

# Rural Place Branding Processes: Dimensions and Contextual Factors

Barbora Gulisova, Chris Horbel & Egon Noe  
 Department of Sociology, Environmental and Business Economics & Danish Centre for Rural Research, University of Southern Denmark, Esbjerg

## Introduction

Place branding research has mostly studied countries, cities, and tourism destinations, while rural areas have received less attention. Due to their specific context, including the different stakeholder constellations, different institutional arrangements and resources available (Vargo & Lusch, 2016), it can be assumed that rural place branding processes (PBP) are distinct from those studied in city, nation or tourism destination contexts. Rural places are also diverse and the branding processes must account for the specific characteristics of the place. Based on a literature review, three attribute dimensions to describe different types of place branding processes have been identified and integrated into a conceptual framework.

### Aim

- Identify types of PBP applied in rural places and contextual factors determining type of PBP

### Methodology

- Exploratory, qualitative: 3 focus groups, 1 interview
- 10 Danish rural places

### Findings

- Actor participation:
  - Top down: local/regional council and efforts for stakeholder involvement
  - Bottom-up: community initiative with low public authority involvement
- Embeddedness: high degrees of societal and territorial; structural mostly not (yet) established

- Perspective: largely inside, often leading to lack of differentiation
- Context factors: initiator, aim of PBP, existing brand(s), administrative context

### Discussion, implications & limitations

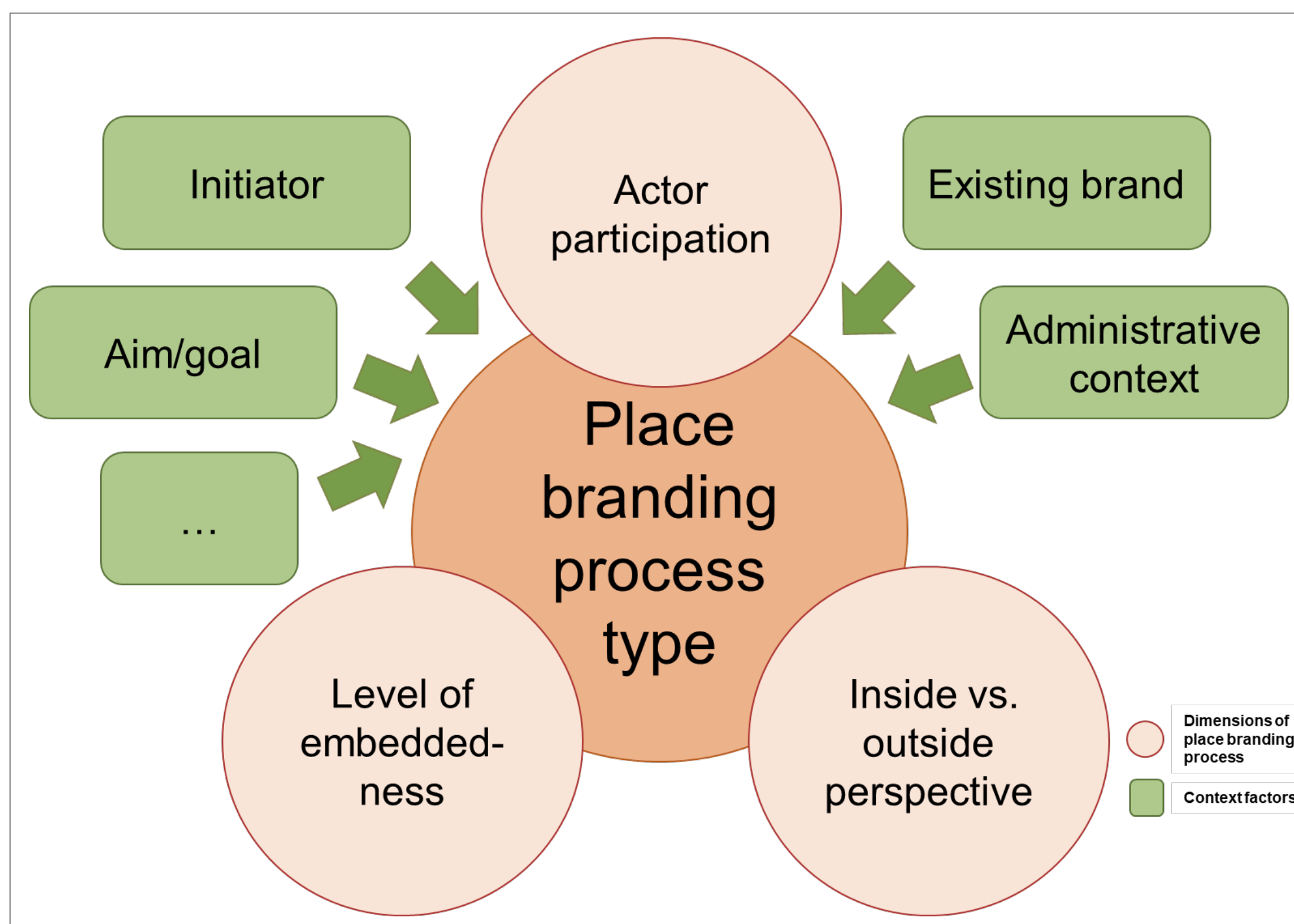
- Initiator and goal interdependent and highly influencing the type of PBP
- Strong existing sectoral brands: potential do develop into integrative
- Strong, outdated brands: re-branding

### Further research

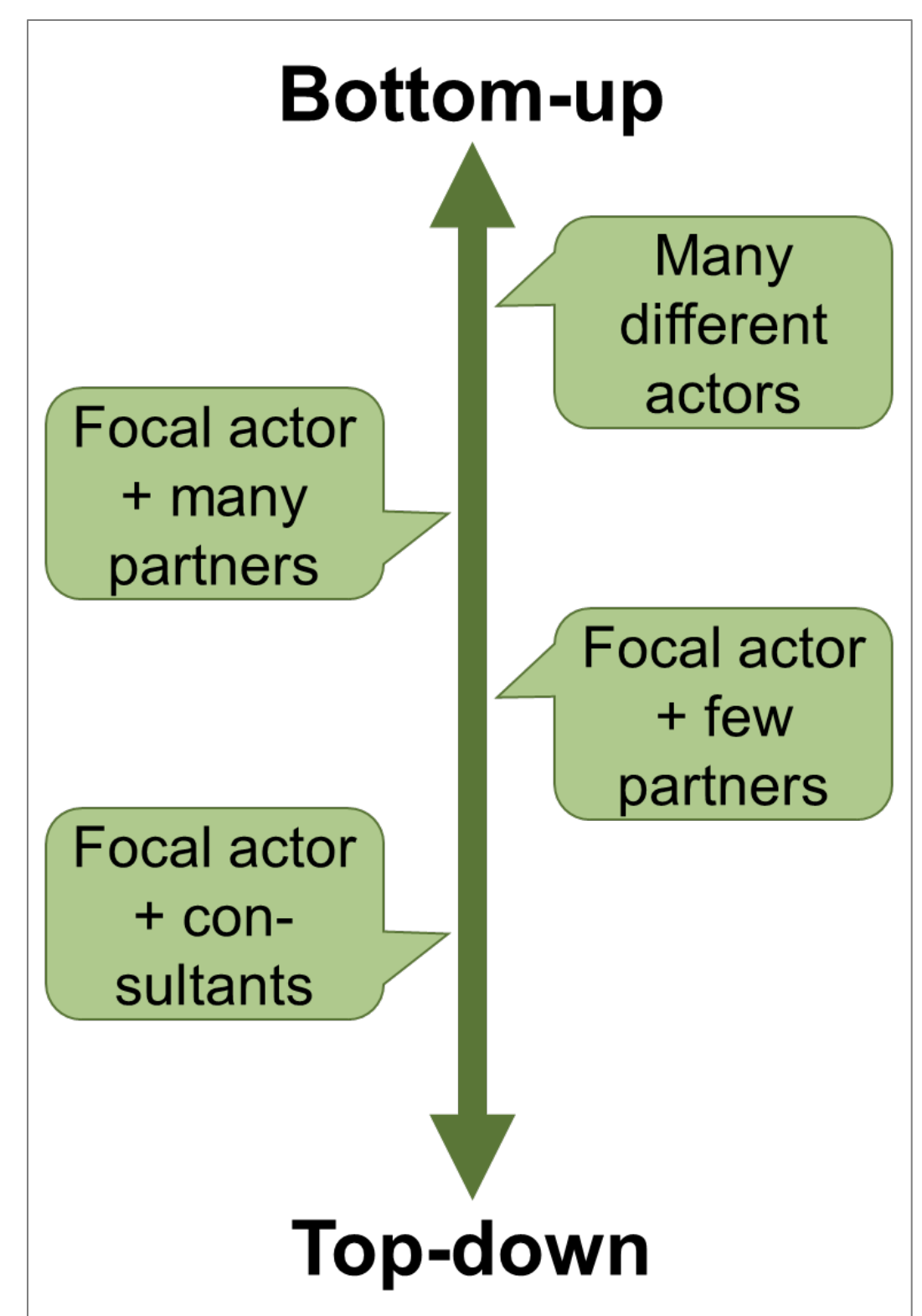
- Additional context factors
- In-depth analysis of influence of context factors on PBP dimensions
- Link context factors and types to outcomes



Geographical Location of Cases Included in the Study



Dimensions of Place Branding Process Types and Contextual Determinants



Typology of Place Branding Processes