

PLACE BRANDING AS A USEFUL TOOL OF PLACE COMPETITIVENESS

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Abstract

This paper is dedicated to the discussion about the issues of applicability of the concept of place branding as a useful tool of place competitiveness. Modern place marketing and place branding approach is rooted in the understanding of general principles of place functioning, applicable to the whole range of its various representations. It uses all the accessible information about the given place. That is why we derive philosophical basis of place marketing and place branding concept from the concept of a “place”.

Many places all around the world have achieved great successes primarily thanks to the city marketing or the city branding, consequently they can serve as a clear argument why we should pay more attention to this issue. Brands and their images facilitate not only the identification of places, but also speak about the perceived quality. We try to show the concept of branding as a natural part of regional development and a challenge for underdeveloped regions.

Key words: concept of place, place marketing, place branding, place image, place identity.

CONCEPT OF PLACE AS A PHILOSOPHICAL BACKGROUND

Philosophical basis of city branding concept may be derived from the concept of a “place”. However, the issue is that nobody knows exactly what we talk about, when we talk about a place. A place does not represent a peculiar part of academic terminology. It is a word we use daily in our life. It is a word muffled by general connotations. On one side, the subconscious knowledge makes it easier to be understood. On the other side it can be ticklish. Geography has been explicitly dealing with the concept of place since the first half of the 20th century, however it has been intuitively involved in it since its very beginnings, what indicates its good elaboration but also a considerable diversity of approaches. Based on the Habermas’s cognitive conceptions’ classification, three basic approaches can be distinguished:

empirical-analytical tradition, hermeneutic tradition and critical tradition (Johnston and Sidaway 2004:20-22; Matlovič and Matlovičová 2007; Matlovič 2006:16; Matlovič 2007). In the frame of already mentioned classification we will present principal features distinctive to individual approaches to the place.

The conception of places as singular points located on the Earth’s surface characterized by a unique combination of physical-geographic and human-geographic features represents the first stage in the development of geography, so called empirical-analytical research tradition. The world was at that time seen as a diverse, rich and fascinating mosaic of places that has got a changeable and variable character. This understanding of a place was asserted as the fundamental aim of geography since 1939. Much merit for that was brought mainly by R. Hartshorn

(the main representative of this tradition), who says that it is geography that should examine spatial differentiation of the world, understood in terms chorological paradigm as a part of the mosaic. The concept of place in this period is rather vague and a place is rather an implicit category. The concept was based on the absolute understanding of space. Space is perceived as a container, which includes a place as a bounded territorial unit (Matlovič and Matlovičová 2007; Hubbard et al. 2002; Matlovič 2007).

The 1950s and 1960s brought a change. As for the concept of place it meant its reduction to the localization in space. This approach is typical for neopositivist quantitative geography that emphasises research techniques leading to the revealing of general areal patterns, rather than places and people as such (Cresswell 2004:19). This was reflected mainly in the shift from idiographic approach to the nomotetic one (Matlovič 2007). Quantitative geography did not really need the place concept, if it did need it then just in the concept of spatial location specified by coordinates.

The period of the 1970s through 1990s represent a significant advancement in the development of the concept of place. In geography, criticism of absolute conception of space and place has escalated, being pursued primarily by quantitative geography, and two new approaches to the conception of place were developed during that period too. Hermeneutical approach (which perceives place as a meaning), typical for the hermeneutical research tradition and critical approach (which perceives place as a process) had been promoted by followers of critical research tradition. The main representative of hermeneutical research tradition is humanistic geography. Its methodological basis and interpretative frameworks were found in phenomenology, which was a major breakthrough in philosophical thinking and created a new "philosophical paradigm". Phenomenological approach represents radical criticism of sentiments and rejection of scientific quantitative explanatory methods. The understanding of phenomena is promoted instead (Hubbard et al. 2002:39-40; Matlovič and Matlovičová 2007). The main basis of humanistic approach represents a different understanding of space. Absolute understanding of space is rejected

and replaced by a relative one. In other words, space is becoming a meaningful place through the activity and thinking of people. According to this tradition space is not given, but socially produced and constructed. It's not considered to be an objective structure, but a social experience (e.g. Massey 1994 in Hubbard et al. 2002:14; Matlovič and Matlovičová 2007). Compared to the previous empirical-analytical approach a place in hermeneutic tradition is understood through the meaning, which it conveys. Different people can carry different associations with the same place. For example if we consider a concrete locality, a photographer can see a perfect place for taking pictures in it, a farmer can have associations of hard work on the field, and to a businessman it might appear as a great place for his hotel, etc. The heterogeneity of meanings that can be generated by a place is expressed not only in relation to the different groups of people (in a sense of social, economic, etc.) but it undergoes a change of perceptions in terms of time, such as it is conveyed in the following example: if the social status of a farmer is changed, for example of he leaves to study in the capital city, later when he comes back he might hold a different opinion as he does not see anymore in the presented place a place suitable for farming but e.g. a suitable place to live in with his family, or it may be associated with pleasant memories of his childhood.

Unlike the previous approach, humanistic approach, on the contrary, expresses an attitude to the world, emphasizing the subjectivity and experience rather than the logic of spatial science. The place is therefore closely connected to the meaning – subjective (but not particular) sensation of people, including both the mission and role of place in their individual or group (collective) identity. Awareness of the importance of a place has led to the development of marketing techniques heading to the disclosure of character and formation of a place image (Castree 2003:167; Matlovič and Matlovičová 2007).

Another essential aspect of place perception in hermeneutic tradition is a scale. For example what comes to your mind hearing a word *home*? Probably for most of you it is *Earth* in terms of James Lovelock's Gaia hypothesis – which represents the Earth as a home of mankind. For some of you it could be

a concrete continent, a state or a city you are from. Finally it could be your flat, a favourite chair or a couch as a home as well. Place is thus in the centre of interest for people, regardless of the scale zoom level (from your favourite chair in the living room to the entire Earth as a home of mankind) (Tuan 1977, Tuan 1991).

The ability of place to create a history is being brought to life today, and thus it contributes to the production and reproduction of social memory. Memorable places play an important role in the exclusion of memories in both literal and figurative meaning. Auschwitz, a concentration camp being a place where 4 million people had died and 87 percent of them were Jews, can serve as a next example. The period of socialism had interpreted it as a place of aggression between the East and the West. It commemorated only those “people”, who suffered there, however not the Jews. At one of the memorial tablets we can find the following text: *“4 million people suffered and died here, in the hands of Nazi murderers between the years of 1940 and 1945”*. But in fact, this place served mainly as a Jewish extermination camp. However, the 1970s have brought a change. It was related to controversial efforts to “Romanize” Auschwitz in other words to marginalize and exclude the Jewish history of the place as a sign of genocide. It appeared as a result of the strengthening effort of Polish Catholic feelings. Cardinal Karol Wojtyła, later Pope John Paul II, had several services in the camp where he mentioned the prisoner, catholic clergyman Kolbe, who assisted in converting of Jews in the camp. Father Kolbe was later declared saint. During one of the masses there was an altar in the shape of a giant cross built obviously at a place where Jews were sent to the gas chambers. It was placed there also as an unspecified message for the Jews who were killed at this place. There was also a monastery founded on the outskirts of Auschwitz in 1984. This controversial location immediately became a worldwide headline in news, after Rabbi Weiss had protested against its positioning. There is a huge cross at the observation place in Auschwitz (Charlesworth 1994). Memorable places play an important role in the exclusion of memories in both literal and figurative meaning. The above example reveals that places are

not bounded territorial units, but they are situated in a social, political, economic and historical context that shapes them (Relph 1976; Cresswell 2004).

In geography, the critical research tradition is represented by both structuralist and realistic approaches (such as radical and feminist geography, Giddens theory of structuration, realistic and new cultural geography). Places are perceived as very complex entities that are situated within their own hypothetical limits, but are formed by external forces emanating from beyond these assumptive limits (Hubbard et al. 2002:17). Thus, the place is a result of mutual interaction between structure and activity. In the contemporary critical human geography, there is a dominating debate about places seen as socially constructed entities. If we assert that a place is constructed socially, it implies that it is not a natural entity, but has been created by a man, and can also be changed or destroyed by a man (in the aspect of meaning and in the material aspect). Critical geography understands a place as a process. The place is “what is continuously happening”, and what is involved in history in a specific context through the creation and use of real (tangible, physical) environment (in the aspect of meaning and in the material aspect). Places are interconnected and interdependent. And this supports the fact of the existence of mutual coincidences (when separate things happen by chance at the same time). Places are endless, they are produced by reiteration (continuous repetition) of procedures (practices) – by repetition of seemingly trivial daily actions. They are compared to switching points or nodes in the translocal network. Different places are involved in different groups of relationships with different intensity (Pred 1984:279; Matlovič and Matlovičová 2007).

FROM CONCEPT OF PLACE TO THE PLACE MARKETING

A place, however, means different things to the different people (Hubbard et al. 2002:16) in the spirit of hermeneutical approach. This cognition has contributed to the development of new marketing techniques attempting to determine the nature of identity and the image of a place. In this sense Aaker (2003:60) says: *“... a local identity is just as a place, being*

looked for in order to be apprehended. A local identity is a unique set of associations that identify a place which the management wants to either create or retain. The associations represent what a place means and indicate a promise to potential visitors based on local life and institutions.” Nowadays, no one disputes any longer that the identity of a place can be a result from activities planned within the framework of place-marketing projects and, unlike the image, we regard it as an objective state of place perception. We see it as a sum of characteristics by which a particular place differs from the others. It represents an active portion of marketing planning, and it can be influenced. Being a result of marketing communication, but also a result of coincidence processes, image is a passive process (Matlovičová 2007). Unlike identity, the image of a place is *“a set of subjective views, ideas, senses and feelings that people get from a place. Any image will thus represent a simplification of a huge amount of associations and partial information associated with a particular place. [...] in simple terms, image is something more than just trust [...] it is a personal perception of a place that may vary greatly from person to person”* (Kotler et al. 1999:160-161; Kotler et al. 2002:229). An identity, a brand and image should be viewed as mutually dependent elements of a product called ‘place’. We often perceive the difference between these on an intuitive basis only.

An important impulse for the use of marketing approaches in city governance (in this case we consider mainly the territorial-administrative units of various scale such as cities and villages) was the lack of free capital and shortening of state subventions, which was intensively manifested in the 1970s. This shortage compelled the cities to look for non-standard solutions. One of the possibilities was the extension of the concept of marketing and its application to the cities. At that time a new concept of a city governing appears in practice – perception of the city as a commercial company so called “entrepreneurial city”.

Critical approach to a place supported this idea by allowing the perception of external environments’ impacts upon the formation of the resulting image of a place. It thus can be seen as another spur for marketing analysis of place seen as a product in the competitive battle for resources (Matlovičová 2007).

As we have already indicated above, a place represents an interesting phenomenon that has been, is, and probably will be for a long time a subject of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary studies. Modern place marketing and place branding approach is rooted in the understanding of general principles of place functioning, applicable to the whole range of its various representations. It uses all the accessible information about the given place (Matlovičová 2007). The tenet of marketing approach to a place is its perception as a product. However, as we have already mentioned, a place in terms of hermeneutical approach can be perceived by means of its meaning which it conveys. Therefore we perceive it as a product also by means of its non-material characteristics such as e.g. impression, atmosphere, feeling, etc. In marketing terms, the notion of “a product” covers any and all manufactures, services, and also experience, persons, places, organizations, information and thoughts, which means everything that may possibly become a medium of exchange, an item of use or an article of consumption, everything that may satisfy the needs and desires (Kotler and Armstrong 2004:382). Kotler and Armstrong (2004) extend the above list by events, persons, places, organizations, ideas or various combinations of these elements. One of the biggest problems regarding the place marketing is a high degree of heterogeneity of a place as a marketing product. In practice (mainly with larger areas) it is therefore divided into subproducts with higher rate of uniformity. The complicated inner structure as well as the internal and external relational levels of a place foreshadow some difficulties associated with its definition. One of the aspects of the view of a place is based on the fact that it represents virtually a kind of “heritage” passed from generation to generation, representing thus a base of the new direction in marketing (heritage marketing). However, the essence of marketing process consisting of its adaptation to the preferences and needs of clients, does not necessarily exclude the creation of a new place without having any prior history (Matlovičová 2007).

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Based on the actual debates we may state that a place as a product is a specific complex of material and non-material subproducts with the functional and spatial aspect (Florek 2006). In addition to functional components, a place also involves semantic integral components such as image, local cultural climate, business climate, the capability of self-organization and the capability of creating network relations between and among various subjects, communication system, and the quality of economy. Their meaning lies in inimitableness, and therefore they are critical inputs to the process of gaining a competitive advantage over other places (Matlovičová 2007). By formation and adaptation of a city to the actual needs of market it is possible to influence its development positively. Place prosperity, as a goal in the widest sense, can be initiated, maintained and developed by suitable and systematic application of existing marketing tools.

However, regarding the recent efforts to raise the competitiveness of cities and to attract capital, we observe continual transition from place marketing towards place branding. Application of the concept of brand formation in relation to the cities (as areas of various scale) was inspired by practices of commercial companies which started to use it in order to differentiate their products from the other products seemingly physically identical. Because a product brand represents some added value for which a customer is willing to pay even more than for any other generic product.

However, branding does not represent something new. Cities have always been a brand in the most accurate sense. In the past, cities were often labelled by coats of arms, flags, what is now seen as a reflection of more or less glorious history and fate of the city. *“As places have long adopted marketing as a form of planning and management, as argued at length elsewhere, it is not particularly surprising that they should also increasingly embrace the idea of place branding. [...] This idea is hardly new and is probably as old as civic government itself. The acquisition and exercise of city rights has nearly always been accompanied by nomenclature, regalia, armorial trappings,*

distinguished public buildings and ceremonies, all designed to assert the existence and individuality of the place to outsiders and insiders alike” (Ashworth 2009:10).

In current globalized world, the need for differentiation of the cities of various scale grows proportionally with the intensity of competitive struggle for the sources. The number of actors on the market, growth rate and frequency of decisions is so high that individuals and organisations do not have enough time to study all the places, but rather rely on the simplified and generalised idea about them. As Anholt (2007:1) says: *“We all navigate through the complexity of the modern world armed with a few simple clichés, and they form the background of our opinions, even if we aren’t fully aware of this and don’t always admit it to ourselves: 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 disease. Most of us are much too busy worrying about ourselves and our own countries to spend too long trying to form complete, balanced and informed views about six billion other people and nearly 200 other countries. We make do with summaries for the vast majority of people and places – the ones we will probably never know or visit – and only start to expand and refine these impressions when for some reason we acquire a particular interest in them.”* Good, powerful and positive reputation makes a place not only stronger in the competitive struggle for sources, but also resilient e.g. in the period of economic recession.

But what is a brand? A concise formulation of essence what a brand represents could be expressed by general definition: *“Brand is an identifiable entity that makes specific promises of value”* (Dolak 2001). According to Kapferer (1997 in Moilanen and Rainisto 2009:6) *a brand is not only a symbol that separates one product from the others, but it involves all the attributes that come to the consumer’s mind when he or she thinks about the brand. Such attributes are tangible, intangible, psychological and sociological features related to the product. The brand is a personality the customer relates to the product.* A brand is an impression perceived by a client’s mind about a product or a service. It is the sum of all tangible and intangible elements, which makes the selection unique.

Everyone looking at the Statue of Liberty will think about New York, looking at the Eiffel tower about Paris, etc. It sounds like a “trivial example”, because for most of people it is more than obvious and they do not think why it is like that. But what actually makes us to build such unusual, interesting and technically extremely demanding buildings? Would not it be easier and less expensive to build any easier building than the Opera House in Sydney is? Or for example the less showy hotel than the hotel Burj Al Arab in Dubai? Why it was not enough for Cheops or Chephren to have traditional tombs of those days and they made an incredible effort to build the pyramids? Despite the series of arguments that we could give, at the beginning of all decisions there was and still is COMPETITION. Whether we are realizing it or not, competition directly or indirectly affects our decisions and does so also in relation to the places.

In this sense we could raise a question: how can a city compete with the other cities? Most often there were one or two buildings or statues, cathedrals, skyscrapers or giant wheels. These iconic monuments have helped to raise the awareness of cities. They are of great importance for the city as they attract tourists, but what is more important they build respect and awareness. They attract investments, but also: create a visual image of the place making it easier to remember. If a place does not possess these visual icons it's very difficult to become famous, to gain good reputation and to be associated with a good image. According to studies (Anholt 2007, 2010), the Eiffel Tower is the most popular monument in the world. The tower was built as an example of urban heritage. Its purpose is that one could say: *“this is Paris”*. Today's Paris without the Eiffel Tower would be unimaginable. The tower represents a symbol, a brand, an image of the city and even an image of the country. This is perhaps the best example of successful branding, which is now tried to be imitated by many other cities around the world. At the top of the list of the world's famous monuments is Sydney, which can not be imagined without the Opera House. The Opera House in Sydney is extremely unique and incommutable. If you ask about the capital city of Australia, there are certainly many people today whose answer will be Sydney. Why? It is not only because it is the largest

city, but rather because of the fact that common people do not match Canberra with any icon. However, Sydney is identified by unconventional Opera House, which popularity has placed it among the new wonders of the world. An example of Bilbao city confirms the fact how even a single building can literally boost prosperity and change the image of a city. Before Frank Gehry's Guggenheim Museum was designed and built in Bilbao, many foreigners hardly knew about its existence. Such an expressive, titanium building shocked the world and thanks to this building Bilbao was literally put on the map. Since 1997, when the museum was opened, it has attracted about 11 million visitors; roughly one million visitors annually. Half of them were foreigners coming just because of Guggenheim. In past ten years the activities of the museum contributed to gross domestic product by two billion dollars. However this statistics do not include the contribution of Museum's brand to the value of city's economy which is also very important, as this contribution is sometimes beyond calculation (Anholt 2007, 2010). Therefore, the underdeveloped towns started to build new, majestic looking buildings such as the Burj Al Arab in Dubai, which has become a symbol of modern Dubai, icons like e.g. the Atomium in Brussels or the Eiffel Tower in Paris or well-known buildings of cultural and social centre, the Esplanade in Singapore, which looks like famous tropical fruit Durian, that is also why tourists called this centre “Singapore Durian”. The Shanghai World Financial Centre officially opened in 2008.

In the given examples the architecture presents a way how a city communicates with the surrounding world. There is an attempt to transmit a signal: “look at us, we are progressive, we do businesses, come here and join us, we are the future”. It has happened also to Petronas Twin Towers in Malaysia. They were the world's tallest buildings since 1998 when they were finished. It was a way how Malaysians wanted to inform the world about their certain technological progress. They wanted to show that reaching certain technological standard they are able to build not only the world's highest building, but they can do whatever. To construct the world's tallest building is a matter of prestige and recognition. Therefore, in 1931 the completion of the Empire State Building

became an impulse for a competition who can build even higher building. But just few years were enough for competitors to break the record of Petronas and today they were overwhelmed four times more. If we look at the map of the world, we find out that this is an obvious attempt of Southeast Asian countries to show the world that their economic strength grows continually. It is obvious that the completion of the world's tallest building in Dubai in January 2010 drew an attention to Dubai. Even in case of Dubai it should be noted that the projects currently being implemented there, are beyond the limits, conveyed with rather arrogant attempts to show to the world that there are really no obstacles that could discourage them. The whole project of building new Dubai distinctly recalls the biblical story of Babylon tower construction or rebuilding of famous Eden. Judge for yourselves, even the world's highest building has not been finished yet and new project for even higher building – Nakheel Tower or Al Burj – had been already completed. The expected height should be 1,400 m but in January 2009 the project was stopped for now due to financial problems. However, e.g. the Eiffel tower is a clear evidence of the fact that the size is not the most important. The new super buildings cause sensation all around the world. But the time and branding are the entities which can decide whether all super buildings will become icons or images inseparable from the city in which they are located.

All that was mentioned so far is very closely connected to the concept of place branding – *the management of place image through strategic innovation and coordinated economic, commercial, social, cultural, and government policy. Competitive identity is the term to describe the synthesis of brand management with public diplomacy and with trade, investments, tourism and export promotion* (Anholt 2007). However, it should be noted that its success depends on whether its application is consistent and this fact is undoubtedly related to its correct understanding as a complex process (e.g. Kavaratzis 2005). From this point of view it is evident that place branding is not a slogan, it is not a logo of the city, it is not a coat of arms or a city flag, it is not a municipal budget, it is not a leaflet or a prospectus, it is not an advertising campaign or an event, but all these partial elements help to bring a place brand to life.

As we have mentioned above, a city coat of arm or a city flag is now seen as a reflection of more or less glorious history and fate of the city. However, the brand reflects the promise for the future, says about what the city represents now and what the city wants to be in the future. For example: Paris is the promise of romance, Milan – style, fashion and New York – energy (Anholt 2007).

Place branding itself is inseparably linked to its image and identity. If the city agrees on a set of characteristics that are to be presented with the help of successful marketing communication, then appropriate image or perception of individual identity can be achieved. Of course, it does not have to work so well. This process is influenced by a variety of factors that should be predicted by the city, that represent surroundings of the city (competitive cities, the media, etc.) and can broadcast so called communication disturbances. Its effect on the resulting image is not only positive but also negative. It is important for the cities to define, analyze and then communicate their image, because if they do not pay enough attention to it, it might happen that someone else (with stronger market position) will form it. It is an example of Bratislava. This is no longer about branding, but rather about labeling, in which usually a competitor consciously tries to stick the city with a negative image. One of the examples we can find in Slovakia. Some years ago the movie *Hostel* has been presented on the market. Bratislava was shown as a nursery of dubious existence of street gangs and murderous business groups. But actually the film was shot in Prague and authors of the film have never been to Bratislava. Moreover, they did not bother with the fact that mediated information about Slovakia is not reliable. Paradoxically, it contributed to the widespread and useless advertisement of rather a poor movie, at the expense of deteriorated image and perception of Bratislava and whole Slovakia in the eyes of potential clients, who had seen the film and did not have a chance to confront it with reality. Poor territory perception may devalue its image and may have far-reaching consequences for its future prosperity. These negative associations may reduce the probability of incoming investments, to disrupt the activities of existing companies and may also have a

devastating effect on numerous groups of visitors, and consequently can thereby deepen the decline of a territory. To have a good communicating brand of a place means that people are aware of it and through this brand some associations are created in connection to the given place.

Hot discussion about the devastating impact of the mentioned movie on the image of Slovakia capital and also on the whole country, contributed to the fact that not only Bratislava, but also other cities in the country have begun to take an image of the city more seriously. Bratislava has come up with its new logo and slogan "Bratislava – Little Big City". The official website of the City presents Bratislava as a modern city, struggling with socialism impact and uniformity. Building of a new dominant feature, Apollo Bridge, also contributed to the formation of a new image of the city, and the country as well. Development of brand perception can be reversed by the downward trend. Then the appropriate conditions for the revival process might be prepared.

Brands and their images facilitate not only the identification of places, but also tell about the perceived quality. They are perceived very sensitively mainly in the tourist destinations – as places which are the destinations of tourist travels. There are some differences according to place branding. *"Destination branding is the marketing activities a) that support the creation of a name, symbol, logo, word mark or other graphic that both identifies and differentiates a destination; b) that convey the promise of a memorable travel experience that is uniquely associate with the destination; c) that serve to consolidate and reinforce the recollection of pleasurable memories of the destination experience, all with the intent purpose of creating an image that influences consumers decisions to visit the destination in question, as opposed to an alternative one"* (Blain et al. 2005:331-2). From the point of view of global perspective, some places failed to attract very large investments or some sort of tourists because their brand is not sufficiently strong or positive as much as they would deserve (e.g. Romanian tourist destination Mamaia with beautiful beaches; or Ukraine, which proposes innumerable amount of attractions such as mountains, wide plains, sandy beaches or marvellous Orthodox churches and cathedrals).

On the other hand, some places benefit from the positive tourist brand although they had made a little effort to reach it (Anholt 2007). The brands such as Tahiti, Seychelles, Bahamas are associated with luxury, exotic vacations by the sea. Chamonix, Cortina d'Ampezzo, Risoul are symbols of great skiing, etc. The fact that these places possess a vibrant brand name nowadays is the result of refined destination branding, while in this case the target segment is a solvent group of tourists.

However, branding also works outside of tourism. For example, the Wall Street is a place that became a symbol of finances, wealth and prestige. Or Las Vegas is a symbol of entertainment and gambling. Hollywood is a symbol of film industry and show business. The London area of Docklands is a good example of re-branding. The Old London's docks have long been experiencing the image of decline and the state of gloominess. A change was achieved firstly by the implementation of crazy looking project that suggested rebuilding of the whole area into the new, modern financial and commercial centre. Naturally, there were huge problems at the beginning, since this part of London was one of the worst places for living ever since. And as we know, an address nowadays represents a personal brand of each of us, based on which we indicate our social position and express if we are doing well or not. Obviously, the most common way for application of branding to the cities is through the focus on visual elements of branding such as a new logo, a new slogan, and creation of a new campaign which is related to all the mentioned visual components (Kavaratzis 2008). For example, *Amsterdam recently initiated a new branding campaign based on the slogan: "I Amsterdam"*; *Athens, a successful host country of Olympic Games in 2004 welcomed visitors by the slogan: "surprise yourself in Athens Attica"*. *London comes as the "Totally London"*, *Berlin presents itself as "Das Neue Berlin"*, *Edinburgh as "Inspiring Capital"*, *Basel declares: "Basel beats differently"* (Kavaratzis 2008). Extremely successful was the campaign in New York. Perhaps each of you know, "I love New York" which I guess has appeared on every possible thing on which the slogan can be put. The reality that it is perfectly communicating brand is proven by the fact that even if you do not speak Arabic, you are able to identify this slogan in this language.

CONCLUSION

The above mentioned examples make it clear that the concept of branding is a natural part of regional development. It represents a challenge for underdeveloped regions. Many places all around the world have achieved great successes primarily thanks to the place marketing or place branding, consequently they can serve as a clear argument why we should pay more attention to this issue. "If a county has a good image, everything is easy; if it has a bad or weak image, everything is twice as hard and costs twice as much" (Anhold 2010:157). "A positive place brand encourages inward investment, and tourism is a magnet for talent (both new immigrants and returning members of the diaspora), and if properly managed can create a renewed sense of purpose and identity for the inhabitants of the country, region or city. [...] the branding of products and services from places, and the branding of those places themselves, will increasingly be seen as a key focus of marketing, as well as a crucial component of foreign and domestic policy, international relations, economic and cultural development, trade and tourism. For the first time, the art and science of branding has an opportunity to prove its value beyond the tired old litany of 'improving shareholder value', and become recognized as one of the most valuable and relevant disciplines of postindustrial society" (Anhold in Morgan et al. 2004:28-30).

Note:

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Resumé

„Place branding“ jako užitečný nástroj konkurenceschopnosti místa

Článek diskutuje záležitosti aplikovatelnosti konceptu „place branding“ jako užitečného nástroje konkurenceschopnosti místa. Přístup k modernímu marketingu a značkování míst je ukotven v pochopení obecných principů fungování místa, jež je aplikovatelná na celou řadu jeho různých reprezentací. Využívá dostupných informací o daném místě. Proto odvozujeme filosofický základ konceptu marketingu a značkování místa z konceptu „místa“.

Mnoho míst na celém světě dosáhlo velkého úspěchu primárně díky marketingu města či značkování města, což také může sloužit jako jasný argument, proč bychom této otázce měli věnovat více pozornosti. Značky a jejich obrazy ulehčují nejen identifikaci míst ale také vypovídají o jejich pozorovaných kvalitách. Snažíme se ukázat koncept značkování jako přirozenou součást regionálních rozvoje a výzvy pro zaostalé regiony.