

A Review on City and Country Brand Index

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Abstract: Building a coherent country branding program at international level requires a strong coordination between the government, the business sector, the decision makers from educational and cultural sector, the civil society and, the mass media representatives in any country. The paper presents the main efforts that countries have done to build a country image with a significant impact at international level. It focuses on the main policies and programs applied by countries in the specific field of the national branding, offering a good analysis on the institutional framework and experience in promoting the country's image internationally. A growing number of articles and literature in worldwide deals with the issue of applying marketing and branding concepts to cities and countries or places in a wider sense (a city denoting an urbanized, organized and functionally shaped place with all belonging contents and functions). From the perspective of physical planning and urban development, literature is focused on macro perspective of a place, on efficient social and economic functioning of an area in conformity with objectives set by a particular social and political community. From the perspective of marketing and branding theory, literature is more focused on marketing and branding nations and less on the segment of cities and small towns.

Key words: Country Brand · City Brand · Country Brand Indexes

INTRODUCTION

Whilst many think of the 21st century as the era of digital, information and communication technologies, marketers across the world are well aware that this century is also the century of country branding [1, 2]. The concept of country branding, sometimes used by the overlapping terms of nation or destination branding, has gradually gained importance during the past decades. It represents a young field of research that deals primarily with planning, organizing and communicating the image of a country, namely image management [3]. It has developed from or is related to public diplomacy, marketing, public relations and information management [4]. Moreover, country branding taps and is affected by economic, social, political and communicational dimensions. The importance of creating a coherent country brand has equally been acknowledged and disregarded by some countries [3]. While countries such as Australia, Croatia, Germany or Spain stand proof to the power of an exhaustive, consistently supported country promotion, other countries risk falling behind for not pursuing branding strategies [2]. It was empirically demonstrated that people do not necessarily object the process and

implications of branding, but rather find the 'brand' nugget as too shallow of a representation of historical and cultural legacies, natural landscapes, touristic attractions, language or people [5]. In order to coax then, the brand concept has to brand itself.

Country branding has also evolved from marketing, being analogous to corporative product branding. Nonetheless, destinations brands (be they countries, regions, cities or places) represent intangible products and provide unique configurations of climate, environmental conditions, culture, language or touristic attractions. Country branding thus refers to how countries market themselves, by offering unique experiences, emotions and lifestyles in order to attract consumers, tourists or entrepreneurs [6]. Perhaps the most widely known practical implication of country marketing is the so-called 'country of origin effect' [7], which posits that consumers associate willingly or unknowingly the quality of the products with the production country's reputation per se [8]. On the macro level, one can argue that the same mechanisms are at stake when defining the relations between importers and exporters, the right places to out source business functions, the countries' involvement in international

trade and others' exclusion from the international arena. One can even argue that the purported advantage globalization yields upon the development of destitute countries area utopian idea, lest countries are a priori branded. Thus, by lacking a complex apparatus that screens for and disseminates positive information, countries around the world will not be able to exploit their full potential and competitive advantages within the international arena [2].

When we talk about the brand of countries, regions, cities or places, we often refer to their image, reputation and identity, to the external way in which potential tourists, residents, consumers or investors perceive that specific place [8]. Country branding has gradually gained importance during the past years, having emerged concomitantly from public diplomacy, marketing, product branding, public relations and information management [3-4]. When compared to public diplomacy, branding ensures a wider span of management in general and controlling in particular [9]. Marketing branding is needed because there are plentiful characteristics that locations hold and thus their effectiveness rests upon the satisfaction the interplay of characteristics can offer. The economic sphere of a country is thus strongly related to the way in which the reputation or the image of a country affects the flow of capital, goods and services, factors of production or people. A proper and thorough communication process stemming from a country towards the rest of the world fosters a burgeoning environment for cultural discovery, touristic exploration, social interactions and networking. In light of the spheres related to branding, it thus comes as no surprise that the realms mostly researched by brand indexes are the political, economic and social ones.

A country brand can be a generic label or an omnipresent packaging, or may become a link between the political, social and economic pillars of a nation. When properly designed and created, a brand can build a country, can concentrate the tourism offer, which can stimulate investment in and out of a country, can restore its reputation and create a renewed pride among the citizens of that country. Country branding is a topic discussed both in the past and in the present by the press, because it is a fashionable topic. It marks the image projected by each country in the world. "Branding is not expensive advertising or PR campaign, but the mere idea of incorporating in each country's development strategy the concept of creating an image that reflects reality" [1]. For the cities, more and more brand models and rankings are available to assess their stand among others in respect to image as well as pointing out the shortcomings that need developments and generally direct them on a specific route of branding.

The research in the focused domain of country image has been developed in the 1990's with works of Philip Kotler: *The Marketing of Nations* [10], *Marketing Places in Europe* [11], *Marketing Asian Places* [12] and *Marketing for Hospitality and Tourism* [13] or Eugene Jaffe and Israel Nebenzhal with *National Image and Competitive Advantage* [14], Peter Van Ham with his article *The Rise of the Brand state in the Foreign Affairs* publication [15]. In April 2002, *The Journal of Brand Management* designated a whole special edition to the topic of country branding with contributors from the academic world (Kotler, Papadopoulos, Gertner, Heslop and Gilmore), consultants (Anholt, Olins) and practitioners. Creating a country image has been defined by Nworah (2004) as being the process through which a country is actively looking to create a unique and competitive identity with the purpose of positioning the country both internally and externally as a good destination for trade, tourism and investment. Practically creating a country image has to take into consideration more aspects as there are more audiences that we address.

Country Branding-conceptual Considerations: The image that one has about another country shows how one sees that country as a tourist destination, as a place to invest or as a source of goods. Therefore, country branding becomes part of a self-perpetuating cycle: as country promotes its brands, those brands will promote the country. As Anholts put it, image and progress go hand in hand, as a positive image is the consequence of progress, rather than vice-versa and when the two of them are carefully managed in tandem, they help each other along and create an accelerated change. A country's brand can profoundly shape its economic, cultural and political destiny, as well as international competitiveness.

Creating a country image (through country marketing) consists of using strategic marketing to promote a country's image, products, tourism and foreign direct investment. Even though the country marketing concept has been established internationally in 1990's; the subject is not completely new. Numerous countries promoted their images over the years in order to attract foreign tourists and numerous studies have been conducted in the last 40 years in order to identify the COE (The Country of Origin Effect) for their products and services.

The City Brand: Why has city branding become increasingly popular and important? According to authors Cheratony and Virgo [16], branding helps cities attract tourists, funds or residents in the increasingly competitive environment. Furthermore, authors are convinced that a strong city brand shall have less difficulty in overcoming

hard times such as economic crisis. The main premise of city branding is creating added value for an organization - city with a brand through adequate brand management [17]. According to the author Qingjun Wu [18], city brand for the city of Rizhao in China has become the biggest intangible asset of the city. Anholt [3] maintains that people evaluate cities and places, choose them, like or dislike them based on stereotypes and clichés. If you do not have time to read a book, you judge it by its cover. It is very difficult for a city or a country to convince their prospect visitors or investors that their perceptions are unfounded. And this is the fundamental task of city branding. Therefore, it has become more obvious that today's countries and cities increasingly compete with other cities worldwide in terms of investments, attracting larger numbers of tourists and the best possible placement of their export products. Their greatest concern is to attract as many as possible suitable investors, to secure the best possible image to secure long-term local and national development of economy. The process of branding cities and countries is not simple and it takes quite a long time. Such long duration is the result of the need to change the image of the city or country by constructing infrastructure projects and creating attractions - recognizable features and forms. Country or city branding is not a promotional campaign. Results become visible only after a couple of years and only after ten or fifteen years may it be stated and concluded whether the process has been successful. Branding and creating a city brand is a prolonged part of strategy of city marketing. Marketing or urban marketing has to teach city administration how to listen to its stakeholders, how to recognize its wishes and needs and wishes and needs of all its stakeholders and how to behave as competitors. City branding is an addition to the process. Branding has to secure loyalty of stakeholders and attractiveness, recognition of a branded city. Cities have a certain truth to themselves. The truth is actually the core that accumulates all marketing and branding efforts.

The most well-known model for city brand 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.

The ranking is developed by averaging city scores across the index's six categories:

- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- 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 [19].

The successful cities: New York, Paris and San Francisco - had the qualities that strong brands do and marketed their history, quality of place, lifestyle, culture, diversity and formed cooperative partnerships between city municipalities and government in order to enhance their infrastructure. They were proactive in their approach.



Fig. 1: Simon Anholt's City Brand Hexagon [19]

What Makes a Strong Country Brand?

- Makes People's Lives Better
- Creates Emotional Desire & Demand
- Consistent Across All Touchpoints
- Point of View on the Future
- Drives the World Forward
- Economic Performance and Power

The FutureBrand 2010 Country Brand Index, presented in partnership with BBC World News, is our sixth and most comprehensive study of country brands to date. It is based on more respondents across more countries and questions than ever before. After five years of research, we know that country brand strength is driven by perceptions of five key dimensions: Tourism, Heritage and Culture, Good for Business, Quality of Life and Value System.

In addition, the strength of a country brand is determined in the same way as any other brand. We measure levels of awareness, familiarity, preference, consideration, advocacy and active decisions to visit. But the most important factors, the aspects that truly differentiate a country brand, are its associations and attributes - the things that people think of when they hear a place name, or look at a photograph or plan a trip. But above all, a strong country brand is more than the sum of its attributes: it makes people's lives better.

From progressive politics to openness, freedom of speech, movement and a positive outlook on the world, countries that are geared around their people and their needs score highly. They also have to create a strong

emotional connection, making people want to visit, do business, learn and build their lives in a place. Not just that, but like any brand, they need to be consistent across all touch points, from advertising and public relations to political representatives, cultural ambassadors, tourists, companies and indigenous products. We need to be able to differentiate between country brand experiences, from people to places, from products to companies. Country brand ranking even correlates to how far a nation exports its values through its iconic brands.

These features, coupled with a strong point of view and role on the world stage and a tireless effort to drive the world forward, encouraging tourism, immigration, cultural exchange and partnership, make the difference between a nation state and a genuine country brand. Also, as the 2010 Country Brand Index reveals, while economic performance is vital to brand strength, it is not enough to guarantee a high world ranking.

How to Measure Country Brands: One of the leading, widely used brand hierarchies in the literature is the Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brands Index, coordinated by the renowned branding scholar Simon Anholt. The index is compiled on a yearly basis and measures the efficiency with which countries construct, develop and sustain their country brands. In 2008, 50 country brands were assessed, based on their brand performances in tourism, investment and immigration, culture, people, exports and governance. These six general indicators are broken into other sub-indicators, which are later operationalized in the form of survey questions [20].

The survey runs yearly in 20 developed or developing countries. Based on the answers, a hierarchy of nation brands is compiled for each of the six variables, the aggregation of which determines the final hierarchy. For the 2008 hierarchy, for example Turkey ranks 36st and for the 2009 hierarchy is 32st out of the total 50 country brands investigated. Though the index does not allegedly measure the genuine performance of the countries in the six domains outlined (e.g. sheer tourism revenues) but rather the brand efforts, there are still some methodological controversies. In particular, it is unclear how can country efforts be measured by respondents' opinions. It is thus hard to differentiate between countries with a traditionally strong brand (e.g. Italy, France) from countries with a recent branding surge and quantify the respective efforts. In other words, the index does not capture to the full the development of a country's image since it does not control for historically held brand strengths. Moreover, one can argue that there is an obvious association between a country's development level and the hierarchy rank, again

Table 1: Correlation between the NBI Scores and the Respective Per Capita GDP

		Score Received on the NBI	GDP (PPP) per capita
Score received on the NBI	Pearson		
	Correlation	1.000	0.701**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000
	N	50.000	49
GDP (PPP) per capita	Pearson		
	Correlation	0.701**	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	49	49.000

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) [20].

suggesting that the efforts per se are not fully grasped [20]. A simple correlation between the country brands scores and the per capita GDP of the respective countries reveals a strong and significant positive relation, $p < 0.005$ (two-tailed), $r = 0.701$ (Table: 1). Thus, the overall development level of a country significantly relates to the success of the brand itself, though as Anholt [1] posits the relation is mutually-enforcing and no causality effect can be delineated.

Another widely employed such index is the Country Brand Index (CBI), compiled yearly by the brand and strategy consultancy Future Brand. The methodology of this index is more complex than that of the Nation Brands Index (NBI), encompassing three tiers of brands research. The first tier is a general survey run in nine countries (similar to the NBI), the second is a qualitative hospitality experts survey (interview-based), whereas the third component is represented by secondary expert research. The operationalization is based on a twofold scheme, covering both the supply side of the country brand (what the country can offer) and the demand side of the actual or potential tourists, foreign investors, residents or citizens of the respective country (what is expected). The general survey comprises 30 attributes, among which we note: authenticity, history, culture, infrastructure, touristic attractions, business environment, technological advancements and environmental protection and similar others [21].

Similar to the Anholt-GfK Roper Index, the FutureBrand CBI acknowledges the distinction between brands in general and tourism as a particular brand form. Tourism is generally considered to be the most visible manifestation of a country brand and perhaps the most valid measurement of the branding's effectiveness [21]. Turkey branding strategies have made no exception to this belief. Across time, several programs, built on different themes, aiming at various audiences, have attempted to stimulate touristic activities. Tourism has been both extolled as key to all problems and treated as the root of all societal evils. What the present analysis will show is that there are multifarious facets to a problem and

multiple factors that affect a country's image, thus employing a unilateral perspective to branding by using tourism will not only be flawed, but also ill-willed.

Both indexes employ surveys, delineating the areas that are of importance towards a country's image. While the Anholt-GfK Roper NBI measures performance around six large dimensions, the CBI uses, along expert interviews and secondary research, 30 attributes for determining a country brand's stand. Both studies reveal of an intricate manner the importance of not awarding precedence to a particular dimension, but to rather tackle the branding process simultaneously from several viewpoints.

Why Country Brands Matter: For the past five years, FutureBrand has rallied around the idea that countries have the potential to become some of the world's strongest brands, rivaling Nike, Sony and IBM. We have documented how well-branded countries can better promote economic value and export products; attract inbound investment, tourists and talent; redress stereotypes or clichés and build competitive advantage. All this remains true. We also see new and innovative ways countries are promoting themselves: using global sports to showcase a nation, creating strong and ground breaking environmental policies and approaches, electing powerful leaders who inspire global goodwill and creating icons of culture and the arts.

There are some who say that marketing alone cannot build a country brand and that a strong country brand requires a solid foundation of infrastructure, a stable economy and a secure government. While this is true to some extent, we have certainly all witnessed the powerful role marketing can play in advancing a nation, from its capacity to shift perceptions or introduce a new country to the world to its ability to communicate a destination's focus or superior export. The UAE is a good example of a visionary nation that was able to successfully promote itself while much of its infrastructure and attractions were nowhere near complete. By aggressively identifying itself as a country filled with icons of wonder, luxury accommodations and modern conveniences amid a cosmopolitan Middle Eastern atmosphere, the UAE was effectively able to capture the attention of global tourists and investors. The brand and the nation were built concurrently. This is one small example of a nation we at FutureBrand are quite familiar with, having worked extensively with the government to brand The Palm and The World. It demonstrates how a powerful country brand, at its best, can stimulate interest, drive behavior and create advocates. We strongly encourage all countries to carefully consider how they market themselves and to candidly assess if they are

communicating effectively and with true and relevant messages [21].

The CBI Dimensions: Country brands have to focus on several dimensions to perform well in today's increasingly connected world. The strongest country brands are multifaceted and represent strengths in all the areas that impact life, business and travel. On the other hand, the world's weakest country brands do not have recognizable profiles in any dimension. The following rows provide an in-depth look at five key dimensions that make up a country brand: Value System, Quality of Life, Good for Business, Heritage and Culture and Tourism.

Value System: Country brand strength depends on the ability to encourage open dialogue, individual rights and civil liberties through its political system and social values. When a country is recognized as a place where people can live openly, where the rule of law is upheld, where business is respected and where institutions are trusted, its brand grows stronger. All of the values that are essential to modern society are crucial in the development of credible country brands. For our CBI ranking, Value System is the foundation for brand building and includes Political Freedom, Tolerance, Stable Legal Environment, Freedom of Speech and Environmental Friendliness. When a country's Value System is regarded as weak, the performance of its brand is affected across all the other dimensions measured by the CBI. In today's interconnected world, against a backdrop of austerity and financial turmoil, the ability for a nation to encourage open debate, peaceful dialogue and citizen protest supersedes all else.

Quality of Life: Quality of Life is perhaps the broadest dimension of the CBI. For our purposes, it is measured by the attributes Job Opportunity, Most Like to Live In, Standard of Living, Safety, Health care System and Education System. Generally, Quality of Life represents a country's ability to offer gainful employment, affordable and comfortable housing, an accessible and competitive education and overall security to its citizens. Naturally, this dimension is inherently tied to Value System and balances many issues impacted by freedom. For example, respect for the rule of law often goes hand-in-hand with a sense of safety. To this end, the CBI rankings underscore that where political freedom and democracy rule, a higher standard of living is achieved. The financial crisis of past years and the economic malaise following have certainly threatened Quality of Life in the area of Job Opportunity, but it may be too soon to tell the degree to which this will impact country brands in the long-term.

Good for Business: Contrary to conventional wisdom, Good for Business is not simply an indicator of a country's commercial strength. Rather, the dimension includes the attributes Regulatory Environment, Skilled Workforce, Advanced Technology and Investment Climate—all factors that lead to a more holistically robust and attractive business environment.

Today, economic prosperity has been challenged in many markets and financial institutions and governments are under heavier scrutiny than years past. The very stability of global currencies, banks and commercial enterprises has created doubt in some country brands—translated in this year's rankings. As with Quality of Life, Good for Business is a dimension deeply tied to Value System: where the rule of law is upheld, confidence in financial markets increases and brands perform at their best.

Heritage and Culture: Heritage and Culture is a supporting dimension in a country's brand and reflects the ability of a nation to communicate its cultural assets fully and positively—from history and language to art and cultural attractions. For the CBI ranking, Heritage and Culture includes the attributes History, Art and Culture, Natural Beauty and Authenticity.

Just as every dimension of the CBI is interconnected, a nation that celebrates its history through monuments, attractions, museums and continuous support of the arts often ranks high in Quality of Life as well. Heritage and Culture also reflects a nation's commitment to responsible infrastructural projects that support travel and tourism, in the process fueling the arts, literature and sports.

The promotion of a country's heritage and culture often falls to both public and private enterprises, thus including the influence of iconic national brands that operate across borders. There's no doubt that a strong tourism authority, transportation infrastructure and vibrant hospitality and service industries play a vital role in this dimension.

Tourism: Tourism is a dimension closely linked to Heritage and Culture, but unique in its considerations of economics, the media and entertainment. For the purposes of the CBI, Tourism includes Resort and Lodging Options, Food, Attractions, Value for Money, Beaches, Nightlife and Shopping.

The economics of tourism connects a country's ability to provide accessible, affordable options for holiday-makers and business visitors alike. A nation's currency, exchange rate and infrastructure as it relates to the economy are important points of influence. The

media's coverage of a nation's economic and political standing can also play a major role in tourism. Additionally, when a destination appears in the news for any reason, it has the opportunity to communicate its values, unique attributes and personality. Arguably, even negative coverage-such as that following a natural disaster-can create empathy and awareness for a country brand. Not surprisingly, films, television shows, documentaries, books and magazines can fuel tourism, as well as national and international PR and advertising campaigns.

The strongest country brands understand that the elements of tourism combined with the infra structural considerations of Heritage and Culture represent significant economic stimuli [21] SION.

CONCLUSIONS

Brands are part of our everyday life, created as a consequence of growing competitiveness and globalization. Country and City brands represent and comprise all its cultural, social, economic, tourist and town planning assets. In today's economy marked by crammed markets, fast marketing, "media jam" and deluge of information, brands have become the principal and the most important distinguishing features of particular products, services, organizations, as well as recognition of particular countries and regions.

Each new attempt to create a country brand in the last 15-20 years was associated with suspicions of corruption and speculation, always looking for motives for demonstrating that the money is spent in vain, while the real problems are completely different. In addition, the communication campaigns were canceled, most of the time following political changes in the institutions implementing them.

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