

REGIONAL IDENTITY OF CITIES

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to provide theoretical methods and practical strategies of creating city identity, and to utilize them as basic tools of city management. In the modern global economy, there is an increasing competition among the cities in an effort to better positioning itself in the world, country or region. Branding is one of the major factors that contribute to the development of cities and their differentiation in relation to competitors and other challenges. Only the cities that have a strong brand and positive regional identity in the context of territorial and national boundaries represent the support for the growth and development of the countries in which they are located. The objective of this thesis is to determine the effects of branding cities. This study will explore cities as brands and branding a city properly. Good branding can assist in making cities desirable, just as bad branding can assist in making cities undesirable. While some cities have prospered over the years, others have suffered. City must have good qualities in order to brand itself successfully, but a myriad of factors are involved. Cooperative efforts between residents and municipal government are one of the key factors in determining the branding potential of a city. This study also determines what cities need to focus on in order to survive in the global economy, and the effects of globalization on cities.

Keywords: City, identity, brand, globalization.

INTRODUCTION

The fundamental starting point for the application of the concept of identity of the city is that the name of a city becomes a brand, and as a result it creates a psychological image in the minds of members of the target group (potential investors, tourists, citizens, businessmen) i.e., it helps everyone in assessing the city's products and services, facilitates the tourists' decision on the visit, affects business decisions, influences decisions about relocating residents, etc. A good brand certainly creates better and more desirable perceptions of a city, with the result of increasing foreign investments, improving the city promotion, increasing the city imports and exports and creating new jobs. A city brand, in addition to its economic strength, wealth and development, it should also be developed in directions such as creativity, music, philosophy, confidence, wisdom, challenge and safety. On this basis, each city brand will be associated with its domestic manufacturing brands and will partly depend on their performance.

The aims of the city brand are considered as following: 1) Increase awareness of its own citizens, connecting citizens and creating a strong emotional bond with their city (urge them to think about their town, create and change the city's image, to change negative perceptions about the city and city authorities); 2) Increase self-confidence in their own economy, their own knowledge and their own abilities; 3) Create new and maintaining existing businesses, social, cultural and emotional ties and relationships in terms of promoting and developing the local economy, increase exports and urban job opportunities; 4) Encourage tourists in terms

of recognition of the city as an attractive destination, urging them to purchase local products and local consumption.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are few scientists engaged in theoretical research identity of the city, almost all of whom have a positive definition of the issue. Lynch (1972) states that "basically the identity of the city is the memory supported by a stable environment representing the symbol of the past" (p.56). For him, the symbol of the city is the unity of the past, present and future.

Relf (1976) explains the term 'identity' as it is seen from the phenomenological point of view and points out the correlation between the two concepts of identity: the identity of something and the identity with something. The identity refers to something unique i.e. one thing is different from the other. However, the so-called essential identity is inseparable from the identity that determines the relation with something else. In addition to the environment, activities and meanings, the author introduces another category, the *genius loci*, which is called the spirit of the place, and is a space-based and authentic identity. It also emphasizes that the identity of a place is an important part of the identity of persons and groups, and the understanding of the identity depends on way the identity is interpreted by residents, tourists or anyone else. An example could be found in different understandings of the city's identity; so residents of the ghetto have a different image of the city than the ones you have worked with at the Institute for city planning or tourists. In the works of Demateisa, Galand, Leresche and Dentan (1994), appears the notion of identity as a center of self-organization. The city as a self-organization includes the physical form with certain functions, enabling it to continuously develop and modify the shape in time, or is defined as a cultural matrix that consciously or unconsciously contributes to the structuring of its development.

Capital construction projects can be crucial to the creation of an identity. According to Temelova (2014) foundations, investing in capital projects can be both a means of creating a positive internal image of the city, but also a means of promotion. These projects include the application of the latest styles of world architecture, creating iconic buildings that combine the capital provocation and feasibility. The most famous example is the Guggenheim Museum in Bilbao, Spain. The construction of the museum enabled the city and the region to become a major tourist destination. Bilbao once the city of steel and shipyard today is very attractive because from the very first beginning of the construction of the museum, it began to open up many famous hotels, shops and restaurants. The sample of this city has affected Graz, Innsbruck and Porto, as well as many other cities that began with the construction of capital buildings in the request for additional affirmation. However, despite positive such projects can have negative consequences that are reflected in attracting a certain group of investors primarily oriented to tourism, but not on other sectors of the economy.

BRANDING AS THE BASIS OF THE CITY'S IDENTITY

One of the key factors of economic development of a city is the recognition of its identity. How can a city be recognized? A city ought to give a chance to all economic sectors to be developed under the same conditions. Industries that can be quickly developed through specialization should promote their further development therefore creating brand by which the city will be identified in the world.

Today the world is one market. The rapid advancement of globalization means that every country, every city and region compete with each other to attract consumers from all over the world i.e., tourists, investors, students, entrepreneurs, international cultural and sporting events, always aim for the attention of the international media, respect from public institutions, as well as Citizens of other countries.

Every city, county or state has its own identity by which it is recognized in the world. For example: 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 nations about poverty, corruption, war, famine and diseases. Most of us are too busy worrying about ourselves and the countries where we work and do not have much time to spend trying to form a complete and balanced view about six billion other people and nearly two hundred other countries. It is as if a man does not have time to read the whole book, and he says a summary of the book by its cover, the book's title and its stereotypes.

These stereotypes-whether positive or negative, right or wrong-fundamentally affect our behavior towards other places and their people and products. This may seem unfair, but there is nothing you can do to change it. It is very difficult for a country to convince people in other parts of the world that go beyond these simple images that they have in mind. Some very advanced countries do not receive as much attention from visitors, students, businesses or investments as they would like because their reputation is weak or negative, while others are still trading at a good image gained for many decades or even centuries, and today give relatively little effort.

The same is true for all the cities and regions that have a good, strong and positive reputation and they found out that almost everything undertaken on the international stage is easy compared with the places with poor reputations that found out that almost everything is difficult to be reached, and some things seem virtually impossible .

Thus, all responsible governments, companies and institutions need to find out what their country can offer to the world, and to develop a strategy for their management. This is a key part of their job to try to build a reputation that is powerful, attractive and useful for their economic, political and social goals. Discovering the offer that a city can provide to the world better than the other nearly two hundred countries is one of the main skills of a government in the XXI century.

According to Anholt (2007) today, most countries promote their products and services and streamline its reputation as best as they can, but they rarely do it in a coordinated way:

- Schools, colleges and universities promote their courses for students and researchers in the country and abroad;
- Tourist Board promotes the country to tourists and business travelers;
- Investment Promotion Agency promotes the country to foreign companies and investors
- Institutions build cultural relations with other countries and promote cultural and educational products and services;
- The exporting countries abroad promote their products and services;
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs presents its policies abroad in the best possible light trying to manage a national reputation as a whole.

Far more can be achieved if the work of these actors is coordinated and harmonized with overall national strategy that sets clear targets for the country's economy, its society and its

political and cultural relations with other countries. This is a proof that none of the conventional disciplines is able to promote its country's identity in a successful way.

However, the task of promotion, positioning and reputation management at the global level has been known for long in the world of commerce. Corporations have been facing these challenges for more than a century. The competition on the management and promotion of reputation made possible the appearance of brand management techniques. It is clear that there are more differences than similarities between countries and companies, but some of the theories and techniques of brand management if used intelligently and responsibly may become powerful tools of competitiveness and agents for changes both at home and abroad. By increasing reputation, better positioning and promotion of the city makes its identity competitive in the world.

The Competitive Identity is a term used to describe the synthesis of brand management to public diplomacy in trade, investment, tourism and export promotion. It is also a model for the expansion of national competitiveness in the global world (Anholt 2007).

Is branding of the city the basis to launch economic growth?

The popularity of branding of countries, cities and regions is directly stimulated by the process of globalization because of their unique differentiation and positioning. The clear defining of the image of one place, its better positioning and the acquaintance in the international market terms, helps to know different destinations and brings cultures and people closer. The focus moves from the local to the global level, from the branding of products and services to the branding of cities, regions and countries. In the current process of connecting the world and creating a large global village, it is a challenge to brand the city, meet the world with its unique characteristics, promote the true values and still allow the city to develop in the desired direction. In order to achieve these objectives it is necessary that all marketing activities be designed so as to serve the socio-economic interests of the city, destinations and regions. The main objectives of promoting the city or region are: the development of tourism and economy, the increase of investments and the improvement of the image of the city or destination.

The strategic approach of branding the city demands a longer period of time in order to become recognized and attractive. The aim of the strategy of the brand is to anticipate the experiences of the target group and consequently create the required activities. At the same time it also affects the improvement of the life in one city and attitude of residents and tourists toward it. When you define the brand – as the strategy of the city, it is necessary to test the sensitivity of the target group, and accordingly to take concrete actions, make plans, provide investment, joint ventures, organize cultural and sports events. It is significant to initiate and conclude an agreement with the managers of public transport, architects, urban planners of public spaces, with the aim of attracting tourists and future residents. The idea is to make the place attractive. All activities should have a great impact on the internal and external public and to determine the way in which they move around economic, social and cultural developments. In order to be effective the strategy of the city should be integrated and coordinated with marketing and communication, public policy, urban planning, urban design, economic and business development. It is essential that the interested major parties, above all politicians understand the importance of the brand as a strategy and define the direction of its development. All the decisions that people make in the course of buying products or using services are partly rational, and partly emotional. The importance of this

relationship is certainly important when deciding which city to visit, which city to move in, in which to invest or in which to get education.

Among the biggest advantages of a 'branded' city are included: fame, popularity, income and a better sense of belonging to citizens. Opponents of "branding" stated that if the city focuses on a few selected characteristics, those that act less interesting and inappropriate, may be lost forever.

How can a brand have a bad reputation? Anholt (2007) describes the negative side a brand can have. Powerful and well-known countries though they have their own brands do not necessarily mean that they have a positive regional identity. For example: North Korea, Afghanistan, and Iraq have a strong and well-known reputation that is not positive. The reputation of a country strongly influences the way people within and outside of think about it, how to treat it and how they would react to all that is created. To identify a better and more successful brand it is sufficient to answer the following questions:

- If you had to choose between two DVD players from unknown manufacturers with the same characteristics, which one would you expect to pay more for Japanese brand or Chinese brand?
- If you have two equally qualified applicants as professors of Economics, who would you like to choose a Turk or a Swede?
- If the Mongolian State Circus and the Nigerian State Circus are having a show in the city, which one would you expect to have a better promotion?
- Which of these two cities Sydney or Sarajevo, would you like your city have a partnership with?
- Does the holiday on the Albanian Riviera sound more or less luxurious than one on the French Riviera?
- Would you like to build a high-tech factory near Zurich or near Kampala? Etc.

For each of these questions, there may be very good reasons for the selection of both options, but most people have a clear idea of what to choose even when they do not know a lot about a country.

The country's reputation has a direct and measurable impact on almost every aspect of its engagement in other countries and plays a key role in the economic, educational, social, political and cultural progress. Whether we are thinking about going abroad to study, going somewhere on vacation, buying a product that is made in a particular country, applying for a job abroad, moving to a new city, donate money to the war-torn and famine-hit region, or choosing between movies and theater performances and CDs by artists in various countries, we rely on our perception of these places to make the decision process a little easier, a little faster, a little more efficient.

Branding is a topic that is constantly in the media, so we as consumers have our own ideas of what branding we have around us. Most people think that 'branding' is synonymous with advertising, graphic design, promotion, public relations and even propaganda. People who are engaged in the marketing, advertisers and other people who work professionally with brands use different and more technical definitions of words and their definitions vary from one industry to another.

CONCLUSIONS

Today, when all cities are becoming competitors of each other in attracting resources, one of the leading concepts becomes their distinctive identity in the region. Only those cities that meet the expectations and demands of citizens, companies, investors create a positive image in the eyes of the public and acquire the prerequisites for improvement of economic activities. The identity of a city reflects a large number of elements such as: economic, cultural and historical development, position and residents. The significance of each of them forms an overall picture that leads to individual success or failure. All participants in the global market are aware of the necessity use of identity as a basic strategy to differ from the competition. Branding is a modern concept and the cities which possess a good brand have achieved greater progress. This is the main reason why a large number of cities are considering to have their own brand.

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