me. As I progressed through my DBA research I began to accumulate publications. This was one of the biggest problems or dilemmas that I faced as the publications imposed considerably upon the time that I had available to research. After I had accumulated a number of publications to my name some of my academic colleagues were advising me to abandon my DBA research and to apply to study for a PhD by publication. Although this might have been an easier route, I was already invested in a DBA and I felt that I had an obligation to the interview participants who had generously given up their time to contribute to my research. For these reasons, I felt that it was important to complete the task and I always viewed the prospect of PhD by publication as an expedient possibility that I might be able to pursue if anything went badly wrong with my DBA research.

My DBA programme began with a week-long workshop in Liverpool in May 2012. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend this workshop as I was on my honeymoon at the time and I did not get to meet my cohort of students until many months after my programme began. In lieu of the week-long workshop, I had a two-hour meeting with the then director of the DBA programme in autumn 2012. I was appointed as a full-time senior lecturer at LJMU in September 2010 and I embarked on my DBA as soon as I reasonably could after completing my Post Graduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (which was a pretty much mandatory condition of my appointment). In 2011, I submitted a paper (with two co-authors) to be considered for

presentation at the EuroMed Academy of Business conference in Crete. After peer-review and corrections, I was invited to present my paper at the conference. In addition, and, much to my surprise, I was appointed as the track chair for the marketing track at the conference. Our paper was published in the conference book of proceedings which came with ISSN and ISBN numbers. After the conference book of proceedings had been published I was approached by the editor of a journal and my co-authors and I were invited to prepare another paper (which had to be at least 50% different from the original one) based on the conference paper for possible publication as a journal article. As a result, when my DBA programme began I already had one peer-reviewed conference presentation and one accepted journal article. I had already made a start on the road to conference presentations and publications and this gave me confidence in my ability to complete my doctorate.

I met the other members of my DBA cohort for the first time at the second week-long workshop that was held in Liverpool in 2013. My DBA cohort were an eclectic group from different parts of the world including Nigeria and the United Arab Emirates and there were two colleagues, who, like me, worked full-time at Liverpool John Moores University. The other members of the cohort were all, or almost all, MBAs like me but they were from a range of different professions; there was a senior politician, a deputy chief executive, a chartered accountant, a director of estates, a senior engineer, a former army officer and a senior academic amongst others. I was the only marketer in the cohort. I got on with all the members of the cohort very well and the workshop was a great success. The international nature of the cohort was a very welcome aspect but it meant that we only rarely came together in person. We did try to

communicate regularly via Skype but work schedules and international time differences made that difficult.

In late 2012 my father died. He had suffered from Alzheimer's disease, which steadily increased in its severity. Together with my sister, I had power of attorney over every aspect of our father's care and financial affairs and both of these, and in particular, the latter were very complicated. After our father's death, my sister and I were executors for his estate and there were complex legal matters to deal with. I also had a minor operation, which resulted in my being signed off work by my consultant for two or three weeks. Dealing with the complexity of my father's estate and the need to recover from my own minor operation meant that I had to apply for a deferral over the submission of my DBA proposal. After I was granted a deferral, I was some 5 months late in submitting my proposal and in obtaining ethical approval for my research project. These events taught me that it is not only professional demands that can impact on the time needed to engage in doctoral research but also the normal course of life events too.

After I submitted my research proposal and ethics form, which was required to be an 8-10,000-word document representing the first module on the DBA programme, I learned that I had passed the module and ethical approval was granted by LJMU on 8th October 2013. As I work full-time as a university lecturer and I have been involved for a number of years in reviewing for conferences and journals as well as writing my own research papers I have always found that during the teaching year I have had comparatively little time to progress my DBA. In late 2013 and in 2014 I contributed to a paper with the title, 'The Competing Dynamics and Relationships in Corporate

and Local Government Agency Constructions of Place' by Russell et al which was published in 2014. I also prepared my own conference submission for the 7th Annual Conference of the EuroMed Academy of Business, which was held in Kristiansand, Norway in September 2014. I was the first named of three authors and our submission was called, 'Towards a framework for change: destination marketing in North West England'. This journal article and the conference presentation were very much linked to the subject matter of this thesis.

In July 2014 after attending a public presentation by the Chief Executive of Marketing Cheshire, I spoke to her and arranged to meet her to discuss my research project. That meeting took place on 29th July 2014. Given that my plan had been to interview senior executives from within Marketing Cheshire, I was very dismayed to learn from the chief executive that there were none as any potential interviewees had recently been recruited by the previous chief executive and had transferred with him to Liverpool. This was a setback but the chief executive proposed that I should instead interview the chief executives of DMOs throughout England. This was an attractive proposition but I was concerned over whether or not I would be able to access these individuals for interview purposes. The Chief Executive agree to help me by sending e-mails to potential interviewees that introduced my research project and me. This proved to be a very fruitful way to gain access to a number of key individuals. I conducted a pilot interview on 8th August 2014 and after slight modifications to my standard questions I interviewed my first interviewee proper (P1), who was the chief executive of an NTO, in London on 13th August 2014. During the course of that interview, I asked P1 for examples of best practice throughout England and I used the answers that I received to inform who I should approach next. Over the course of the

next three years, I continued to interview chief executives and chief officers of DMOs and the chief executives or directors of organisations who were key stakeholders of Marketing Cheshire. I found that identifying, approaching and interviewing individuals was a very enjoyable process which was reminiscent of the time when I was negotiating £250,000 plus synthetic sports pitch contracts. It was the element of '*la chasse*', the chase, which appealed to me. Whilst that may be a rather dubious hunting analogy it does convey the sense of excitement that I felt in building my research data and no animals or even humans were hurt in the course of my research.

Throughout the time that I was conducting interviews, I continued to write papers and present at academic conferences held at universities throughout Europe in locations such as Kristiansand, Norway, Warsaw, Poland, Verona and Rome in Italy and Valletta, Malta. To date I can claim 7 conference presentations and 10 journal articles. All have been peer-reviewed and all have been published with ISSN and ISBN numbers. My publications and details of other scholarly activity can be found in Appendix 1. Four of the conference presentations and five of the journal articles relate directly to the research in this thesis. In addition, I have been the co-editor and corresponding editor of two journal special issues and in 2016, I co-edited a book called *Organizational Management* (Stokes et al, 2016). In producing conference presentations, I have responded to calls for papers but virtually all of my journal articles have been as a result of invitations either from co-authors or from editors-in-chief to submit papers for their journals based on the conference presentations that I have made. As a result of these invitations, except when I wrote my very first paper, I have never targeted specific journals or aspired to seek publications in particular journals.

Hartog (2018) adopts an auto-ethnographic approach in writing about her researching of her own practice and how her underlying values are central to this quest. It is an illuminating account which she ends by posing the question of why self-study matters. This self- enquiring perspective is something that I recognise in my own personal and professional development although I have not gone nearly as far as Hartog in chronicling the process. Hartog (2018) recognises that an auto-ethnography is sometimes seen to be a less valid form of scholarship but she argues that this may be attributed to the power-relationships and vested interests in maintaining the status quo that are sometimes found in academia. From a personal perspective some of Hartog's accounts do have resonance with me and I have frequently had cause to carefully consider my own approach to teaching and to recognise how it has developed over time.

Hovannesian (2013) is a very personal account of a doctoral 'journey' and it concludes with her describing herself as having become a scholar-practitioner and feeling part of a fellowship. I find that I can very much relate to Hovannesian's account as I feel a strong sense of fellowship and academic community with my colleagues at work and with my fellow authors, editors and very good friends, Professor Peter Stokes (who is also one of my doctoral supervisors), Professor Caroline Rowland, Dr. Neil Moore and Dr. Simon Smith. We have all worked well together and we have engaged in insightful academic conversations both at home and in all sorts of locations across Europe. I also feel a strong sense of fellowship with members of the EuroMed Academy of Business whom I have met at conferences. For a number of years, I have reviewed papers and served as a track chair at EuroMed conferences throughout Europe. The contacts that I have made through these conferences meant that when I co-edited two

journal special issues I was able to invite leading academics who I knew from Spain, Germany, Cyprus, Portugal and Israel to contribute papers. This sense of community that I gained from attending, presenting and chairing tracks at academic conferences is also enhanced by the contacts that I retain with former students. Further recognition as an academic came when I was invited by the Cyprus Ministry of Education and Culture to be a member of an external validation committee for a proposed new master's degree at the University of Nicosia in May 2017.

Reflection is the focus of this chapter and it is a concept that I have been familiar with for some time. Reflection formed a significant part of my MBA studies and I was required to write reflectively when I subsequently studied for a Post-Graduate Certificate in Education. As a business school product I am well acquainted with the work of Kolb and others and I have taught students to use Kolb's (1984) and Gibbs's (1988) models of reflection.

Reynolds (1998) points to distinctions between reflection and critical reflection. The primary distinction that Reynolds (1998) sees between reflection as espoused by Kolb (1984) and and Schön (1983) and critical reflection lies in the individual perspective of reflection.   Reflection also focuses on the immediate problem whereas critical reflection also embraces the questioning of assumptions together with the analysis of power and control relationships. Reynolds (1998) traces the origins of critical reflection to the work of what is known as the Frankfurt School during the 1920s and 1930s who are credited with the development of Critical Theory (Stokes, 2011b). More latterly Habermas (1972) is associated with the development of Critical Theory (Reynolds, 1998).   Critical reflection is seen by its advocates as being emancipatory

and removed from routine problem-solving as it requires a radical questioning of assumptions. Habermas (1973), in particular, argues that a preoccupation with methods should not receive priority over considerations such as motive or purpose if a more humanised society is desired. According to Reynolds (1998), who cites Alvesson and Wilmott (1992) in this context, the purpose of Critical Theory can be expressed as the emancipatory potential to critically reflect on social reality, including on the self, in the knowledge that the social world is socially constructed and is, therefore, capable of being transformed. When it emerged from the Frankfurt School, Critical Theory was strongly influenced by Marxist doctrine (Stokes, 2011b). Alvesson and Wilmott (1992, p. 435) contend that 'Critical Theorists work within the Enlightenment tradition', which they state was a tradition that was originally founded on challenging the existing order that prevailed in the late 17th and early 18th centuries. This included the divine right of kings, the strong dominance of the church, feudal society and prejudicial and power-based viewpoints. A central premise of Critical Theory is that it has both the capability and the responsibility to contribute to liberating people from dogma, doctrine, assumptions, power relationships and other factors that inhibit opportunity, autonomy and long-term satisfaction (Alvesson and Wilmott, 1992). The combination of empirical study linked to philosophy is fundamental to Critical Theory, as is the notion that as reality is socially constructed, it is therefore capable of being changed. Whilst I am very much in favour of fairness, equity and opportunity, I am not seeking to change the world in any fundamental way. Therefore, my own world view is probably much less radical than that of some Critical Theorists and I have a rather more *laissez-faire* but not entirely *laissez-faire* approach to politics and economics. In the view of Reynolds (1998) there are four aspects of critical reflection that distinguish it from other types of reflection. These are: the questioning of

assumptions, a focus on the social as opposed to the individual, the analysis of power relationships and a concern with emancipation. I will now discuss each of these four tenets of critical reflection in the context of my own doctoral research.

7.3 The questioning of assumptions

Throughout my career, the overwhelming part of which was in the private sector I enjoyed a great deal of autonomy. This was because I gained early promotions and achieved relatively senior positions at an early age and it was also because I travelled extensively in my work and spent comparatively little time in a company office with its accompanying rites and rituals. Autonomy has always been important to me but I did not expect to enjoy as much autonomy as I possess as a university lecturer. This translated into my role as a DBA student and it allowed me to question assumptions about the organisation that I was researching and about other such organisations with very few constraints. I felt throughout my research that as I was investigating perceptions of an organisation that I did not work for I was not subject to the organisational pressures that can be imposed on employees who are conducting research into their own organisations and this meant that I was independent and was free to challenge assumptions.

7.4 A social rather than an individual focus

A significant part of my reason for electing to research for a DBA rather than a PhD was the sense of a shared journey that I expected to undertake and to a considerable extent that became my lived experience especially during the early years of my doctoral research. Spending annual working weeks with my fellow students at the DBA workshop was an enriching experience. Unfortunately, there was little

commitment to action learning set meetings amongst my group. I was as culpable as anyone else in this because I found that personal and work issues made it difficult for me to spare the time to attend meetings. However, the two action learning set meetings that I did attend were enjoyable and socially beneficial and the group were able to offer individuals valuable support. I initially hoped that the action learning sets might become a focus for our group to collectively reflect on our academic journey and that this reflective account might have more of a collective and less of a first person narrative. Unfortunately, that was not the case and I imagine that each person's final chapter would have taken on a very different and individual character. Given the passage of time that now seems to be a very logical outcome as everyone's motivations to study, career paths and trajectories differ very widely.

7.5 The analysis of power relations

To some extent, my research was justified by a change in government policy in respect of the marketing of destinations. Until comparatively recently destination marketing fell substantially within a public sector remit but this has now changed with the government seeking much more private sector involvement.

The change in government policy has brought about commensurate changes in the power relationships between the state, local government, private providers and the market (Horlings, 2012). Critical reflection has enabled me to focus on the merit and the justice of this. I have considered issues such as 'whose right is it to decide on this process?' and 'who owns the place that is being marketed?' Whilst these issues may have occurred to me in the normal course of events I feel that as a result of having to critically reflect on my academic journey I began to question the fairness and equity of

the changed circumstances. This approach helped me to preserve as neutral and independent a stance as I could in conducting my research.

7.6 An emancipatory approach

My doctoral journey has been something of an emancipatory process. I have found myself questioning the ideological premises that underpin destination marketing and the business models that underpin it. This has led me to reflect on the nature of public and private sector funding and to query to what extent society needs DMOs.   Another key aspect to consider within the context of my own research is to query the ownership of a destination and by extension the legitimacy of a DMO in promoting that destination. These are points that have been raised and discussed earlier in my thesis.

I have found my doctoral research to be a fascinating experience and my research has certainly informed my teaching throughout the course of my doctoral programme. It has been liberating to approach learning formally again (we never stop learning in a general sense), to read, to ponder and consider the work of others and to discuss what I have found with colleagues. When I conducted research in the past with doctors, by which I mean medical practitioners in this instance, I found that it gave me new insight into them as individuals and into the problems that they experienced in their working lives. Even though most of them knew me from my (then) professional role in the pharmaceutical industry, they seemed to view me differently after I had interviewed them.   I found that this process built trust and respect, which I found to be emancipatory even though I would not have used that term at the time. That has again been the case with the current research and I have very much enjoyed engaging with DMO chief executives and chief officers and their key stakeholders.

7.7 Ethical issues, action learning and personal reflection

According to Robinson (2015), the understanding of the research's purpose and value, is critical to its integrity. This, he believes, lies "in the insights it offers into practice" (Robinson, 2015, p. 140). In the case of this research, the insight that it offers into practice is twofold. Firstly, there is the insight that it provides into the strategic and operational aspects of a particular DMO and possibly to the strategic and operational conduct of DMOs in general. Contributions to practice are comparatively rare in the extant literature surrounding destination and place marketing to the extent that one leading author, Karatvatzis (2015, p. 266) describes academics in the field and practitioners as 'strangers in the night'. The secondly practical contribution of the research is the insight that it gives the researcher into his teaching of tourism and leisure management and event management.

From an ethical standpoint these two contributions to practice may offer up contradictions. Robinson (2015) refers to the pre-moral values or core values that underpin some professions. For instance, according to Robinson (2015), the key component that underpins medical practice is health and the medical practitioner has a responsibility to ensure fair distribution of healthcare to his or her patients. In a similar manner, it is incumbent upon a university lecturer to ensure that students are treated fairly in their access to learning, to dissertation supervision and to academic support. However, management as a profession is not necessarily associated with a benevolent approach to subordinates and is generally more focused on organisation objectives such as the creation of shareholder value. It could be argued, however, that a stronger focus on the welfare and interests of staff will lead to greater motivation

and increased productivity which will in turn contribute to organisational objectives. Such an approach would likely find favour with the advocates of Critical Theory.

Coghlan and Halian (2015) discuss action research. By this, they are referring to an approach which focuses on research in action as opposed to research about action. This involves the researcher adopting a systematic approach to the study of organisational issues and engaging with those who are directly involved in those issues. This aptly describes the current study. The goal, in this instance, is to generate actionable knowledge whilst at the same time building a theoretical framework to this knowledge. The approach requires an element of partnership in which the participants in the study actively contribute to the study process. Research is conducted in a spirit of collaboration 'with people, rather than on them or for them' (Coghlan and Halian, 2015, p. 169). This contrasts with traditional research methods in which the members of the system are normally seen as the subjects or objects of the research.

According to Coghlan and Halian (2015, p. 169) action research occurs in three forms which are referred to as 'first-', 'second-' and 'third-person-' practice. First-person practice involves personal and professional learning. This can involve learning about one's own attitudes, assumptions and understanding of situations. It can also involve the development of insights and judgements. It may be evidenced in research diaries and in reflective accounts such as the present one. Second-person practice relates to engagement with other people who form part of the project, for example, interview participants. In this instance, the focus is on the ways in which the researcher works with other people in the study in terms of listening, collaborating, managing and

decision-making. Deciding who should be involved in the research process is a key element in second-person practice. In the current study the researcher made all such decisions but the process was informed to some extent by snowball sampling. Third-person practice is concerned with the dissemination of actionable knowledge to interested parties. This is an impersonal practice which involves writing up and publishing one's research. In this study the principal objective is to combine all the elements of the research into a coherent and comprehensive DBA thesis which can be defended at a viva voce. Dissemination of the preliminary research findings has already occurred and is likely to take place in future through conference presentations, journal articles and in lectures to students.

According to Coghlan and Halian (2015) action research takes place in the present although it draws upon the past and its objective is to shape or influence the future. By its cyclical nature: planning, action, evaluation and reflection, it naturally entails both a practical and philosophical function and it requires a reflexive approach. It is the philosophical element that distinguishes action research from less academically weighty project management or quality improvement programmes.

This reflective chapter (or account of first-person learning) represents one of the main ways in which a scholar-practitioner thesis differs from the traditional approach in which 'value-neutrality and detached objectivity' (Coghlan and Halian, p. 176) are assumed to be both desirable and achievable. This chapter is intended to convey a critical subjectivist approach which demonstrates reflection and reflexivity. The adopted approach throughout this research project was to determine, define and explain the context of the research, to ground the research within the relevant extant

literature, to demonstrate how the perceptions of leading practitioners and key stakeholders were elicited, to show how reflection and reflexivity formed a key part of the process and to produce outcomes that contribute to both theory and to practice.

When reading about critical management studies the fairly sudden revelation and realisation that I have become rather cynical about some aspects of 'management' came as something of a surprise (Parker, 2018). Is this because I have become wiser and better informed or is it merely because I have become more cynical and world-weary? I'm not entirely sure personally and I feel I could make an argument from either perspective. For most of my life I have questioned established wisdom and I have frequently taken a rebel stand. This has often been manifested in a willingness to stand alone especially in defending what I perceived to be injustice. For instance, I have defended subordinates who I felt were being unjustly pilloried by top management even though I knew that those subordinates would have been unlikely to have done the same for me. However, when I have elected to stand alone I have generally done so quietly without drawing too much attention to myself and I have tried to avoid causing unnecessary disruption. For some eighteen years, I managed other people; in the early years, my roles were largely operational but as my experience grew, I found myself increasingly in strategic roles. It would have been reasonable to surmise that because of this experience I had a managerial perspective. Although I have largely eschewed management roles since I became an academic I could have almost assumed that my managerial perspective remained with me. For that reason, it was quite a shock to reflect on my personal and academic journey and to realise that I had become more anti-managerial than I had previously been throughout most of my career. Any disillusionment with management practice that I currently have is largely

directed towards the calibre and integrity of the highest levels of academic management and it is certainly not with strategy or strategic management in general. When I worked as a manager in the private sector, my experience was that generally you stood or fell by your decision-making and by your ability to generate revenue for the organisation. Since I have become a university academic, I have encountered a new culture in which the values of accountability and taking responsibility have been largely replaced by an imperative to cover one's own actions in a manner that can be evidenced.

One thing that I have recently reflected on is the primary role that place has played in this research. This thesis is about place but it has also been inspired by place. Much of the thesis was written in some of my favourite places: in Mousehole and Port Isaac in Cornwall, in La Clusaz in the French Alps and at my home in Cheshire. The initial idea for the thesis was conceived following a conversation with two friends (Professor Caroline Rowland and Dr. Neil Moore) at an academic conference in Elounda, Crete and elements of the thesis have been presented at conferences in Kristiansand, Norway, Verona, Italy, Warsaw, Poland, Rome, Italy and Valletta, Malta. In many respects, this thesis represents a return to where I began as an academic. My first degree was in geography and sport science and I have probably considered myself to be a geographer at heart for most of my adult life. I have not entirely abandoned sport science either as I am still competing (badly and in a much diminished fashion) in short course triathlons nearly four decades after first graduating.

7.8 Conclusion

This research process has been a patchy and sometimes staccato journey. Partly this has occurred because I have often found it difficult to find the time to work on my thesis during the academic teaching year. My work on my thesis has also frequently been punctuated by work on conference presentations, publications and reviewing activity. Life events have sometimes got in the way too.

My DBA research has never become a chore, as such, but it has haunted me and hung over me for a very long time. It has also seriously disrupted many holidays and very many weekends. However, I imagine that when it is finally over it will leave a gap in my life that will take me some time to adjust to.

What has been particularly exciting have been the revelations and new avenues to pursue that have emerged from dialogue with supervisors, with fellow doctoral students and academic colleagues, with practitioners and with fellow delegates at academic conferences and through the copious reading that necessarily accompanies a doctoral research project.

I am very grateful to LJMU for providing me with the opportunity to undertake this journey of personal enrichment and to my doctoral supervisors for their guidance along the route.

Of one thing I am certain. I do intend to continue researching with renewed vigour, skills and insight and to further disseminate my work at conferences and in publications.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

PETER SCOTT – PUBLICATIONS AND RESEARCH RELATED ACTIVITY

Published conference presentations (with ISSN and ISBN numbers)

- Scott, P. From destination marketing to place marketing in North-West England. Valletta, Malta. In D. Vrontis, Y. Weber & E. Tsoukatos (Eds.) (2018) *Proceedings of the 11th Annual Conference of the EuroMed Academy of Business (pp. 1717-1719)*. Cyprus: EuroMed Press

- Scott, P., Stokes, P., Rowland, C. & Gordon, D. Destination marketing in the United Kingdom and organizational ambidexterity: exploitative dilemmas and explorative prospects? Rome, Italy. In D. Vrontis, Y. Weber & E. Tsoukatos (Eds.) (2017) *Proceedings of the 10th Annual Conference of the EuroMed Academy of Business (pp. 2341-2343)*. Cyprus: EuroMed Press

- Kakouri, S. K., Scott, P. and Scott, T. Cyprus and the U.K.: delivering nutritional advice services through digital technology. Rome, Italy. In D. Vrontis, Y. Weber & E. Tsoukatos (Eds.) (2017) *Proceedings of the 10th Annual Conference of the EuroMed Academy of Business (pp. 2141-2145)*. Cyprus: EuroMed Press

- Scott, P. & Rowland, C. Current Challenges in Place Marketing in North-West England. Warsaw, Poland. In D. Vrontis, Y. Weber & E. Tsoukatos (Eds.) (2016) *Proceedings of the 9th Annual Conference of the EuroMed Academy of Business (pp. 2091-2093)*. Cyprus: EuroMed Press

- Scott, T., Scott, P., Stokes, P., Moore, N. Smith, S. M. & Ward, T. Reconceptualising the Consumer Journey in the Digital Age: An Exploratory Study of the United Kingdom Retail Sector. Verona, Italy. In D. Vrontis, Y. Weber & E. Tsoukatos (Eds.) (2015) *Proceedings of the 8th Annual*

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- Scott, P., Moore, N. & Rowland, C. Towards a framework for change: destination marketing in North West England. Kristiansand, Norway. In D. Vrontis, Y. Weber & E. Tsoukatos (Eds.) (2014) *Proceedings of the 7th Annual Conference of the EuroMed Academy of Business (pp. 2233-2235).* Cyprus: EuroMed Press

- Scott, P., McIntosh, A. E. & Stokes, P. Medical Doctors Perceptions of Influences on Prescribing Behaviour and the Implications of Sales and Marketing Practices in the Pharmaceutical Industry. Elounda, Crete, Greece. In D. Vrontis, Y. Weber, H. Ruediger Kaufmann & S. Tarba (Eds.). (2011) *Proceedings of the 4th Annual EuroMed Conference of the EuroMed Academy of Business (pp. 812-834).* Cyprus: EuroMed Press.

Journal articles

- Seraphin, H., Smith, S. M., Scott, P. & Stokes, P. (2018) Destination Management through Organizational Ambidexterity: Conceptualising Haitian Enclaves. *Journal of Destination Marketing & Management* (In press: available online 14th March 2018)

- Scott, P., Higson, P., Fletcher, T. & Stokes, P. (2018) An Analysis of the Transformations of Leadership and Direction-Setting in Place Marketing: A United Kingdom Contextual View and Case-Study. *International Journal of Digital Culture and Electronic Tourism* (2) 3 pp. 239-254

- Scott, P., Scott, T., Stokes, P., Moore, N., Smith, S. M., Rowland, C. & Ward, T. (2017) Reconceptualising Buyer Behaviour in the Digital Age: An Emergent Journey. *International Journal of Marketing Technology* (12) 2 pp. 165-179

- Scott, P., Scott, T., Stokes, P., Moore, N., Rowland, C. & Ward, T. (2017) The Consumer Journey in The Digital Age: the Challenges Faced by Destination and Place Marketing Agencies. *International Journal of Digital Culture and Electronic Tourism* (2) 1 pp. 28-45.

- Goncalves, G., Reis, M., Sousa, C., Santos, J., Ramos-Organbidez, A. & Scott, P. (2016) Cultural Intelligence and Conflict Management Styles. *International Journal of Organizational Analysis* 24 (4) pp. 725-742

- Moore, N., Stokes, P. & Scott, P. (2016) Staging and Managing Match Events in the English Professional Football League: An SME Learning Perspective. *Journal for Global Business Advancement* 9 (2) pp. 179-194

- Stokes, P., Larson, M.J., Russell, N., Adderley, S., Moore, N., Mathews, M., Smith, S., Lichy, J. Scott, P. Ward, T. & Brindley, C. (2015) 'Smart Cities' – Dynamic Sustainability Issues and Challenges for 'Old World' Economies: A Case from the United Kingdom. *Dynamic Management Relationships Journal* 4 (2) pp. 3-22

- Russell, N., Adderley, S., Stokes, P. & Scott, P. (2014) The Competing Dynamics and Relationships in Corporate and Local Government Agency Constructions of Place. *Dynamic Management Relationships Journal* 3 (1) pp. 3-16

- Stokes P., Moore N., Hickman M., Scott P., Rowland C., Russell N. & Visser M. (2013) Tools and Models in Outdoor Management Development: A

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- Scott, P., McIntosh, A.E. & Stokes, P. Sales and Strategic Marketing Practices in the Pharmaceutical Industry: Doctors as Customers and their Decisions. (2013) *Journal for International Business and Entrepreneurship Development* 7 (1) pp.37-51

Journal Editorships

- Scott, P. (Corresponding editor), Moore, N. & Stokes, P. (eds.) (2016) Special issue of *Journal for Global Business Advancement* 9 (2)
- Scott, P. (Corresponding editor), Stokes, P. & Gordon, D. (eds.) (2018) Special issue of *International Journal of Digital Culture and Electronic Tourism* 2 (3)

Book

- Stokes, P., Moore, N., Smith, S. M., Rowland, C. & Scott, P. (eds.) (2016) *Organizational Management*. London: Kogan Page

Reviewer Activity

- Reviewer EuroMed Academy of Business Conferences 2012-2017
- Winner of Best Conference Reviewer Award EuroMed Academy of Business Conference, Estoril, Portugal, 2013
- Reviewer International Journal of Organizational Analysis 2011-2016

Conference track chairmanships

- International Entrepreneurship Educators Conference, Liverpool John Moores University, Liverpool 2016

- EuroMed Academy of Business Conferences 2011-2017

External validation committee membership

- Member of external validation committee for new masters' degree, University of Nicosia, Cyprus, May 2017

APPENDIX 2

Example of interview transcript identifying colour coded themes

Interview with Participant P11 – Managing Director, major visitor attraction, Friday 7th
August 2015

I – So the first question is, erm what business would you say that you are in?

P11 – Erm, we are, are a, well, a number of different hats on, depending on who you are. We are a technically a conservation and education charity. So a not-for-profit organisation erm, but we're also a commercial enterprise and er, we need to be a commercial enterprise to maintain er, what we do here at the zoo and so er, you could say that ..and some people describe us as a visitor attraction as well. So it depends on who you are er, will depend on what sort of business…well it varies really (Theme 3).

I – Ok, thank you. If I could move on to question two. What can the private sector and the local place or destination marketing organisation do for each other in partnership?

P11 – Ok, well we erm, from a Chester Zoo perspective would assume that destination marketing organisation or destination management organisation (Theme 5) would help promote us as a zoo, would help promote us both here in Chester, in Cheshire (Theme 7), sub-regionally and in the UK as well as internationally (Theme 6) and probably would be able to provide us with contacts and open doors for us that we wouldn't be able to open on a, on a single basis. That's probably number one. Number two, erm, we would assume and hope the DMO would be able to try and co-ordinate erm, other

er, visitor attraction, DMO type private organisations together to make sure that we're getting the biggest bang for our buck within Chester, Cheshire sub-region (Theme 7 and 8) and nationally (Theme 1.5.2). Number three to be able to erm, keep us abreast of what's going on within the visitor economy, again in Chester, Cheshire, sub-regionally (Theme 7 and 8), what's going on in government er, what funds, grants er, opportunities there are er, within the UK (Theme 1), er, I think, is that number four, number five, to be able to provide funding to us or funding opportunities to us or within the private sector be able to resource and collate funding that would make, help the visitor economy (Theme 1). Number six, to get involved in er, areas outside the visitor economy which would help the visitor economy so, er, investment in the county, erm, encouraging people to come and live and work within the county. So, erm, making sure that we've got quite a rich, diverse, population within Cheshire as well as trying to attract visitors from outside Cheshire to come in to Cheshire (Theme 7), erm, and I also think, number six or seven, erm, an organisation that pulls together all other similar type organisations together. So in Chester, for example, we've got organisations like Chester Renaissance, we've got CH1BID company, we have got Marketing Cheshire, we've got erm, visitor economy elements within Cheshire West and Chester Council because we're quite unique, relatively unique in Cheshire (Themes 7 and 8), having three different authorities working ...all with different timetables and priorities led by different leaders (Theme 2.2) some from different parties er, often means it, we need an organisation like the DMO to be able to pull together or try to pull together a single strategic approach to um, the visitor economy and tourism. So I think there's a whole host of different facets erm, I think that on top of that an organisation that can help sell, so you know, having a sort of online shop

and website that allows us to be promoted electronically and through social media erm, is really important (Theme 9.1) erm, that's probably about it. Is that ok?

I - Ok yeah. Thank you very much. Erm, what do you see as the main challenges to an effective partnership between the local place or destination marketing organisation and its partners?

P11 – The main challenge at the moment is funding (Theme 1). Erm, as I just mentioned, Cheshire's quite unique. Three different councils, erm, if we just take East Cheshire and West Cheshire and Chester erm, both of which until May were led by Conservative, Conservative group and now we've got a Labour group in West Cheshire and a Conservative group in East Cheshire, all with different priorities and now all three of them with different funding models, funding DMOs in different ways but, importantly, actually decreasing their funding erm, for obvious reasons (Theme 7 and 1). So that's probably the biggest challenge, not knowing what the funding is (Themes 1.1, 1.3, 1.31, 1.32). Not knowing how long it's going to last and trying to replace that funding with either private sector funding or finding alternative ways of making what was traditionally a DMO that was there to give advice and to help, support and all those other things that I mentioned earlier but now actually starting to become a commercial animal themselves in selling product to actually make money to keep the organisation going and that's probably the biggest challenge (Theme 1.1, 1.3.1). I think the other challenge is something that you mentioned a little bit earlier on and that's really around back in 2011 where there was a belief from government that the private sector should take a lead in DMOs which is correct but, you know, it's not necessarily the case that the private sector has got the money to replace the public

==sector money or the desire to actually, to do that (Themes 1.4, 1.5).== Erm, and that has been, I know that's been a big challenge for erm, <mark style="background:red">Cheshire DMO (Theme 7)</mark>. I was also, erm, before coming up here, I was the chairman of Devon DMO er, for a period of time and that moved from being a, an organisation very similar to Cheshire to a virtual, a virtual board purely made up of erm, ==the private sector with public sector observers because the funding disappeared to, to zero, and erm, the was an inability er, to be able to replace that funding like-for-like with the private sector. The private sector er, wasn't able to but also I think the private sector didn't feel that it was their position to do so just because the public sector funding was being cut it doesn't mean that the private sector just can jump in and say fine I'll replace it. So, funding is the biggest issue (Themes 1.1, 1.5)== erm, I would say erm, the second issue, from what I can see, is trying to maintain or er drive up the government's erm, desire long term, the government's belief in the importance of the visitor economy sector. Erm, and, you know, this has been going on for a number of years now. When I was a DMO chair down in Devon tourism was the biggest employer in Devon but it was getting the biggest amount of cuts from funding and the second thing I noticed last week was that the Prime Minister set up a new five point plan to help deliver or boost tourism in the UK erm, some of that's, although it's not to do with funding directly some of it's to do with er, trying to sort out some of the issues that have been going on for a while. So trying to boost how the government sees the visitor economy as being important is a big challenge. So, those two. Funding number one, erm, number two putting it on the government's agenda.

I – What, if anything, could enhance partnership levels?

P11 – Erm, I think the second one that I just mentioned. If, if it suddenly becomes a priority or starts to become more of a priority for the government that's when the private sector starts to prick its ears up and get interested. Erm, you know, stuff recently about Northern Powerhouse and you know the Chancellor's interest in what's going up in Manchester has definitely started to prick up the ears of a number of private sector organisations within the north, you know, especially around the visitor economy. I think the second one would be er, to try and enhance by actually proving or showing how important the visitor economy is to private sector organisations within er, within Cheshire so they can see a direct correlation to er, driving the visitor economy and their bottom line, I think is really important. Clearly an organisation like ours, we see the DMO as extremely important to us because it helps us to deliver the visitor numbers that we need to be able to maintain erm, our operating surplus and maintain the zoo as it is and allow us to grow and invest in the future. Erm, I think also, erm, a better er, understanding of the visitor economy from the local enterprise partnerships (Theme 1.6) er, I think is really important and, you know, when the LEPs (Theme 1.6) were formed, what four years ago, something like that, four years ago. When the LEPs (Theme 1.6) were formed four years ago, or whatever erm, the visitor economy really didn't feature in their agendas, that much, and LEPs (Theme 1.6) were going for big scale manufacturing, digital, all those sorts of bits and pieces and I think it's only actually now that a number of LEPs (Theme 1.6) including Cheshire are actually realising that in order to be able to develop the county where or a LEP (Theme 1.6) area, where there is, where it's a good place to live, work, you need a strong visitor economy behind that. No one wants to go and live in a county or a city which is bland and has got nothing really to do erm, so erm, the LEPs (Theme 1.6) are extremely important and I think that the LEPs (Theme 1.6) will continue to be even more

important as we move on to the current Parliament, the current government er, period of time. So, I think they're probably er the two, the only obvious one is to be able to restore funding erm, er the DMOs. I haven't really mentioned that because I can't see that happening. It's not going to happen so let's not, you know, money's always going to make things better in many respect for DMOs but it's not going to happen so erm, er, we need to put that to one side. I think the only other one that's linked to that one is somebody finding a perfect solution to how do we deliver DMO activity er, within a particular area with no core funding from government erm, and, you know, various DMOs trying to do, have different models in doing that but I don't think that any ones massively succeeded in the present environment erm, yeah, so, is that ok (Themes 4.1, 4.2 and 1.6)

I – Yes, that's fine than you. My final of the standard questions. What the future of place or destination marketing organisations?

P11 – Future, erm, they, I think the future is erm, well they need to become streamlined, very efficient, very effective at the same time. Erm, private sector led but I think the local authorities and the public sector will need to maintain their allegiance and be very much part of what's going on even if they're not core funders any longer (Theme 1.1). Erm, in some respects, erm, led by independent private sector organisations (Theme 2) who have got erm, the willingness, the desire to be able to er, this is where I was mentioning Devon, where we had a virtual team, so from the consumer point of view they didn't see any change in how we were delivering Visit Devon but it was basically a team of people who were all private sector led. One was a spokesperson for one er, one company maintained the website (Theme 9.1), one

company did xyz and everyone put a little bit of funding into it and managed to keep it going so there was a voice for tourism in that particular county. There were people who would speak out for it where necessary. The website was still maintained and I think now that we're moving into, much more into the digital age (Theme 9.1), there's a lot that can be done through a er, through a very clever website erm, you know, very clever use of social media of Twitter, Facebook erm, what have you which can deliver a very similar message to probably that that DMOs did ten, fifteen years ago when they were extremely strong (Theme 9.1). You don't need to have a team of twenty, thirty people doing things now, you can have a very small team of people that still deliver the same thing. So, you know, it's still very important, erm, it's still erm, the visitor economy still needs a voice and without a DMO it wouldn't have a voice at all. Erm, I think the other part of it is erm, a DMO actually having a very strong allegiance and probably being involved within the local enterprise partnerships (Theme 1.6) in a particular area erm, and erm, being able to seek out any core funding from there is er, it's important. So I think that's probably where I'd see it at the moment (Themes 9, 9.1, 2, 1.6) .

I – Ok, that's all the standard questions. Can I ask you whether in your former role as chairman of the DMO you found any conflicts between the public and the private sector which inhibited any progress?

P11 – Er, yeah. I would say erm, cultural conflicts that aren't necessarily to do, anything to do with DMOs but just the way that the public and private sector works. So, speed erm, you know, the private sector wants something immediately and has got the ability to sign something off immediately and the public sector has to go through

a number of different committees and groups and sign-offs before it can get there. I think just the general um, culture of erm, getting things done erm, public sector very, very slow erm, with people, not their fault but with people who don't have the same drive that the private sector does because that's inevitable, they're not getting rewarded for the benefits at the end of it erm, has been the biggest obstacle and the other one, especially in more recent years is a erm, a public sector that doesn't have the confidence in knowing what's happening next erm, and doesn't have the confidence to be able to see a medium or a long-term er, er programme or strategy for a particular thing. ==You know, changes in government, changes in government locally with different personalities coming and going, er, with unsecure funding, erm you know, local authorities have just been sort of like limping along er from one year to the next and in some, in many respects have also then within those twelve month periods have been facing huge cuts (Themes 1.1, 1.3.1).== So yes I've seen both in Devon and up here in <mark style="background:red">Cheshire (Theme 7)</mark> the personalities and promises and discussions I've had with certain individuals within the local authority and then three or four months later those individuals have disappeared or moved on to another role. You start the same process again and it does get very frustrating for the private sector that you actually feel as if you're going one step forward and three steps back er a lot of the time. Er, and more recently up here in Devon, er, <mark style="background:red">up here in Cheshire the consequences of having a change of administration from one party to another erm, and, although I've not seen anything negative from the Labour Cheshire West (Theme 7)</mark> erm, we know that we've got a local authority in their own admittance who are, aren't particularly experienced and who have to go through a massive, steep learning curve. So since May, since the local elections in May nothing really has happened erm, because they're still trying to find their feet and work out what the heck's going on

being at the same time under fire from the Conservative opposition with a majority of one, one councillor. Erm, and we've also got a new MP here in <mark>Cheshire (Theme 7)</mark> who, you know, I'm sure he wouldn't admit, this we didn't think he was going to get elected, erm, and he's again having a very steep learning curve. Erm, and I think frustrations around <mark>the private sector sometimes feeling they're being forced or are having their hand pulled behind their back to erm, to step in and fund initiatives that the public sector was funding in the past only to get things across the line. So we've all got three year programmes on certain things and the funding's been pulled in end of year two, the private sector feels it's got an obligation to jump in and fund the third year just to cross the line at the end (Theme 1)</mark>. So, er, yeah and then they just, other very minor issues around what time is it, twenty past two on a Friday afternoon, if you ring County Hall now you'll find that most people are out packing up for the weekend. Going home, or early finish on a Friday sort of stuff erm, we're still here and we work weekends as well and all that sort of stuff that doesn't seem to happen within the public sector. So, erm, I've been involved with a DMO in Devon which was my first foray into the world of the public sector and, you know, I had my eyes opened very wide about what goes on there. I think the only other one is probably erm, differences and conflict within the public sector itself especially between officers and councillors. Erm, you know, who's running the shop, and differences of opinion between the two and different ways of working, that sort of stuff.

I – Ok, than you. My final question is, who do you think should be the type of people who should be the board members of a DMO?

P11 – Erm, it should be led and chaired by a relatively senior, totally independent private sector organisation but a private sector organisation that's probably heavily linked to the visitor economy or one of the key drivers of the DMO and somebody who (indistinct) lives within the DMO area. Erm, and then around that person er, I would say, probably two or three similar independent non-exec directors, representation from the local authority or local authorities depending on the area and then probably representation from other similar er, organisations, I mentioned earlier, if there's a BID company within the area, a strong chamber of commerce within that area. If there's a, I'm trying to think of other, if there's any other sorts of organisation, any other business organisation within that area er, and probably, er have er chief executive or a manager who becomes the or is the go-to person for that particular area who has got fingers in lots of pies and knows what's going on. Er, I think it's ideal, it doesn't need to be a massive board, you know, I would say probably no more than ten people and at the very, very most er, the Marketing Cheshire (Theme 7) board at the moment is around about ten, twelve people but I've worked in boards in the past where there have been about eighteen, twenty people er, er strong erm yes I think that's probably the biggest make-up and then probably erm, probably one or two people who've got specialisms in particular areas like digital marketing or any areas where there is some weakness, you know, as well as someone whose got a very strong finance background who can help within audit and accountancy (Theme 3 and also 4 and 7). Ok?

I – Ok. Thank you very much. That's fine and I'm concluding the interview and switching off.

Appendix 3

Chief Executive, Marketing Cheshire advert