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City Branding and the Tourist Gaze: City Branding for Tourism Development

Sonia Jojic

Polis University, Tirana

Abstract

 For many years now the topic of city branding has gained a significant interest in both the academics and policy maker's specified fields. As many cities tend to compete globally in attracting tourism, investment or talents, the concepts of brand strategy has been increasingly adopted from the commercial filed and has been applied to the urban development, regeneration and quality of life of cities. Nevertheless, city branding helps in increasing the status of the place as touristic destination, residential, or business location. As many places are mainly branded as touristic destinations, urban tourism is one of the fastest growing segments of worldwide tourism market. Thus this article intends to explore the essence of city branding related to tourism and John Urry, "Tourist Gaze"; city image, and the relationship between city branding and its residents.

Keywords: city, branding, tourism, development

Introduction

City Branding

City Branding itself is the process of distinguishing and diversification, where local tourism organizations, cultural and arts facilities, museums, historic preservation groups join and construct a place images, helping in producing tourist sites with the common aim to attract consumers and investment to a particular local area. This process involves in two main components, 1. Place making or city building,(the process which makes a specific place more attractive) and 2. Place or city branding (the process of promoting a place), (Anholt, 2008), (Avraham and Ketter, 2008), (Kavaratzis, 2004). The main goals of city branding is to re-image a city perception, depending on its place identities and of course understanding the local culture of the place. Still, city branding is more than the promotion of a place and its marketing, its about constructing and reshaping the cities image from its historical architecture and street plans, the images of the city heard or read, the art produced by its residents etc, thus attracting the desirable consumers and maximizing consumers spending. Therefore, City Branding aims to:

1. Develop new ways of communicating the city's image
2. Achieve competitive advantages
3. Strengthen the reputation of a city, improving also its economical importance.

Building a good city image is an important mixture of activity and structure. Because successful brands give benefit beyond the physical aspects of cities, there is a big necessity to process the visual image into a unique brand image through clear strategies.

As Unsworth states, ''City branding should be associated to the main things that people should know about a place''. Thus, the process of creating a brand requires media-generated imagery; branding of the urban projects; city life, historical buildings, important signature architecture, and the overall form of the city, should follow in accordance with main target focus on how to develop the brand (tourism, investments, actracting new residents).

City Branding comparable to corporate branding

While researching if branding is whether beneficial for cities or not, first branding should be defined. The American Marketing Association defines 'brand' as 'a name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of these, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors'.

On the other hand, Hankinson (2004) also emphasizes the distinctive character of the branded product which is the result of the positioning efforts in relation to competition and unique combination of attributes and values. Paul Biedermann defines brand as the essence of one's own unique story. Moreover, De Chernatony and Dall'Olmo Riley (1998) define brand as the multidimensional construct of values facilitated by the producers and recognized by the consumers of the product. This is a two – way process of communication between the owners of the brand and the consumers who perceive it. It is more than a name or a slogan promoting a certain product, as it integrates a number of different qualities associated with that specific product. A brand differentiates a product from its competitors by these attributes and values, forming a unique combination. Thus, a brand carries values, bonding's and loyalness in relation to the customer (Stigel and Frimann, 2006).

Nevertheless, a distinction is necessary to be made between product or service brands and corporate brands. Corporate brands different from product brand have a slightly different aim. The targets are not only the customers, like in the case of product brands, but different stakeholder groups. Therefore their complexity ought to involve the company's mission, values, beliefs, communication and culture. (Simoes and Dibb, 2001). As defined by Simoeas and Dibb, a corporate brand is a continuous expression of the distinctive business model of an organization through the verbal, visual and behavioural means.

The concept of "brand" and "branding"

In addition of the comparison of city branding and corporate branding, distinction should be made also between the concepts of brand and branding, which are not equal. As described by the Business Dictionary term "Branding" involves the entire process of creating a unique name and image for a product or company in the minds of consumers and other stakeholders. (businesdictionary.com). On the other hand, the term "Brand" is an overall image or set of perceptions and associations in people's perception of the brand. Hence, "Branding", emphasis on establishing and maintaining this brand. (Stigel and Frimann, 2006). However, branding does involve promotion, most importantly, it goes beyond it. The aim of branding is to establish a significant and distinguished presence in the market that attracts and retains loyal customers. Indeed, the aim of branding is not only to distinguish a product or a service from others, it consists also in the representations of values and beliefs that will influence the behaviour of customers (Tasci and Kozak, 2006). After all branding is about altering or refining an image. Thus, it should be treated as a complete and continuous process, which all other marketing activities are subject. (Kavaratzis, 2004). In fact when it comes to places, they are very complex and can be still treated as a single product, however the functions of this product should be treated as a combination of various services, associations, etc. In his book "How to Brand Nations, Cities and Destinations" Rainisto (2003) states that place brands are more similar to corporate umbrella brands than they are to product brands, and therefore a place's image is a value a place can benefit from. While referring corporate branding the company itself is the main focus and not the products or services it offers, is the company's mission, vision and culture that are the main elements of branding. It can be believed that the same applies to places, as place branding is not about the single products the city offers, it is about the larger picture of branding the city as a whole entity. Thus, the main goal of place branding is in using the place's values that are associated with its local products, which can promote the place itself. Similar to corporate branding, place branding is about attributing certain qualities to the entire combination of place products, as every single one of these products can then befit from the place brand as a whole.

In addition, Merrilees, Miller and Herington (2009) define place branding "as the ways in which communities, cities, regions and countries market their entity". Thus, defining City branding as a part of place branding which applies to single cities

rather than whole regions or countries. On the other hand, if a city's efforts focus on attracting tourists, then city branding can be expected to be a part of destination branding.

Since destination branding applies to the tourism market, its primary aim is to attract visitors to a given destination. Therefore, city branding can be considered as both place branding and destination branding for an urban region."Cities have always been brands in the truest sense of the word". (Anholt, 2008). Anholt reinforces the idea that governmental attempts have been made to create place identity and to promote it to its either external or internal consumers, have long taken place before the name 'city brand' started to be used. (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005). Thus, city branding in its essence is similar to corporate branding, both of them aim to attract attention of multiple stakeholders and not single customer groups. Furthermore, both city branding and corporate branding have multidisciplinary roots, they both have a high level of intangibility and complexity, which need to take into account also social responsibility, both dealing with multiple identities and need a long – term development. (Anholt, 2008) In fact, Hankinson (2007) claims that city brands are comparable to corporate brands and consequently concludes that place branding needs leadership, a brand-oriented organizational culture, coordination of different departments influencing the "brand", constant and consistent communication and strong partnerships. Hence, methods and techniques applied previously to corporate branding can now be used for building strong city brands. (Kavaratzis and Ashworth 2005). After all, the idea behind branding is to persuade the customer, in which the city is able to fulfil his needs better than the competition. Michalis Kavaratzis states in his article "From city marketing to city branding: Towards a theoretical framework for developing city brands", that city branding and city brand management aim at influencing spatial behavior of people and companies by putting the city on their mental maps and enforcing the positive perception of it, whether it relates to living, visiting or investing.(Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2005). On the past years the aim of city branding has changed, from attracting outsiders, nowadays it focuses more on the current and potential residents rather than just visitors. It has become more important to keep its residents, and thus keeping business in the city, thus resulting in sustainability. In conclusion, we can define place branding as the planning and execution of the entire process of creating, managing and/or improving the perceptions of a existing city, its potential customers and other stakeholders, which aim to influence the spatial behaviour of customers, being beneficial for the city's sustainability and development, and focuses on the values of a city as a whole.

Branding strategies for cities

City image can be projected into the international market place very fast, where the chances of attracting tourist, companies, will certainly improve the urban vitality of the city. Importance of city branding focuses in the empowerment of local knowledge and creativity which can be used in a more efficient approach to public planning and urban development of the city, thus using city branding as an essential tool in urban regeneration. On the other hand, city branding can also be treated as segment of destination branding when concerning tourism. Tourism is the main backbone for political and economic progress and social restructuring, helping in exposing domestic enterprises to the international market, but also encourages interaction between host populations with outsiders. Nevertheless, the value of place branding and destination branding is in the importance of attracting visitors, with a highly potential of helping the economical aspect of the city. Branding can bring positive and profitable associations. However, in creating a positive city image a set of clear values should be defined with the brand. Branding is not just about logos and slogans, but the "ACTUAL IDENTITY" of the brand itself that takes in consideration different groups of stakeholders. Nonetheless, branding should be based on a clear set of values and beliefs with a clear purpose for the strategy to be effective and in return beneficial for the city. In order to be successful and have a long-term impact, branding should be accompanied with actual visual changes within the city.

Undoubtedly, marketing campaigns have a slightly impact in helping to 'sell' the city as a tourist destination, investment location by improving the perceptions of people about the city. Moreover, the role of branding should also focus in policy change. In his article "Place branding: Is it marketing or isn't it?. Anholt, claims that strategy consists about the knowledge of the authorities of the current situation of the city, what is the actual desired position of the city and how to get and manage it. In addition, "Substance" is stated as the implementation of the strategy in different forms, such as economic, political, and cultural activities which take place in the city. In conclusion, 'Symbolic' is seen as the action that will be communicating the actual changes in the city. (Anholt, 2008). Most of the time, people believe that the image of a city improves with excessive marketing or advertising tools, however it is the actual change that is being communicated and used as a marketing tool. Definitely branding is important, still alone it cannot achieve much. It has to be strengthened by positive visible evidence in the city.

The 4d place branding model

Branding itself is a major trait of contemporary postindustrial society. As mentioned before, Kavaratzis (2009) claims that the concept and techniques of product and corporate branding are now also employed in a variety of different ways, including place branding (Kavaratzis, 2009). Thomas Gad's 4D Place Branding Model consists in conducting in more in-depth research as a framework for destination marketing projects. This also encompasses further communication process that helps establish the brand and its message with regards to the target audiences. Thus the 4D Place Branding Model, also focuses on communicating a created image. This reflects the essential role assigned to image formulation and image communication in theoretical discussions (Kavaratzis, 2004). Thomas Gad's 4D Place Branding Model consists of four phases: 1. Discover, 2.Define, 3.Design (re-Design) and 4.Deliver.

The model was designed for general application of place branding. Moreover, place branding can be treated as a new image created by distinctive characteristics of a place as well as preexistent images.

Discover: The first phase where primary research takes place, consisting of five constitutive parts, including questionnaires, workshops conducted by NGO, interviews, research on materials and analysis. Gupta, A. (2010), in her publication "Branding a nation: Framework for building favorable country-image", claims that "discovering" and identifying the image of a place is thought to be the preliminary aspect in the theory of branding (Gupta, 2010). Moreover, Gertner and Kotler state that the image of a place influences the brand response to its residents, visitors and investors (Gertner and Kotler, 2004). Still, Kotler emphasizes that the image of a place is a sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that people have of a place (Gertner and Kotler, 2004). In addition, cultural heritage often incorporates traditional and cultural values of certain regions or places, hereby including beliefs, ideas, traditions, architecture and foods, which can be used in creating or identifying the image of a place. The focus of Discover as the first component of the 4D Place Branding Model is to gather all the significant and available resources for creating the underlying themes of the brand image. These underlying themes can focus on distinct cultural and heritage values, historical stories, local values or natural resources of the place. Morgan (2006) argues in her publication "How has place branding developed during the year that place branding has been in publication, Place Branding." That the process of branding focuses in two main phases: 1. Internally, all the gathered information of cultural and historic artefacts help in identifying the preferred and suitable image of the city; 2. Externally, focusing in discovering the citizens' perception of the cities. Nevertheless, both these two phases have a reciprocal process, thus underlying that the direction and themes of the place branding strategy are determined through the Discover process.

Define: The second phase of the 4D Place Branding Model is Define, aiming to identify a simple definition and clear solution for the brand positioning, reflecting the uniqueness of the concept of brand identity in theories of branding, which indicates the way in which the branding theme wants the brand to be preserved (Kavaratzis and Ashworth, 2006). The process of Define starts by extracting a word or creating a slogan, a memorable phrase, that defines a place. Description occurs in a concise form, which can be in a length of a paragraph or in a statement in comprehensive scale.

Design / re-Design: Design (re-Design), the third phase in which the process of created or present images are transformed into tangential branding resources. This is described by Kavaratzis (2004) as the core part in branding places, were re-image or re-inventing of a place is done. This phase falls right after developing a brand through its branding positions from the previous stage of Define. As Kotler (1999) describes in his book "Marketing Places Europe", there are four distinct areas used as the core for creating competitiveness in place branding: 1. Design (character), 2. Infrastructure (fixed environment), 3. Basic services (service provider) and 4. Attractions (entertainment and recreation), proposing on how to enhance the attractiveness of a destination through practical design. The Design (re-Design) phase from the 4D Place Branding Model also includes a range of different strategies for brand positioning, such as cultural heritage and physical design. There are general qualities that make up the physical design related to the landscape, urban space, architecture and infrastructure, which reveal's the place brand and uniqueness of the destination. Cultural exhibition features the distinctive cultural heritage in the form of paintings, relics, traditional songs and performances, food making, local customs and ceremonies. Since the presentation of the cultural heritage elements contributes to communicating the brand and its messages to the people on a more direct level, it is reflected both in the process of image formulation and communication. Nowadays, succeeding in attracting wider recognition is part of the development agenda of contemporary cities, faced with the need to differentiate and compete against one another. However, city branding plays an important role in this struggle of recognition. On the other hand Cultural Heritage, tangible or intangible can potentially become a striving force in creating an identity and a city brand for cities or places rich in cultural and natural heritage.

Deliver: The fourth phase of Tomas Gads branding model is Deliver. This step of the process aims to communicate the brand and designated messages to the intended target audiences. This phase is set to work constantly to strengthen the image of the situated brand by communicating through multiple channels (marketing means of communication).

Cities and the tourist gaze

Nowadays, urban tourism is one of the most fastest growing segments of worldwide tourism market. Thanks to a number of low cost transport carriers, city trips have become increasingly popular. Planning a city trip has become more than easy more than half of European consumers arrange their holidays on their personal computer. Clearly, competition between cities for tourists has increased (Selby, 2004). Due to this phenomenon, more cities try to invest in city branding. In their Research Report of the Nordic Innovation Centre in Oslo, *"Image of the City: Urban Branding as Constructed Capabilities in Nordic City Regions"* Jason and Power, state that the usual branding strategies employed are usually twofold (Jansson and Power, 2006):

1. Cities either emphasize the material characteristics of the place such as buildings and events, or its

2. Immaterial aspects, for example, stories, slogans and logos. In this way, cities hope to differentiate themselves from the competition and attract tourists. Certainly, city branding can be a useful tool in building a touristic image. But in fact how does this image building work? What can cities really do to attract attention? Why is, for instance, Rome, Paris, or Venice are tourist magnet? To better understand the phenomenon of why tourist prefer some cities instead of other ones, which might be of the same historical value, the theory of the "tourist gaze" by Urry (1990), will be explored.

John Urry, cities and the tourist gaze

The British sociologist, John Urry, in his book The Tourist Gaze (1990), developed a theory on why people travel for leisure and why they visit certain places (Urry, 1990). The author, emphasises that tourism is a process that involves the act of going away to search for visual experiences that people normally do not see at home or at work. The main activities/objective of tourists are 'gazing at signs'. Signs regarding the particular features of a place, such as a famous cathedral, beautiful landscape or many other attraction that a city might have. For instance, tourist visiting New York will definitely visit the Statue of Liberty, or gaze through Wall Street or Little Italy. Different form a place inhabitants, tourists usually look for different things in a place, thus adopt a 'tourist gaze'. However, places which are gazed upon are not randomly chosen. Urry argues that the tourist gaze varies by society and is always socially constructed (Urry, 1990). According to Forbes, Chinese tourists prefer to gaze upon the city of Frankfurt, New York, gazing upon the skyscrapers. In addition, American tourists would not prefer to visit the small historic towns in Italy of their own adherence. Urry, explain that this happens due to the manipulation that happens by a variety of media channels constructing that gaze about a certain place. Advertising, television documentaries, websites and blogs, social media channels, travel guides, and newspaper articles, enable people to form an image of what to expect when visiting a place. Thus, in Urry's view, both tourists and attractions are manipulated: the gaze falls upon those features of a place that are already anticipated. Or, as Urry (2002: 3) puts it: *'When tourists see two people kissing in Paris what they are gazing upon is "timeless, romantic Paris"'*.

Urry's theory is highly affirmed by the rise of mass tourism[1] since the second half of the 19th century. Nevertheless, since from its invention, photography started to accompany tourism, right at the same time that organized tours arose. In fact, the growth of tourism had a high impact in the future development of photography. Mac- Cannell, D. (1999), states in his publication *"The Tourist: A New Theory of the Leisure Class"*, *"the act of taking pictures of a place that is no longer used, 'sites' are turned into 'sights': thus tourists visit churches, not to pray, but to photograph them"* (MacCannell, 1999). Peter D. Osborne views this phenomenon as a 'site sacralisation[2]' which has become the engine behind tourism, in an attempt of become what places are expected to be, the tourist industry thus has produced a lot of '*pseudoauthentic attractions'* (Osborne, 2000). Similarly, most Dutch cities reinforce the stereotypes of 'Dutchness' by inventing spots, events and souvenirs encouraging to tourists that they have found "the real Dutch culture". Urry (1990), notes that not all tourists are

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[1] Mass Tourism is a form of tourism that involves tens of thousands of people going to the same resort often at the same time of year. It is the most popular form of tourism as it is often the cheapest way to holiday, and is often sold as a package deal. Source: www.geocoops.com/mass-tourism.html

[2] Essays on photography regarding the relation to art; space, identity and landscape; travel and mobility. Book: Travelling Light – photography, travel and visual culture

the same type, tourists with a 'collective' gaze tend to feel safe, thus aiming in following organized trips to visit tourist magnets[1]. On the contrary, more tourists are developing an individual, 'adventure', 'romantic' gaze, searching for authenticity in the cities or places they decide to visit.

Although a sociologist, Urry theory of "tourist gaze" did not develop in the context of city branding. However, the notion of the tourist gaze, is much of relevance towards cities that want to build an image and attract tourists. Hence, if people visit places mainly because of photographic images, then city branding itself can help in providing and distributing these pictures. That sad, city branding can be a powerful tool in constructing a positive a trustful tourist gaze based in providing an experience that resembles the images used in their branding. Although a pragmatically view, regarding historical and social-cultural reasons (Morgan, 2004), city branding can offers hope and possibility for every place, small cities, towns, villages, localities that suffer from offering nothing special. **Examples**: Wallander detective television series Fig.01 "Wallander" detective television series takes place in the city of Ystad in the south of Sweden: The example highlights how the "Wallander" detective television series is taken as an advantage from the city to organize Wallander tours.
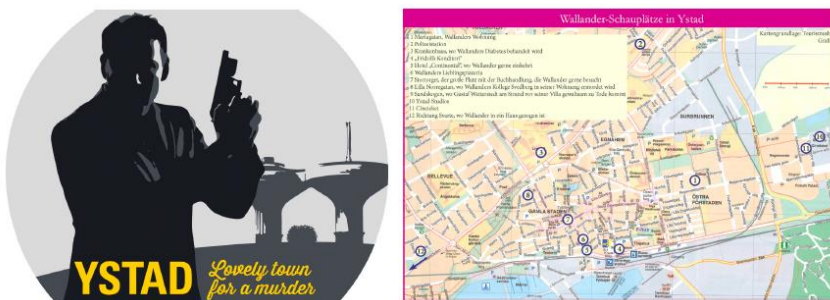

Fig.01 "Wallander detective television series City Tours". Source: Ystad Commune, http://www.ystad.se/filmlocations

"Tomatino festival" Buñol, Spain Fig.02. Buñol village located in Spain has developed a reputation as a photogenic attraction consisting of the annual Tomatino festival where villagers throw tomatoes at each other, coloring the streets of Buñol entirely red purely for entertainment purposes.

Fig.02 "La Tomatina" festival, Buñol Spain".Source: La Tomatina Tours http://www.latomatinatours.com

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[1] Attractions

City's image

Upon John Urry theory of "touristic gaze", Kevin Lynch theory is based on his empirical research of the built environment noting that individuals perceive a city predominantly based on a set of built objects. Nevertheless, OECD(2005), and Ashworth (2009), base their theory of "touristic gaze" in regards of hallmark events, and famous personalities Fig.03.

Kevin Lynch	Built Environment	Coliseum (Rome)
OECD	Famous Personalities	Spot where President Kennedy was murdered (Dallas)
Ashworth	Hallmark Events	Oktober Fest (Mynich)

Fig. 03 Examples of "Touristic Gaze " models. Source: Sonia Jojic

Regarding Lynch observations, he argues that tourists visit a city to gaze upon objects in the built environment. Lynch (1960) notes that in many American and European cities, most individuals perceive a city predominantly as a set of built objects (Lynch, 1960), particularly, five physical elements, developing people's image of a city:
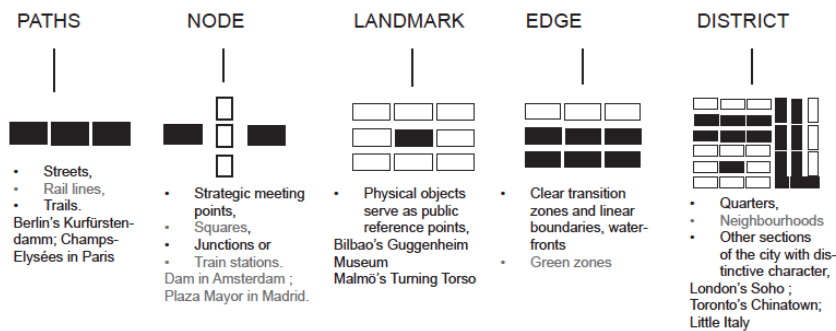

Fig. 04 Kevin Lynch diagram of the "Five Physical Elements" . Source: Sonia Jojic

Lynch, with the concept of 'imageability', noted that some part of a city create a strong mental impression on people minds. Edges and Landmarks, particularly for tourist, function as image carriers, because they are easily identified, recognized and remembered. Nevertheless, tourists also direct their gaze towards hallmark events taking place in a certain city, in a certain time of the year. A city can not only be identified with certain activities organized during events (music, art or sports), but also its organizing capacity by hosting it. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), argue that although the benefits of hallmark events for the local economy are mostly overestimated, the impact on the local image of a city can be considerable (OECD, 2005). Referring as a good examples of mega events that contributed to image building is the example of the Summer Olympics of Barcelona (1992), Fig.05.

Fig. 05 Summer Olympics of Barcelona (1992). Source: Visit Barcelona http://www.welcome-to-barcelona.com/

In addition, tourists tend to visit a city due to the association with a personality, such as a famous painters, musicians or writers, where very often, the affiliation of a place with a named individual might tend to be the result of city branding. This branding technique is called the 'Gaudí gambit' after the the architect and designer Gaudí (Ashworth, 2009). Nevertheless, painters, musicians, writers, scientist are suitable icons for a city, even if they might not be linked to the place(examples: Vermeer (Delft), Mackintosh (Glasgow), The Beatles (Liverpool). Clearly, some cities might hold on to more image carriers than the three types mentioned above. Certain cities or places, tend to be in the public imagination due to important position in history (Athens (antiquity)). Hence certain places hold on to reputation related to the aspect of the local economy, 'city of- origin effect' Wolfsburg (Volkswagen). Hospers (2009) notes that for city branders, tourists are an attractive target group, especially in regards with urban and cultural tourism, seen as a growing market, where tourist are quite responsive to their branding technique (Hospers, 2009). Urry's theory of the tourist gaze indicates that people visit a city to 'gaze at signs', looking for certain features in the urban landscape that are already presented to them by pictures (Urry, 1990). This theory explain the self-reinforcing 'Matthew effect' in tourism magnet cities, such as Venice, Paris, New York, etc, imageable cities already in the public eye which attract even more attention for the fact that are famous for being famous. However many other cases in city branding such as the case of Barcelona, Budapest, Slovenia Fig.06 , etc, are examples that highlight that cities can easily identify their image carriers, trace and possibly construct new ones through the improvement of the imageability of the place. Nevertheless, cities that do not hold the "Matthew effect", should prevent the emergence of a visual overload for the tourist gaze, building a stronger touristic image through new means of tourism (Hosper, 2009).

Fig. 06 Slovenia Branding Model, "I Feel Slovenia ", Logo. Source: Government Communication Office,

Republic of Slovenia

City branding and residents

In the urge of creating a city brand, many city authorities tend to underpin the importance of its residents, where this group most of the time is neglected in the process of building the city brand. Underestimating the essential value that residents have in shaping and enhancing a city's brand, can weaken the aims and intentions of a city's brand strategy. Although it might be unrealistic to satisfy the demands and desires of all residents, they are crucial point in building the city brand, as they 'live and breathe' the city's brand identity. The perception of tourists in directly influenced by the residents' attitudes and attachment to the city where they live, work and play. Residents' talents and skills, also contributes to the city's and region's growth. This way, residents can possibly add value to the brand equity[1] of the city in which they live. Aside from the economic advantages, cities also offer their residents many social and emotional benefits, opportunities to share information, social bonds, and engagement in a range of activities which match their interests.

Similar to the objectives of a product or service brand, the ultimate objective focuses in creating preferences and loyalty to the city among various segments which cities serve. Nevertheless, the number of stakeholder groups with an interest in the city are potentially unlimited. However, in the race to build a brand which has to be admired by tourists and other short-term visitors, in most cases residents are overlooked, despite their important role as loyal supporters and the true ambassadors of the city brand. Residents personify a city's local culture, defined as the "Genius Loci", they represent the personality of the place. Residents and other stakeholders should aim in preserving the aspects of their city they value, making their cities appealing and viable places to live. Moreover, a city's diversity and richness used as source of inspiration for its branding strategy, may also present challenges, where the approach of "one-size-fits all" might be misguided and impractical. Referring to the cities diversity and richness, scale, personality, history, values, residential composition and urban assets are defined as a multiplex system, where its components overlap with each other reflecting the image of that place (Lynch, 1960). Thus, residents should be considered as the key factor in building an identity for city branding, an identity that is credible, compelling and sustainable in the minds of the stakeholders.

Concluding Remarks

City's branding helps in increasing the status of the a place as touristic destination, residential, or business location. As mentioned above, branding itself is associated primary with economic value. On the other hand, branding also holds symbolic values, since it constitutes a strategy to provide places, cities, towns, an image and its cultural meaning. Branding indicates the need for individuality and emotional connection with the environment in the contexts of globalization, thus giving cities depth and originality, its distinctive character. However, a strong city brand should not only be seen as a potential tool in attracting visitors, business, investment, but most importantly should be used as a strategy to retain its residents and attract new resident. The image of a city has a powerful factor in persuading all of the above in different ways. However, authorities should be more than responsible in giving proper consideration to a strong brand, seen more as a tool of improvement regarding the urban development of the city, thus allowing branding in contributing with the construction of local identity of a place.

Nevertheless, city branding itself is seen as the process of distinguishing and diversification, where local tourism organizations, cultural and arts facilities, museums, historic preservation groups join to construct a place images, helping in producing tourist sites with the common aim to attract consumers and investment to a particular local area. This process involves in two main components, 1. Place making or city building,(the process which makes a specific place more attractive) and 2. Place or city branding (the process of promoting a place), (Anholt, 2007), (Avraham and Ketter, 2008), (Kavaratzis, 2004). As stated before one of the main goals of city branding is to re-image a city perception, depending on its place identities by understanding the local culture of the place. Seen more than promotion of the place and its marketing, city branding stands in constructing and reshaping the cities image from its historical architecture and street plans, the images of the city heard or read, the art produced by its residents etc, thus attracting the desirable consumers and maximizing consumers spending.

Therefore, City Branding aims to:

1. Develop new ways of communicating the city's image

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[1] The commercial value that derives from consumer perception of the brand name of a particular product or service, rather than from the product or service itself.

2. Achieve competitive advantages

3. Strengthen the reputation of a city, improving also its economical importance.

For many years now the topic of city branding has gained a significant interest in both the academics and policy makers specified fields. As many cities tend to compete globally in attracting tourism, investment or talents, the concepts of brand strategy has been increasingly adopted from the commercial filed and has been applied to the urban development, regeneration and quality of life of cities. Previous published research regarding city branding originate from the disciplines of marketing and urban studies, tending to follow parallel directions rather than interdisciplinary paths. The close parallelism drawn between city branding and corporate branding has gained the attention of many scholars in terms of their complexity and range of stakeholders. Here the complexity of city brands is determined from their accountability to address the needs of a wide spectrum of different target groups, which may vary, from tourists, sports fans, fashion consumers and residents. Nevertheless, research has also shown that techniques of marketing and branding may also be used in order to tackle existing negative perceptions of a city. Thus one of the key challenges for branding cities stand and revolves around the issue of how to develop a strong 'umbrella' brand which could be coherent across a range of different areas of activity with different target audiences. Moreover, target audiences are as diverse as a city's residents, potential investors, tourists and stakeholders.

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