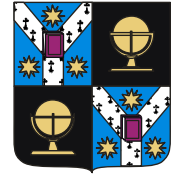`Alexandru Ioan Cuza` University

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Brand image in the inter-city competition.

The case of the largest Romanian cities: Brașov, București, Cluj-Napoca, Constanța, Galați, Iași, Timișoara

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Content

CHAPTER I. Preliminary

Introduction

The image is a source of power. Natural or artificial (constructed), the image (positive) is "ace in the hole" last card the cities involved in the globalization game rely on. Every game has rules (which players must meet to stay in the game), and the most important rule of globalization can be summarized as follows: "Differentiate or Die" (Trout, 2006). Differentiation means do not be like the other, to be otherwise. Identification and recovery in a coherent development strategy, of the elements, the characteristics, the practices that make an individual to be different (known generically as competitive advantage) is the new challenge faced by cities.

What is the brand image of Romanian cities? Or, rather, Romanian cities have a brand image? For now, the answer is negative. Romanian cities have a visual identity, not an image coagulated around dominant singular identity attributes a sharp image, but rather an image dissipated, made from a variety of fragments of images, which correspond more or less to the current reality. Building a brand image or updating local urban image was not a major concern for any city in Romania. In this context when promoting their city, local authorities resort to cliché images that evoke another time, or copied strategies of promotion strategies of some European and American cities.

Concerning cities in Romania of 2013, intense urbanization and misunderstood, and trying to copy some models of American or Western European development resulted in the abolition of local peculiarities, canceling of specification places and replacing them with stereotypical elements. Interventions on urban texture in the last 20 years were punctual, incoherent. Reshaping the urban space was made incidentally to the needs of private actors, without a plan for sustainable urban development.

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This paper aims that, by a dual approach, both theoretical and practical, to identify and analyze the elements that a regional metropolis must use in order to build a brand image that could minimize risks to promote an image which does not correspond to local realities. However, we intend to analyze the role that has a brand image in the long-distance competition, addressing

issues related to the need to create an image representative of Romanian cities, in the context of globalization becoming more pronounced, which translates into an order of cities in an elegant manner, to act individually to ensure economic, social and cultural development.

The paper is structured in five chapters, supplemented by conclusions, references and appendices. **The first chapter**, with Introduction, motivation aspects of the chosen subject, methodological device used (methods, techniques, tools) , thesis issues , assumptions and main objectives. **Chapter II** presents the conceptual framework and context of this thesis , aiming at presenting and analyzing the main concepts on which is structured the scientific approach : urban space , image (with the variations place image versus urban image) , brand (i.e., brand image) , brand and place branding , marketing and competition interurban areas . However, the concept of image is accentuated, customized geographic space as an expression, the result of individual perceptions. **Chapter III** highlights, at a first hand, how the image reflects the concept of urban literature , making it appeal to urban geographical literature (of paramount importance in the study with an image of the city planners and American Kevin Lynch) , the psychological and sociological literature (analyzed as urban image and product support mental maps of social representations) and economic literature (urban image - branding tool instead) . Subsequently, it is investigated how to build urban image, identify categories of actors involved in the creation and its communication, highlighting the possibilities of dissemination (communication, primary, secondary, tertiary). According to different criteria, the image of a city can be classified into several types. Image may fulfill multiple roles. **Chapter IV** includes an insight into the dynamics of urban Romanian cities analyzed (Brașov, Bucharest, Cluj-Napoca, Constanța, Galați , Iași and Timișoara) with capturing the main stages of historical development of cities, and the elements of identification and identity an d the elements of the cultural and natural heritage. **Chapter V** is the essence of the work, aiming at shaping the image of cities analyzed by centralizing and interpretation of descriptive, graphic and cartographic data obtained from the application of a questionnaire targeted towns. Data analysis made it possible to identify the dominant images and symbols (which may or may not coincide with the image designated representative) of the seven cities, updating the economic, cultural and social perspective of residents, identifying competitors and presenting the city in terms of non-residents. The image provided by city

dwellers are characterized by a certain degree of bias, while the non- resident image is critical and is influenced, to some extent, by the stereotypes and myths.

Assumptions and objectives

The general hypothesis of this scientific approach can be formulated as follows: in a world where everything takes on a universal character, creating a brand image is a mandatory sustainable cities will survive. Research hypotheses arising from this general hypothesis are:

• Romanian cities are not yet using all the elements that should use them to build a brand image personalized.

• The image determines the specific behaviors resulting in a differentiated use of urban space, with repercussions on territorial mobility, investment growth, and so on;

• The image promoted outside must be consistent with the image the residents have of that city;

• The image must be congruent to the purpose.

Chapter II. Conceptual framework and context of the thesis

In this chapter will be defined, analyzed and interpreted all essential concepts of the thesis, presenting,whenever necessary, the relationship between them. Conceptual network: urban space - image - brand - brand - marketing areas – interurban competition.

Urban area - the city

The city can be defined as "a specific form of organization of space" (Castells, 1975, p 21), a "center of gravity for a territory" (Peek, 1970, p.9), "a semi thermodynamic and informational -open "(Ianoş, 1987, p 28)," an ensemble morphological physiognomy, social and cultural differences "(as cited Bailly Cosinschi & Racine, 2001, p 123)," an organization mediating between the individual and local groups on the first, and the external environment on the other hand"(Beaujeu-Garnier, 1980, p.17), " a product of nature, particularly human nature "which consists" only of physical mechanisms and artificial constructions "(Park 1925 cited Caves, 2005, p. 29).

Image. Place image - City image

The image is of such visual information in the viewer's mind is formed by contact (direct or indirect) with elements of reality. The image is the result of observation, perception and representation of an object / person (natural processes , of course) as it can be positive, neutral or negative , strong or deleted. The image is the link between the real world and the individual , the link between the real city and the city mentally. " The image of a city can be best described as the link between the real space , objective and perception " (Kampschulte , 1999, p 229) , having its "origin only partially in physical reality " (Vermeulen , 2002 cited Kavaratzis , 2004, p 63).

Brand . Brand image

In this study , the concept of brand image in terms of urban geography is used , referring to the image able to differentiate one city from another , that symbol , sign, name that has the ability to evoke the collective mind of a dominant traits certain place. Brand image refers not only to physical size (the way a certain place looks) but also to the emotional place that (so-called brand image that translates the degree of affection , attachment of individuals to a particular place) .

Brand. Branding the place

The brand is defined as "a product or service that is distinct by relative positioning in the competition and personality, consisting of a unique combination of functional attributes and symbolic values" (Hankinsson, Conking 1993 cited Kavaratzis 2004, p . 65). The brand is not just a name, a slogan, a sign or a logo, it "encompasses a whole set of physical attributes, socio-psychological and beliefs" (Simoes, Dibb, 2001 cited Kavaratzis, 2008, p 37). The brand plays a very important role in the construction of consumer identity (Elliott, Wattanasuwan, 1998, p 140).

Like brands, cities satisfy „ functional, symbolic and emotional needs" (Rainisto, 2003, p 52) of groups of more or less homogeneous consumers, so that cities can and should be managed like some commercial brands to a certain level.

Urban marketing

Initially, the marketing concept (developed in the 60s - 70s) was refering only to goods and services. First that showed interest in marketing the place were Ray O'Leary and Ian Iredale (1976). They described the place marketing as a set of activities "designed to create a mood and behavior favorable to geographical locations" (as cited in Braun, Zenker, 2010). Cities around the world have started to include (in the last two or three decades) in their administrative practice and philosophy of government more techniques and marketing methods "in order to secure / enhance its competitive position in the region" (Boisen, 2007, p. 1).

Interurban competition. Competitive advantage

The world has become a "gigantic supermarket where there are not only products on the shelf, franatically trying to attract the attention of every consumer who goes by " (Anholt, 2002, p. 234).

As a result of growing competition between cities, place marketers try to turn the city into a brand (Braun, 2008 as cited in Braun, Zenker, 2010, p.2) that to promote to different target markets, depending on local interest. An important aspect of the competition is the image current or potential customers have of the place. An attractive image enhances consumer's interest in the place, while an ordinary image fails to arouse anyone.

Chapter III. Urban image. From city to city mental physical

In the literature, the concept of urban image is reflected in three aspects: the image as an expression of the reality of the city, to support image and picture realization mental maps as a tool of urban branding.

Urban image - an expression of the reality of the city. Geographers and urban planners perspective

The concept of urban image is linked to the name of the American urban planner and theorist Kevin Lynch, who calls his first work, The Image of the City (1960). In its design, urban image is a "generalized mental representation that an individual has about the external physical world. This image is produced while the immediate sensations and memories of past experience, and serves to interpret information and to guide actions. "To be loved residents and customers, urban space must be characterized by readability (feature allows easy organization of elements in a coherent urban scheme) and imaginability (city must generate powerful images, clear).

Urban image - support for mental maps. Social representations. Psychological and sociological perspective

Sociologists and psychologists have sought to understand how a place can influence image (image of the city, for example) individual behavior and how it organizes its maps mental images mental / cognitive which helps to locate and go through the city space and to appropriate it. Representations move from an unknown world to an accessible world, easy to master (Curelaru, 2006, p 22), to appropriate.

Urban image - urban branding tool. economists perspective

Another direction in addressing the urban image of urban marketing and branding sphere. Image of the city is considered a tool capable of bringing added value to the given site, or conversely may act negatively on its general attractiveness. The way the individual represents a place explains his attitude for that place. Places can also be viewed products because they are

more than places for conducting events and activities, "they are creations of human imagination" (Ashworth, 2005, p 45), incorporating a multitude of meanings, symbols, feelings and ideas.

Design and dissemination urban image

Result of perception and representation, urban image "implies the existence of two entities: the city and the receiver subject" (Neacşu, 2010, p 103).

Any urban image is transmitted through three distinct types of communication: primary (refers to actions taken by public and private actors who do not have the principal purpose explicit communication: strategies for landscape infrastructure projects, organizational and administrative structure, conduct city), secondary (done, often through marketing practices: internal and external advertising, promotion, development of slogans and logos.) and tertiary (including oral communication (word of mouth), the communication made by media and communication made by competitors) (Kavaratzis, 2004, p. 67).

Chapter V. Radiography current urban landscape

The analysis aims to understand the "realities of the city" in terms of city living individual, the individual for which the city is more than a slogan or a collage of images. City may no longer be considered as an object.

Brand of Romanian cities. Case Study: Brasov, Bucharest, Cluj-Napoca, Constanta, Galati, Iasi and Timisoara. Methodological issues

Valences applied the concept of urban brand image were individualized in an investigation in the field. Among the means of data collection in the field, I opted for the survey based on a questionnaire.

The questionnaire applied the seven samples of two parts, namely a first part (21 questions) which aims to identify respondents' perceptions on different issues, combined, allow the evaluation of urban image analysis, and their views regarding the elements for a city to build a good brand image. The second part (3 questions) focused on respondent demographics. The questionnaire consists of 9 open questions and 15 closed questions.

For this study we used the experimental sample of 1305 individuals (residents of the cities analyzed), distributed as follows: 175 respondents to Brasov, 220 respondents for the city of Bucharest, 182 respondents for the city of Cluj-Napoca, 203 respondents for the city of Constanta, 171 respondents for the city of Galati, Iasi 182 respondents and 172 respondents for the city of Timisoara. Sample selection was done randomly, the questionnaire was applied both on-line (through https://spreadsheets.google.com) and technique in front. The questionnaires were applied in April 2011 - April 2013.

The sample structure

Sample structure shows predominance female respondents in cities Brasov, Bucharest, Constanta, Galati, Iasi and Timisoara (58%, 53%, 68%, 57%, 58% and 56%), while for the city of Cluj-Napoca males predominate (53%). Regarding age individuals stands for Braşov age group 18-25 years (35%) to Cluj-Napoca (36%), Galati (36%), Science (31%) and Timisoara (34%) stands age group 26-35 years and in Bucharest (29%) and Constanta (35%) predominate age group 36-45 years. All samples are characterized by a poor representation of the age group

"over 60" (below 10%), the cities of Bucharest, Cluj-Napoca and Constanta registering poor participation and category 18-25 years (11% and 6% to 7%).

Image versus Images

Items relating to the natural geographical position or particular importance in shaping the overall image of the city, where it benefits from the location in a picturesque landscape. The Brasov city is most often associated (41%) with the image of the mountain. In addition, reference is made to the elements of the landscape: mountain (15%) and the nature (12%). Among the architectural elements are often referred to Black Church (33%) and Council Square (27%).

Natural element dominates and avatars of Constanta - Sea / Black Sea (46%), beach (15%). Image gallery is complemented by elements of the built heritage (Casino - 42%) and significant places for respondents (Port - 18%).

Image of Galati revolves all around an element of the landscape - the Danube: 22.2% of respondents indicated directly Danube, while 29% indicated Danube promenade. Other avatars are Steel Works - 15%, port of Galati - 10%, etc..

Image of Bucharest consists of a variety of elements. Among these are distinguished Parliament Palace (20%), Romanian Athenaeum (16%) Cişmigiu (16%), etc..

Cluj-Napoca is associated with the image of St. Michael Church (26%) and statuary group of "Matthias" (24%). Also mentioned Union Square (16%), Babes-Bolyai University (16%), etc..

The image of Iasi city is dominated clearly by figure Palace of Culture (70%). Imaging assembly is completed by "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" (35%), Metropolitan Church (27%), district Copou (21%), etc..

Most respondents from Timisoara associate to city Metropolitan Cathedral image (50%). In second place among images found associated Timisoara Unirii Square (33%). Other images mentioned are: Opera (20%), Opera Square (15%), images of revolution (12%), etc..

Importance of the city's symbol

In the case of Brasov, Cluj-Napoca, Constanta, Iasi and Timisoara, the symbol is a building with monumental architecture, while the cities of Bucharest and Galati symbol refer to

places with a certain resonance in the collective mind local places placed near a elemement of the landscape. The city's symbol is identified with the Black Church Brasov (74%). Other possible symbols of the city are: First Romanian School (27%), Town Hall (24%), Schei Gate (18%), Ekaterina Gate (14%), etc.

Constanta city has as symbol the Casino building (68%). Other possible symbols (architectural, places) might be: Ovid's statue (32%), Tomis Port(25%), Museum of National History and Archaeology (22%), State Theatre (21%), Roman ruins (20%), etc.

Bucharest's symbol is considered to be the Cişmigiu Park(52%). Gallery of symbols is filled by Arc de Triomphe (51%), Victory Avenue (49%), the Patriarchal Cathedral (48%), Parliament House (46%), etc.

Regarding Galaţi, its symbol is identified by research participants Danube Promenade (36%). Other symbols are: "Dunărea de Jos" University (30%), the Archdiocesan Cathedral (26%), port (18%), etc.

Unlike the cities of Brasov, Constanta, Bucharest and Galati whose differs from the city's symbol , where Cluj, Iasi and Timisoara city's image coincides with its symbol. The Cluj symbol is considered to be the Church of St. Michael (34%), the symbol of Iasi - Palace of Culture (82%), and the symbol of Timisoara - Metropolitan Cathedral (81%). Gallery Timisoara possible symbols is complemented by Baroque Palace (17%), Bega (23%), etc.

Other possible symbols to Cluj-Napoca, could be: Babes-Bolyai University (32%), the Botanical Garden (26%), National Theatre (16%), etc.

Regarding symbols of Iasi, aside the Palace of Culture is added: "Al. I. Cuza" University (49%), Metropolitan Church (42%), "Three Hierarchs" Church (35 %), Palas complex (23%), etc.

Diagnosis cities analyzed - the perspective of citizens

Discussions about any of the cities analyzed involve identifying both the positive items and the negative ones. Cities analyzed the same "shortcomings" although considered to be cultural centers, cultural activities are insufficiently promoted and cultural heritage is also promoted insufucient untapped. Cities have changed (the urban layout) both during the communist period and in the postcommunist. Another common aspect refers to the local taxes, perceived as too high compared to services offered.t

The image of the cities analyzed is based on a number of common elements, but with a different weight depending on the specialization of the city. Image of Brasov is built mainly on the work and the tourist attraction (42%), elements of the natural and geographical location (35%), elements of the built heritage (35%), local history (28%), the overall appearance of the city (19%), culture (18%), quality of people (15%).

Image of Bucharest is supported mainly by the overall appearance of the city (which includes elements predominantly negative - 33%), dynamic cultural life (28%) economic activity (19%), specific architecture (16%), elements of the built heritage (14%), the way of being of residents (14%).

Image of Cluj-Napoca is founded on the quality of education and university center (54%) plus quality cultural center (42%), elements of natural and built heritage (22%), local history (19%), multiculturalism (18%), the quality of medical center (10%).

Regarding the image of Constanta, is observed predominantly elements that refer to geographical location (Black Sea- 35%), tourism activity (33%), quality of seaport (30%), plus elements of the built heritage (18%) and economic development aspects of the city (11%).

The industrial function of Galati city plays an important role in shaping the overall image of the city. The city's image is based mainly on economic activity (SIDEX Galati steel industry, shipbuilding - 46%). Local History (17%), culture (16%), the quality of river port (15%) also contribute to shaping the image of the city.

Culture remains a strong element which supports the image of Iaşi (60%). The quality of university and educational center (47%) is another city attu. Local History (24%), the overall appearance of the city (23%), elements of the built heritage (18%) contribute to the perfection of the city image.

Interurban competition

In an era of globalization, the boundaries and national borders tend to dissolve, thinking in terms of competition and competitiveness is not only necessary but also mandatory.

Regarding the competing cities, towns Brasov citizens indicate Sibiu city on top (65%, due to geographical proximity and prominence of the city's cultural scene Romanian), Cluj-Napoca (56% city with a high level of development), Iaşi (35%).

The main cities competing Cluj-Napoca are Sibiu (58%), Timisoara (53%) (location on the country's west façade) and Brasov (46%).

In the capital, the most formidable opponents are Cluj-Napoca (34%), Sibiu (28%), Timisoara (25%), Science (24%), Brasov (22%) top cities in national urban hierarchy. The list is completed by Romania neighboring capitals: Sofia (25%), Budapest (23%), Belgrade (14%) and Chisinau (6%). A slightly exaggerated presence is that of Paris (13%), the association being attributed to the persistence of collective memory of Little Paris .

The most important urban centers competing Iasi, in the perception of respondents are Cluj-Napoca (53%), Timisoara (43%), Brasov (29%), Sibiu (24%), Bucharest (23%), Constanta (20%). It is noted that the spatial proximity principle does play a role in the ranking made by respondents in Moldova cities accounting for a 10% or less (Piatra Neamt - 10%, Bacau - 9%, Suceava - 9%).

Galati citizens believe that the most important competitor of their city is Braila (53% due to spatial proximity and historical competition between the two cities). Mentioned are Constanta (37%), Iasi (33%), Tulcea (25%), Timisoara (23%), Craiova (20%), Bacau (15%).

In terms of competing cities of Constanta, respondents indicate Brasov (41%) (important tourist city because of its geographical location), Timisoara (39%), Iasi (36%), Cluj-Napoca (35%) or Bucharest (24%).

Timisoara competes particular with Cluj-Napoca (58%), Iasi (33%), Brasov (32%), Sibiu (31%), Bucharest (26%), Arad (21% due), Oradea (15%) and Constanta (12%).

Conclusions

The analysis revealed that none of the mentioned cities (Brasov, Bucharest, Cluj-Napoca, Constanta, Galati, Iasi, Timisoara) has a clear, in fact, not an image, but only fragments of images. The cause is most likely the lack of marketing research, a real strategy and promotion plan. Cities also do not know which target groups are addressed, so building an image almost exclusively cultural or tourist would not have the desired effect.

Brasov can count on geographic location (city's image is dominated by Mount Tampa and other items that relate to the natural environment), proximity to the capital, medieval old town (with the symbol of the Black Church), outlining a tourist town image.

Bucharest is more than the capital of Romania. An important Attu derived from the administrative function of the city, Bucharest having the ability to attract major international economic actors, the most dynamic economic center of the country. The quality of university of international metropolis is another important aspect to be taken into account in the process of building the city's image.

Cluj has the advantage of housing a very good university and a relatively transparent business environment, attractive to foreign and local investors. Cluj-Napoca image can be founded on the quality of education and university center, plus the quality of cultural center.

Constanta city can capitalize on three important advantages to build a custom image: geographical location (the Black Sea dominates the city's image), port activity and the age and evolution historic settlement.

Development and modernization of industrial activities and exploitation are the main advantages of the tool port of Galati.

Iasi city collective memory still retains the image of important cultural capital and university town. Harnessing these two attributes, along with promoting architectural and natural heritage are prerequisites for the development of the city's image.

Timisoara is, above all, the city of the Revolution of 1989, the first Romanian free city, and the city of parks and flowers, a city with a relatively well-preserved architecture, a city that has some economic Attu competitive sites.

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