Regional and Business Studies (2011) Vol 3 Suppl 1, 555-562
Kaposvár University, Faculty of Economic Science, Kaposvár

THE ANHOLT-GMI CITY BRAND HEXAGON AND THE SAFFRON EUROPEAN CITY BRAND BAROMETER: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

Árpád PAPP-VÁRY
Budapest College of Communication and Business, Hungary
apappvary@bkf.hu

ABSTRACT

Competition between cities is growing more than ever due to cheaper and easier travel opportunities, international investors, a growing free labor force flow, and, of course, the Internet. Besides the material capabilities of cities, how well they are able to brand themselves plays a large part in their success. The number of tourists, investors, new inhabitants, or the products of the city depend on the success of this self-branding. It also affects the locals and their sense of pride and contentment living in the city. Fortunately for cities, more and more brand models and rankings are available to assess their standing among others in respect to image and to reveal their comparative shortcomings. This information allows them to make more informed decisions regarding which route to take in branding themselves. Although these models use different methodology, the rankings show the same cities finishing in the top.
Keywords: city branding, city marketing, city ranking, Budapest, Hungary

THE CITY BRAND HEXAGON

The most well-known model is credited to Simon Anholt, the "father" of the term "nation brand", who was recently nominated for a Nobel Prize. His original "Nation Brands Index" was redesigned for cities: the index is based on a global survey in which respondents from across 20 major developed and developing countries are asked to rate their agreement with statements about each of 50 cities. The cities measured include:

- North America: Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, New York, San Francisco, Seattle, Toronto, Vancouver
- Western Europe: Amsterdam, Barcelona, Berlin, Brussels, Copenhagen, Dublin, Edinburgh, Geneva, Helsinki, London, Madrid, Milan, Paris, Rome, Stockholm, The Hague, Vienna
- Central/Eastern Europe: Budapest, Istanbul, Moscow, Prague, Warsaw
- Asia Pacific: Auckland, Bangkok, Beijing, Hong Kong, Melbourne, Mumbai, Seoul, Shanghai, Shenzhen, Singapore, Sydney, Tokyo
- Latin America: Buenos Aires, Mexico City, Rio de Janeiro
- Middle East/Africa: Cairo, Dubai, Jeddah, Johannesburg (*Anholt and GfK*, 2011).

The ranking is developed by averaging city scores across the index's six categories (*Figure 1*):

1. "Presence - Based on the city's international status and standing and the global familiarity/knowledge of the city. It also measures the city's global contribution in science, culture and governance.
2. Place - Exploring people's perceptions about the physical aspect of each city in terms of pleasantness of climate, cleanliness of environment and how attractive its buildings and parks are.
3. Pre-requisites - Determines how people perceive the basic qualities of the city; whether they are satisfactory, affordable and accommodating, as well as the standard of public amenities such as schools, hospitals, transportation and sports facilities.
4. People - Reveals whether the inhabitants of the city are perceived as warm and welcoming, whether respondents think it would be easy for them to find and fit into a community that shares their language and culture and whether they would feel safe.
5. Pulse - Measures the perception that there are interesting things to fill free time with and how exciting the city is perceived to be in regard to new things to discover.
6. Potential - Measures the perception of economic and educational opportunities within the city, such as how easy it might be to find a job, whether it's a good place to do business or pursue a higher education" (*Anholt and GfK*, 2011).

Figure 1

City Brand Hexagon

Source: *Anholt and Gfk*, 2011

Objective assessment in the case of this model is not entirely possible since we are dealing with cities as brands and evaluating their images. The emphasis is generally on the opinion of people. As it was mentioned earlier, the online research is carried out in 20 developed and developing countries. Respondents of 18-64 years are

asked to fill out an online questionnaire. For example, the following questions are asked (*Anholt*, 2006):

- "Thinking about the climate in the city throughout the year, how would you assess it in general?
- Thinking in particular about the buildings and parks, how physically attractive do you think the city is?
- The environments of cities vary in terms of air, visual and other types of pollution. How clean or dirty do you think the city is?
- How easy do you think it would be to find satisfactory, affordable accommodation in the city?
- What do you think the general standard of public amenities – schools, hospitals, public transport, sports facilities – is like?
- Think about how people in general would behave towards you - about whether for example they might be warm and friendly, cold or show prejudice towards you. How welcome do you think people in general would make you feel in the city?
- How safe would you feel in the city?
- If you had a week of free time in the city, how easy do you think it would be to find interesting things to fill that time?
- If you lived in the city, do you think there would always be new things to discover or would you become bored with it after a time?
- If you had a business, how good of a place would the city be to do business in?"

The model also serves as a global ranking of city brands, which lists 50 big cities. According to the Anholt-GfK Roper City Brands Index 2009 the top ten positions are the following: Paris, Sydney, London, Rome, New York, Barcelona, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Vienna and Madrid (*Table 1*).

Table 1

The top 10 cities overall in 2009. Global survey

1. Paris
2. Sydney
3. London
4. Rome
5. New York
6. Barcelona
7. San Francisco
8. Los Angeles
9. Vienna
10. Madrid

Source: *Anholt and GfK*, 2011

The Hungarian capital is on the 38th place of final list. The best position achieved was in the category of Place, where Budapest reached the 28th position, while

reaching a 41st in the category of Presence. The latter suggests that amongst the observed big cities Budapest belongs to those, which are less known. Naturally a lot depends on which countries' citizens do the ranking: the Polish, for example rate us 13th on the top 50 list.

ASSET AND BRAND STRENGTH

The other well-known model measures 72 cities; moreover these are all European ones. The name behind this model is also important: Jeremy Hildreth, the manager of the British Saffron Brand Consultants. He had worked together with Simon Anholt on their book titled "Brand America – The mother of all brands". Hildreth had also given a lecture at a conference held in Hungary by DEMOS named "Country branding – International identity and image" (*Hildreth*, 2006).

The European City Brand Barometer is special because it measures cities that have at least 450 thousand inhabitants. This ranking uses two comprehensive aspects: City asset strength and City brand strength.

The city asset strength aspect measures the following (possible maximum points):

1. sightseeing and historical attraction (max. 20 points)
2. cuisine and restaurants (max. 15 points)
3. how easy it is to get around on foot and public transport (max. 15 points)
4. costs very little to enjoy (max. 10 points)
5. has good weather (max. 10 points)
6. shopping (max. 10 points)
7. economic significance of prosperity (max. 20 points)

This list, which can be viewed as an objective measurement is headed by Paris with 89 points out of a 100. The second is London with 88 points; third place is a tie between Munich and Barcelona, each with 86 points. The last three places in terms of asset strength go to the German Duisburg (44 points), the Moldavian Chisinau (39 points) and the Bradford of Great Britain (29 points).

The other main aspect of the European City Brand Barometer is the city as a brand. Here the maximum points also add up to 100. There are four aspects in this case:

1. Quantity/strength of positive/attractive qualities (meaning what prompted and unprompted associations do people have of the city) (max. 25 points)
2. Pictorially recognised (meaning, could many people recognise the city from a postcard without having to read the description on the back) (max. 25 points)
3. Conversational value (meaning, how interesting would it be at a cocktail party to say, "Hey, I just got back from ……..)" (max. 25 points)
4. Media recognition, which is determined statistically by counting media references to the city over a set period (max. 25 points) (*Hildreth*, 2008).

"THE SKY ABOVE BERLIN"

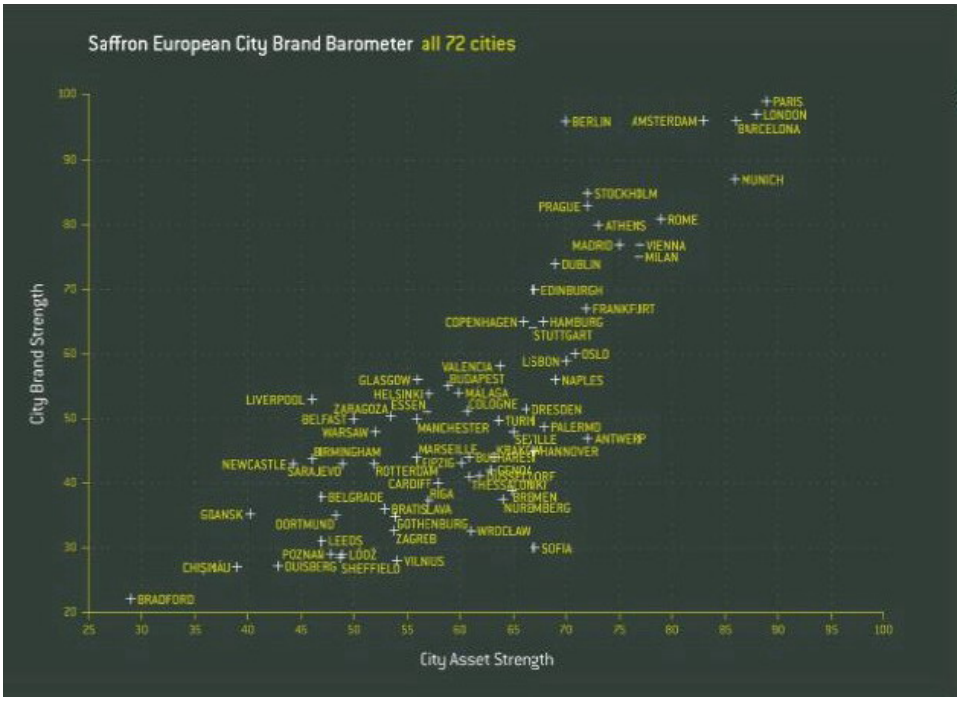
In the ranking of city brand strength it is still Paris (99) and London (97) in the lead. However, in the third place beside Barcelona and Amsterdam, a new arrival, Berlin

(96) joined the list. This is especially noteworthy since Saffron researchers rank Berlin according to its assets to be somewhere in the upper section of the midfield, while in respect to its exceptional branding skills it was able to reach these heights.

Stockholm (city asset strength: 72, city brand strength: 85) and Prague (72 and 83) are also good examples of cities that are doing an outstanding job in branding (*Figure 2*).

Figure 2

Results of the European City Brand Barometer



Source: *Hildreth*, 2008

At the same time the research shows that these cities are exceptions, because in the case of many other cities, the brands and image are far from what their assets would suggest. This is especially true for Sofia (city asset strength: 67, brand strength: 30), Vilnius (54 and 28) and Wroclaw (61 and 33).

According to this ranking, Budapest's asset strength is 59 out of 100 points, which is just above the average score of the 72 nations. On the other Budapest's brand strength reaches 55 out of 100. More interesting is the fact that while according to the objective aspects we are ranked 42nd among the 72 nations, our brand puts us into 25th place (*Table 2*).

This is mostly due to the fact that most cities have a much worse brand image, than what they deserve based on their assets. As Hildreth points out: "Almost half of the cities in the Barometer are utilising less than 80% of their brand potential given their current actual level of attractiveness. ... Our belief is that active branding

should in most cases be able, in time, to push a city's Brand Utilisation closer to, or even beyond, 100%" (*Hildreth*, 2008).

Table 2

The European City Brand Barometer
The Top 25 and the most interesting results

Name of the city	City Asset Strength (on a scale of 1-100, average: 60)	City Brand Strength (on a scale of 1-100, average: 60)	City Asset Strength position (out of 72 cities)	City Brand Strength position (out of 72 cities)
Paris	89	99	1	1
London	88	97	2	2
Munich	86	87	3	6
Barcelona	86	96	3	3
Amsterdam	83	96	5	3
Rome	79	81	6	9
Vienna	77	77	7	11
Milan	77	75	7	13
Madrid	75	77	9	11
Athens	73	80	10	10
Stockholm	72	85	11	7
Prague	72	83	11	8
Antwerp	72	47	11	39
Berlin	70	96	16	3
Lisbon	70	59	16	21
Sofia	67	30	22	65
Krakow	63	44	32	42
Genoa	63	42	32	50
Bucharest	61	44	36	42
Wroclaw	61	33	36	62
Budapest	*59*	*55*	*42*	*25*
Vilnius	54	28	50	69
Bratislava	53	36	54	58
Chisinau	39	27	70	70
Bradford	29	22	72	72

Source: Paris, London and Barcelona are Europe's top city brands

The already mentioned trio of Sofia, Vilnius and Wroclaw are not the only ones who need to develop their image and brand. The list includes Antwerp, Lisbon, Genoa, Bratislava and Bucharest. According to the researchers the latter in terms of its brand assets is ahead of Budapest (61-59), however in terms of its brand image Bucharest is by far behind (44-55).

WORLD TRAVELLERS

This does not mean the end of city brands index. One of the world's leading luxury traveller magazines, the Condé Nast Traveller, for example, asks its readers every year to rate cities as destinations based on six aspects:

1. ambience/atmosphere
2. friendliness
3. culture/sites
4. restaurants
5. lodging
6. shopping

The readers of this magazine are mostly frequent travellers and their personal experiences are important to this ranking, Reader's Choice Awards. Based on their insight the top three places are Sydney, San Francisco and Florence (*Table 3*).

Table 3

World's best cities ranked by travellers, 2009

City/Country	Score[2]
Sydney, Australia	86.9
San Francisco, United States	84.8
Florence, Italy	84.6
Charleston, South Carolina, United States	83.1
Ubud, Indonesia	82.5
Cape Town, South Africa	82.4
Rome, Italy	82.4
Vancouver, Canada	82.3
Bangkok, Thailand	82.2
Buenos Aires, Argentina	81.9
Santa Fe, United States	81.6
Québec City, Canada	81.4
Hong Kong	81.3
New York City, United States	81.3
Chicago, United States	81.2
Venice, Italy	81.1
Chiang Mai, Thailand	80.9
Barcelona, Spain	80.8
Salzburg, Austria	80.8
Victoria, British Columbia, Canada	80.6

Source: World's best cities ranked by travellers

At the same time there are some surprises on the list: in the fourth place is Charlestown of South-Carolina, in fifth is the Indonesian Ubud, sixth is the South-African Cape-Town ahead of such destinations as Rome, Bangkok, Hong Kong, Venice, Barcelona or Salzburg. Nevertheless, these cities all received a rating of over 80 out of 100, which means that they have little reason for complaints.

REFERENCES

Anholt, S. (2006): The Anholt City Brands Index: How the World Views Its Cities. 2nd Edition. [online] <URL: http://www.moaweb.nl/kenniscentrum/library/achief-artikelen-en-publicaties/cbisecondedition.pdf/view> [10-05-2011]

Anholt, S., Gfk Roper (2011a): City Brands Index. [online] <URL: http://www.gfkamerica.com/practice_areas/roper_pam/placebranding/cbi/index.en.html> [10-05-2011]

Anholt, S., GfK Roper (2011b): City Brand Index: Paris is top of the 2009. [online] <URL: http://www.digitaljournal.com/article/274284> [10-05-2011]

Hildreth, J. (2006): An introduction to robust national branding. Including a case study of Poland In: "Country Branding – International Identity and Image" conference, Budapest

Hildreth, J. (2008): The European City Brand Barometer – Revealing which cities get the brands they deserve. Saffron Brand Consultants

Papp-Váry, Á. (2010): Rangsorolt városok. In: Marketing és Média, 16-17. p.

Paris, London and Barcelona are Europe's top city brands [online] <URL: www.citymayors.com/marketing/city-brands.html> [10-05-2011]

World's best cities ranked by travellers [online]<URL: http://www.business.nsw.gov.au/invest-in-nsw/about-nsw/quality-of-life/worlds-best-cities-ranked-by-travellers> > [10-05-2011]