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Hanna-Mari Aula, Janne Tienari, and Arild Wæraas

The University Branding Game

Players, Interests, Politics

Abstract: *In this article, we argue that university branding can be understood as a political game. Analyzing a new university created in a merger, we demonstrate how branding is characterized by different interests among players with different means to influence brand development. We suggest that university branding is a fundamental question of organizational purpose, connected to identities and (dis-)identification of internal and external players in a particular socio-cultural and societal context, not a mere marketing and communications exercise.*

Brands and branding pervade the global economy (Kornberger 2010), and branding of universities has received its share of increasing research attention. This attention reflects changes in the operational environment of higher education institutions, which are subject to marketization and new demands for external accountability (Krejsler 2006; Marginson 2008; Wedlin 2008; Lowrie and Hemsley-Brown 2011). In order to attract students and faculty and to appeal to corporate partners and governmental

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regulators, universities engage in identity-, image-, and brand-building activities (Chapleo 2011; Hemsley-Brown and Goonawardana 2007; Lowrie 2007; Melewar and Akel 2005; Wæraas and Solbakk 2009; Whelan and Wohlfeil 2006). They seek to become more visible and better positioned vis-à-vis other universities that are considered as their competitors.

Research on university branding is gathering momentum, but it is mainly concerned with branding activities and their effects. While critical scholars look at branding as an identity regulation that gives rise to struggles and tensions (Kärreman and Rylander 2008; Land and Taylor 2011), the bulk of research on universities continues to treat branding as marketing and communication activities that are not only manageable but also apolitical. We argue, in contrast, that the visible tangibles of branding intertwine with conflict-ridden processes involving multiple stakeholders—or players—in and around the university, who represent different ideas of what the university is, what it should be, and how it needs to be branded.

Our empirical focus is on Aalto University, which was formed by merging the Helsinki University of Technology (HUT), the Helsinki School of Economics (HSE), and the University of Art and Design Helsinki (UIAH) in Finland. While the merging universities were all established organizational brands, the creation of the new Aalto brand and the dismantling of the old brands became the object of conflicts and politics where multiple interests were at stake. In this article, we pay particular attention to the dismantling of the HSE brand and its relationship with the new Aalto parent brand.

Our research question is as follows: To what extent does university branding involve organizational politics and how do politics play out? Against this backdrop, the aim of the article is, first, to develop the notion of university branding as a political game characterized by players with different interests, positions, and means of influence (Allison 1969); and, second, to illustrate this phenomenon in the case of Aalto University. In the following, we present our study in four parts, each digging deeper into the empirical subject of inquiry: outlining a political perspective on branding, describing the merger process, identifying key players and interests, and discerning politics in dismantling the HSE brand.

University branding: A political perspective

Corporate branding can be defined as the process of identifying and making known "the attributes of the organization's identity in the form of a clearly defined branding proposition" (Balmer 2001, 281). Although recent developments in branding theory and research highlight the importance of including lower level employees and external stakeholders into branding efforts (Antorini and Schultz 2005; Ind 2001), the literature is

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dominated by normative models and frameworks for corporate branding execution. The prevailing view is that all products, services, cultures, and identities should be integrated under one umbrella and into one single expression, as one coherent organizational "body" (Christensen, Morsing, and Cheney 2008). To achieve such integration, the "corporate brand proposition requires *total corporate commitment*" (Balmer 2001, 281, emphasis added). A corporate brand "influences organizational activities from top to bottom, and it infuses everything the company is, says, and does, now and forever" (Hatch and Schultz 2008, 10). The challenges of achieving such integration are not unknown. For example, Schultz (2005a, 183–184) noted that "the cross-disciplinary and cross-functional nature of corporate branding makes the implementation process vulnerable to turf-issues, corporate power struggles and status conflicts." However, these dimensions of corporate branding are largely ignored in theory and research. Relatively little is known about challenges for branding activities that arise from conflicts, power struggles, and bargaining. As a result, "this normative literature provides less knowledge on how [corporate branding] actually unfolds" (Schultz 2005b, 41).

In order to better understand branding processes that occur in higher education institutions, a perspective on corporate branding that recognizes universities as "organized anarchies" (cf. March and Olsen 1979) riddled with "academic tribes" (Becher 1989) is necessary. While extant studies of university branding have tended to concentrate on branding strategies and perceptions of brands (e.g., Curtis, Abratt, and Minor 2009; Gray, Fam, and Llanes 2003; Hemsley-Brown and Goonawardana 2007; Kosmützky 2012; Melewar and Akel 2005; Whelan and Wohlfeil 2006), echoing developments in the corporate branding literature, we propose to extend the research on higher education branding by adopting a political perspective that recognizes conflicts of interests, diverging perspectives, the role of power, and different means of influencing branding in the university. Pfeffer (1981, 7) describes such situations as characterized by organizational politics, i.e., "those activities taken within organizations to acquire, develop and use power and other resources to obtain one's preferred outcome."

A political perspective on branding should recognize the following elements. First, following Allison (1969), organizational politics is characterized by a set of *actors* ("players") who occupy *critical positions*, have different *interests* and uneven *power bases*, and are involved in *bargaining games* to further their interests. The positions of the actors define what they can and must do in the brand-building decision-making process, as well as which questions are considered in the game (Allison 1969). Second, turning an organization into a brand is a *political-strategic act* (cf., Rodrigues and Child 2008). Much is at stake because the fundamental

definition of the organization is involved. Deciding upon one particular direction for the organization's future may exclude other, alternative courses. Disagreement is likely because different internal and external actors may hold different opinions about the nature of an organization. For some, a suggested brand definition may represent an identity threat; for others, it is an opportunity to exercise power, achieve objectives, and acquire an even stronger power base (Land and Taylor 2011). Third, conflict intensity is generally affected by two factors: how much is *at stake* and the *relative strength* of the parties involved. How much is at stake is often a question of scarce resources or how much interest or prestige is associated with the conflict by the parties. In branding processes, how much one actor (or coalition) has to lose from the prospective of a particular branding outcome determines its resistance and involvement. Conversely, how much one party gains from the same process is likely to determine the intensity of its involvement and its coalition-building efforts. The relative strength of the parties can be significant for the outcome if one coalition is stronger than the others (Allison 1969; Cyert and March 1963). All parties can be expected to seek support from both internal and external stakeholders, eventually pursuing powerful coalitions that allow them to further their interests.

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Methods

We have studied the Aalto University merger since November 2007 and generated various qualitative empirical materials in order to understand its unfolding (see Table 1). Following the definition proposed by Van Maanen (1979, 520) of the purpose of qualitative research, we have attempted to "describe, decode, translate or otherwise come to terms with the meaning, not the frequency, of certain more or less naturally occurring phenomena in the social world." We have applied a single case study design as it allows us to explore in-depth relations between interdependent elements and to gain rich contextualized insights into the studied phenomenon that is the politics of branding (Stake, 1995; Welch et al. 2011). For the purposes of the present article, we have focused on analyzing topics and processes related to the creation of the new Aalto brand and the dismantling of the old HSE brand. Instead of relying on a predefined coding scheme, consistent with our constructionist epistemology, our analysis has been an iterative process of shifting back and forth between data, patterns emerging from the data, and theory, until we have reached a plausible understanding of the meanings conveyed by our empirical materials. Patterns emerging from the data have encouraged us to focus on themes such as conflict, coalitions, interests, and power, ultimately aggregated into a perspective on higher education branding that we refer to as *political*.

Table 1
Empirical materials

Texts produced by stakeholders external to Aalto and its predecessors
• International and domestic governmental committee reports
• Research and commentaries on the reform of the Finnish university system
• Memos and brochures by The Finnish Confederation of Industries (EK) (2007–2010)
• Media texts in the major Finnish daily newspaper *Helsingin Sanomat* (HS) and the business daily *Kauppalehti* (KL), covering the period from September 6, 2005, to December 31, 2010 (1,203 media texts in total)
• Miscellaneous media texts in a range of outlets in Finland (e.g., regional newspapers and student magazines) and abroad (*The Financial Times*, *Harvard Business Review*, *Newsweek*)
Texts related to stakeholders internal to Aalto and its predecessors
• Online materials and documents on the making of new university, e.g., strategy, HR, marketing (2007–2010); artefacts with visual imagery such as brochures and advertisements
• Powerpoint presentations, blog entries, and newsletters by the new university president (rector) (2009–2010)
• Aalto image survey for internal and external stakeholders (conducted February–March 2011) and employee survey (conducted May 2011)
• Retrospective account by the rectors of HSE and UIAH (Kasanen and Sotamaa 2010)
• KyWeb (online chatroom for HSE students) and Kylteri (HSE student magazine), searched 2005–2010, carried out in March 2012
• E-mail conversations with HSE professors on the school name and brand (in real time October 2009; retrospectively September 2012)
• Research reports on specific topics
Interviews
• Key decision makers such as rectors and vice rectors of the merging universities, state officials at the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Finance, representatives of the Finnish business community and industry, the new president (rector) and her new top managers (interviewed in 2008–2010); 40 in total
• Communications managers of the merging universities (interviewed twice: March 2009 and March 2010)
• Communications experts the Ministry of Education and EK (interviewed March–April 2009)
• Senior branding consultant (interviewed February 2010)
• New Head of Communications (interviewed September 2010 and May 2011)

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Results

Chronology of events

The merger took effect on January 1, 2010, when Aalto University became a legal entity. HUT, which received university status in 1908, was, by far, the

largest of the merging universities and a renowned institution in the fields of engineering and technology. HSE, established in 1911, was the leading business school in Finland, with Triple Crown accreditation and a solid international reputation. Although the smallest of the merger partners, UIAH, founded in 1871, was the largest university of its kind in the Nordic countries and known for its expertise in industrial design.

The merger planning process proceeded rapidly. In September 2005, the Rector of UIAH first publicly voiced the merger idea. Subsequently, the Finnish business community began to actively promote it. In October 2006, the Finnish government commissioned an inquiry on the issue. The message in the Inquiry Report, made public in February 2007, was that the system of higher education in Finland was in dire need of transformation to become more efficient (OPM 2007). The report laid out the rationale for merging the three universities and provided instructions on how to accomplish it in practice. In April 2007, a new government took office and included the merger in its governmental program. In November 2007, the Ministry of Education gave an official "g" decision for the merger. To signal that its objective was to create something new and exciting, a totally new university name became imminent.

In May 2008, the name Aalto University was introduced, referring to Alvar Aalto (1898–1976), Finnish architect and designer with a reputation for crossing disciplinary boundaries. In September 2009, the new Aalto logo and other visual imagery were presented. Designers had been invited to send in their ideas, which a panel of experts assessed. The panel was eventually split between two entries, and the president of Aalto University made the final decision. To signify the forward-looking nature of the new university, radical imagery was chosen over a more traditional one (see Figure 1). It was also announced that Aalto would consist of three schools, each corresponding to a merging university, and that the old university names and logos

Figure 1. Aalto logo (Aalto University 2009)

The basic version of the Aalto University logo is **A?**, a simple visual message that asks *"What is Aalto University?"* and invites participation: *"What would you like Aalto University to be?"* The aim was to create a sign containing as little identity-predefining symbolism as possible. The meaning and symbolism of the logo will be constructed hand-in-hand with the University. This is also transmitted by the universal visual building blocks of the main colors and the basic font.

The logo has no single static form; instead, it can adopt number of variations by combining the letter **A** with diverse punctuation marks. In addition to the basic version, the University will use **A!** and **A.** The varying symbols modify the significance of the "**A**," indicating that Aalto University is not completely predefined and is open to discussion, questioning, and different perspectives.

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were to be abandoned at the end of 2009. For example, HSE became Aalto University School of Economics, with the acronym Aalto ECON.

Meanwhile, a comprehensive reform of the Finnish higher education sector was taking place, and the creation of Aalto became its focal point. A new Universities Act came into force in 2009, turning Finnish universities into independent legal entities with new governance arrangements. The Universities Act extended the autonomy of universities by giving them more freedom to seek funding from the private sector and to appoint external members to their boards. While HSE, HUT, and UIAH were public universities, Aalto became a foundation under private law and the second largest university in Finland with some 20,000 students and 5,000 employees.

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Players and Interests

Merging HUT, HSE, and UIAH and branding Aalto involved a number of players with different interests (see Tables 2 and 3 below). The early days of the merger, in 2005–2008, were marked by the active involvement of the Finnish Ministry of Education, for whom the issue was of political-strategic importance. The new university was to be a solution to a political problem of not only having an inefficient higher education sector, but also of lacking a well-reputed, innovative university that was able to compete successfully in the global market.

Collaboration formed between the Ministry and representatives of the Finnish business community, who pushed aggressively for the merger. "Finnish universities are crap and something needs to be done about it," one of our interviewees said bluntly. Through its lobbying organizations—the Confederation of Finnish Industries (EK) and The Federation of Finnish Technology Industries—the business community put pressure on political decision makers and universities to provide better opportunities for developing applicable knowledge and educating students to meet the demands of global business: "[T]he central objective [of the merger] is to secure the competence capital within fields central to the development and competitiveness of the Finnish business community and society." Innovation—technological innovation in particular—became the buzzword of the new university.

In 2006–2007, the rectors of the three universities formed a coalition whose viewpoints eventually converged. While the rector of UIA[1] was viewed as the father of the merger idea, the rector of HUT initially raised his doubts while the rector of HSE was ambiguous in his statements. In August 2006, the three rectors suggested that a joint research institute, instead of a full merger, be established, bringing together talent from the three universities to carry out well-resourced, innovative, interdisciplinary research. However, following lobbying from the business community, the

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Table 2
Players and interests

Player	Principal Interests	Examples	Means of Influencing
The Ministry of Education	- To advance reform of Finnish higher education - To enhance Finland's competitiveness in the global economy - To create an internationally competitive university	"According to the Minister of Education, no radical changes are possible in universities without strong initiative from the state" (Helsingin Sanomat, Sep 7, 2006). "The position of Finnish universities does not match the requirements of globalization. … Finland's competitiveness entails … universities where research and education in selected key areas are world-class" (OPM 2007: 9). "A crucial element of the new [university] should be the significant autonomy of the Schools and a management system that supports this autonomy" (OPM 2007: 16, 45–46).	- Exercising owner's authority - Preparing the merger in a small circle
HUT, HSE and UIAH rectors	- To increase university autonomy vis-à-vis the state - To attract more resources	"We propose a full merger and substantial structural changes" (The three rectors, letter to the editor of HS, March 5, 2007).	- Collaboration with other players
Business Community	- To create a technology (innovation) university - To increase practical relevance of education - To promote industry competitiveness	"The new university must mean significant improvements in all operations … collaboration with companies and the best universities … new operational culture and management … There is no way that the transformation will remain an administrative merger. Renewal is a must. The new university must be able to focus and give up [some operations]." (Speech by EK chairman, June 26, 2008)	-Putting pressure on universities (and the Ministry) - Collaboration with other players -Active input of captains of industry -Offering funding

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Table 3
Players and interests, part two

Player	Principal Interests	Examples	Means of Influencing
Aalto University			
Aalto board	- To build a world-class university - To create a unified Aalto culture	"It is important at this moment to make Aalto known, and you can do it better with one name than with three separate names" (Interview with a board member).	- Decision-making authority as owners' representative
Aalto president	- To build a new coherent university brand	"Our goal is to be in world class in 2020. In my view, we need to … develop a common culture to achieve that" (comment in a workshop, February 21, 2011).	- Decision-making authority ensured by centralized structure
Aalto communications		"Visual Identity guidelines" for faculty (2010)	-Decision-making authority ensured by mandate from board and president
School of Economics			
Rectorate (management)	-To develop distinct school brands - To preserve the HSE brand	"I do fear that … if this [merger] is carried out too much like […] a monolithic university model, creativity will suffer and … the operational conditions of the School of Economics … will suffer" (interview with member of rectorate).	- Negotiations with the board and president
Students	- To maintain existing brand recognition - To preserve HSE brand	"Aalto University becomes the 'mother brand' of the three universities… .According to the Rector [of HSE] the schools will continue with their own brands" (online student comment, KYweb, June 1, 2008).	- Appealing to the president - Relying on the traditional tripartite decision-making model of the school (professors, other staff, students)
Faculty	- To maintain existing brand recognition - To maintain HSE identity and to preserve its brand	"Some 'marketing guru' has probably sold the Aalto top management a false one-brand ideology" (professor in an email discussion in October 2009).	- Relying on the traditional tripartite decision-making model of the school (professors, other staff, students)

responsible cabinet minister dismissed the institute idea. The Inquiry Report of February 2007 outlined alternative solutions, but suggested a full merger as the most viable solution. There was no time for general discussion about alternatives, as the new Finnish government accepted the full merger plan only two months later. Furthermore, the three rectors now complied with the merger idea. At this stage, the blueprint for the new university reflected their aspiration of independent schools within a merged university.

In August 2008, power relations vis-à-vis the new university changed and the Board of the Aalto University Foundation became a focal player. The Board comprised corporate executives, policymakers, and academics, none of whom directly represented any one of the merging universities. The Board's first main task was to recruit a new president (rector) for Aalto. The new president was recruited from a Swedish university. In 2008–2009, new governance arrangements charged the centralization of decision-making authority to the board and president, who were able to trump resistance and settle for a one-brand strategy. A centralized structure with a strong Aalto brand prevailed over an alternative, decentralized one with autonomous schools and strong school brands. Many questions of socio-cultural integration between the merging universities were addressed, for example, in getting people from the three merging universities together to discuss the mission, vision, and values of Aalto. In contrast, no clear branding strategy was established until 2010.

Aalto became a legal entity on January 1, 2010. High ambitions were set, and Aalto's goal was communicated by its president as "to achieve world-class status by 2020" (Aalto strategy 2010). In April 2010, following the appointment of a new head of communications at the Aalto level, there was a marked shift from uncoordinated communications efforts to the systematic strategic branding of Aalto. The centralized communications unit became well resourced. "The gun was loaded," an interviewee remarked.

In 2011, the School of Science and Technology was divided into four schools, and in 2012 the Department of Architecture in the School of Engineering was combined with the former UIAH. Today, Aalto operates with six schools. Overall, the creation of Aalto is emblematic of the small Finnish society characterized by tightly knit elite networks. A small group of key individuals, representing various players, was able to make the university merger a reality in a relatively short time.

Politics

The dismantling of the HSE brand was decided by the Aalto Board and president in 2009. This passed unnoticed in the Finnish media but not among HSE students, faculty, and alumni. The head of the HSE Student Union wrote an open letter of complaint to the president, demanding that

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HSE "is maintained as a sub-brand of Aalto University." Alumni and clients of HSE Executive Education, in turn, were worried about the recognition of their degrees "if the brand is taken away," as one of our interviewees put it.

The rectorate of HSE had sought to preserve the HSE brand after the merger. Up until 2009, they believed that this preservation was possible (Kasanen and Sotamaa 2010). HSE was internationally well known, and it was relatively well positioned in global business school rankings. In Finland, it was considered as the number one business school. Since the late 1990 s, the HSE brand had been meticulously developed in relation to international quality audits and accreditations. In 2007, HSE achieved Triple Crown status with three international business school accreditations (AMBA, EQUIS, and AACSB). The dismantling of the HSE brand came as a surprise even to the HSE rectorate.

More was at stake than the Aalto board and president had anticipated. When the students' letter to the president was brought to their attention, several HSE professors engaged in an e-mail discussion where they shared their frustration about dismantling the newly crystallized HSE brand. This expanded into complaints about the highly centralized decision-making system in Aalto. The timing was unfortunate as HSE faculty had just engaged in various branding initiatives, which were targeted at positioning the school vis-à-vis other top business schools across the world. Now the reference point became muddled as HSE, under a new name and logo, was being branded as part of a larger university. There was no longer an obvious yardstick on a global scale, and the business school identity became unclear.

In January 2010, the rector of HSE became the first dean of Aalto ECON, but soon decided to leave for a sabbatical. Also, the previous HSE vice rectors stepped down. Among the faculty, the new Aalto ECON brand was expressed through negation: the focus was on losing one's unique business school identity, rather than embracing the Aalto brand and positioning oneself within it. Questions of losing prestige also prevailed. Apart from losing a reference point internationally, this apprehension was related to the perceived weakened bargaining position of the School of Economics vis-à-vis the technology-intensive schools when resources were allocated. All key resource allocation decisions were now made at the Aalto level.

The powerful position of the president enabled her to pursue the ideal of a *top university* with a coherent and uniform brand. In her newsletters, presentations, and blogs, she constantly emphasized the need to create a "unified culture" with a "common purpose" for the university to become "world-class." The rector was backed by the board, but also by the Aalto communications unit. The title of a presentation given by the new head of communications in a conference in the United States (May 2011) exemplified his approach: "Building a Brand for a Newcomer: *From Nowhere* to

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World-Class Stature" (our italics). After his initial show of strength, however, the head of communications came to advocate a more decentralized approach. He sought to work with the various schools on their distinct profiles and identities "within the Aalto totality" (interview 2011). Nevertheless, the reference points for the School of Economics were still to be found within Aalto, not in other business schools across the world. In August 2012, as recommended by an international advisory body and advocated by the new dean, the board changed the name of Aalto ECON to Aalto University School of Business, or Aalto BIZ for short.

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Discussion and conclusion

Our study contributes to theory and research on higher education branding by exemplifying that building and presenting a university brand involve organizational politics. While the bulk of extant research tends to overlook this issue, our findings extend the research in three ways. First, viewing university branding through the lens of politics allows us to discover a multitude of players with different power and conflicting goals as well as diverging interpretations of the university brand. Consistent with Allison's (1969, 711) notion of "where you stand depends on where you sit," the findings highlight how the viewpoints of some players conflict with those of others. Players who occupy critical positions have the authority to make decisions, but any player's position defines "what they can and must do" (Allison 1969) in the political game of branding. Our study, thus, highlights the importance of identifying not only these critical players but any player who is likely to engage politically in the branding process. The findings call for closer scrutiny of these players and their tactics for influencing the branding outcome, including the use of power, coalition-building, and open conflict.

Second, the findings add to our understanding of corporate branding at the university level by demonstrating how branding is a political-strategic act, opening up fundamental questions of identity and reason for existing. Corporate branding involves not only logos, names, or value statements, but also prioritizing different strategic concerns and ultimately choosing a specific brand identity on which the entire brand building process builds at the expense of other, alternative identities. Choosing an *official* identity entails a reduction of variety and the downplaying of characteristics that by some players are held in high esteem, and possibly even the dismantling of brands that in the past have been meaningful to both internal and external stakeholders. Although a one-brand strategy is not necessarily prescribed in standard corporate branding theory, the idea of coherence is central and, in our case, clearly reflected in the strategy chosen by the

president and the board. These findings represent an important contribution to corporate branding theory and higher education branding research because they reveal how such a top-down approach leads to political opposition. The downplaying or dismantling of (sub-) brands affects social identities and leads to a potential loss of power and status.

Finally, the political perspective improves our understanding of higher education branding by highlighting how conflict intensity is affected by the relative strength of the opposing parties and how much they believe is at stake. Certain parties and coalitions have the power to influence the outcome more than others, although all are affected by the branding outcome. Consistent with the notion proposed by Rokkan (1966) that "votes count, resources decide," parties with weaker formal authority seek to influence the process by teaming up with others in order to acquire a stronger power base. However, our findings also suggest that players who hold critical positions in the organization will seek support from both internal and external stakeholders in order to build powerful coalitions. As a result, whether players can successfully determine the fate of the branding process depends on their level of agreement with, as well as opposition from, other players. This insight is crucial for our understanding of any corporate branding process, but particularly the branding of higher education institutions. These organizations are characterized by a number of players who have a potential stake in a particular outcome of the process. In the case of Aalto University, the HSE rector and vice rectors had different goals and interests in the branding compared to the Aalto University top management, but they lacked powerful coalition partners at crucial moments.

Today, universities operate in a competitive global market (Wedlin 2008). Many of the tensions related to this new order are crystallized in the politics of branding where questions of purpose are brought to the fore. In this spirit, we have conceptualized university branding as a political game and illustrated this concept empirically. Our study is exploratory, and it paves the way for future research on the politics of university branding. Given the limited space, we have not extended our analysis to players such as *competing* universities and the media. Nor have we theorized on how branding becomes lodged in social networks and broader socio-cultural discourses (Holt 2006; Schroeder 2009). To move the discussion forward, it would be important to conceptualize university branding as a fundamental question of purpose, and thus connected to identities and (dis-)identification of various internal and external players in a particular socio-cultural and societal context, not as a mere management challenge and marketing and communications exercise. Research on the relationships between branding and the identity work of faculty would be especially welcome. How branding and identity feed on each other and how and why tensions and struggles arise over time warrant immediate research attention.

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Notes

1. UIAH exemplifies the fact that the merging universities were not uniform entities in their interests vis-?-vis the merger. While its rector was one of the most visible proponents of the merger, the most explicit resistance could be seen among the faculty and students of some UIAH departments who organized public demonstrations to oppose the merger. In the spring of 2008, they voted the rector out of office.

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