

SPORT AND TOURISM AS ELEMENTS OF PLACE BRANDING A CASE STUDY ON POLAND

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Abstract: *This article focuses on sport and tourism as important components of place branding process (national, regional and local). The literature in the field of place branding is reviewed. Next, the article discusses the importance of creating brand image on a domestic (national), regional and local (city) scale, including the subjects (stakeholders) involved in this process. This article also presents arguments in favor of the use of tourism and sport to help create a national, regional or local brands. Moreover, the co-relations between the place's brand and its image were analyzed, and the stages of tourism brand identity management were identified. Finally, Polish initiatives on sites branding have been reviewed: the brand of "Poland" – as an example of national brand, and awarded in the Super Brands Contest 2011 the following Polish city brands: "Poznan – the City of Know-How", "Fall in love with Warsaw", and "Masuria – the Wonder of Nature" as examples of the regional brands. The analysis of strategic documents and case studies found that there is a need for branding of places, by taking comprehensive measures in the area of marketing with the use of sports and tourism. The task of the authors is, therefore, to highlight that the branding of above mentioned elements should be subject to greater interest for Polish public administration, with emphasis on foreign patterns of creating the branding of places, not only in branches such as football, but also to popularize other sports in our country, such as volleyball, handball, rowing, and boxing.*

Keywords: *place branding, place brand, sport, tourism, Poland.*

Introduction

At present, countries, regions and cities can be promoted as traditional goods and services. Simultaneously, promoting sports and recreation services as well as tourism services is no longer exclusively the domain of marketing professionals. A multitude of "products" – related in a broader sense to everything that is expected to meet the needs of buyers – more and more often requires

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the assistance of specialized managers (so-called business investigators), seeking effective and efficient solutions, including creating brand image of the product. A brand today becomes the icon of the socio-cultural personification of ideas, and branding itself is built on archetypal motives. Its aim is to create a brand image that reflects the individualized, sublime desires and expectations of modern consumers. In the future, it will be necessary to integrate well-known brands of places with verified past strategies, using innovations in communications and marketing.

Referring to the above, the article focuses on sport and tourism as important components of branding process of (national, regional and local) places. This article aims to present the opportunities and benefits of sport, recreation and tourism for creating the branding of sites in the light of the literature of the subject. Moreover, a significant mission is to identify differences in the creation place's brand image on different levels of government administration. Therefore, Polish initiatives in the field of places branding will be analyzed: the brand "Poland" – as an example of national brand, and awarded in the Super Brands Contest 2011 cities of Poland: "Poznan the City of Know-How", "Fall in love with Warsaw", and "Masuria – the Wonder of Nature" as examples of regional brands. It should be also mentioned that both Poznan and Warsaw were in the ranking of significant potential for a European brand of cities (Hildreth, 2011) and successively received 29 and 53 points out of 100 points possible. There were also other Polish cities present in this classification, mainly Cracow (the city of the strongest brand in Poland), Gdansk, Wroclaw and Łódź.

Literature review

The purpose of this section is to present the concepts of place branding, such as brand and the branding of places and the image in the context of literature on the subject. Furthermore, the article discusses the importance of creating a brand image on a domestic (national), regional and local (city) scale, including the subjects (stakeholders) involved in this process (Hall, 2010). The key concept for the process of "place branding" is a "brand". It should be understood as everything that we can see, hear, read, know, feel and think, etc. about a particular country, region or city. A brand can be considered a strategic asset of the place and the basis of competitive advantage and long-term profitability (Kotler & Pfoertsch, 2008) for the particular area. A brand represents a concrete market entity (a specific place, country, product, institution, event or a person), which is distinguished from the competition by subjectively perceived and assessed quality and hence, it is regarded through the prism of its identity: name, reputation (image), personality, or symbolism (Boruc, 2008). According to Anholt (2007), there are four dimensions of the brand: brand identity, brand

image, the idea of guiding the brand (brand purpose) and brand equity. From the psychological point of view, the brand is created in the mind of the consumer who gives it a special status in his own ranking of values. Brand strength significantly affects the environment of the modern market, both in politics, trade, culture, tourism and sport. Thus, the concept of brand management has its legitimate use in relation to countries, regions and cities. At the same time it should be emphasized that the brand of the region or city directly affects the reputation of the national brand.

Thinking about the brand lies in understanding branding as a process of representation and deliberate collection of values that make up a reputation, not as a set of tools and techniques of manipulation and falsification of reality (Hereźniak, 2011). The precursor of the term "the place branding" is considered to be Anholt (2002), although the direct references to the concept of "marketing of places" appeared much earlier in the works of Kotler, *et al.* (1993), Gold's and Ward (1994), Van den Berg and Braun (1999), as well as subsequent reports by Ranisto (2003, 2009), Avraham and Ketter (2008) and others. The term "the place branding" can refer to the city, region, country or tourist destinations, and competition between them in acquiring tourists, visitors, investors, residents and other resources (Anholt, 2007; Hospers, 2003; Kavartzis, 2005; Zenker, 2009). This process is based on a strategic approach to public relations, assuming that the change in the image of a place is a holistic process, interactive and on a large scale, requiring more complex operations than the quick change of a company logo or promotional slogan (Avraham & Ketter, 2008; Hospers, 2004). It must be noted that to determine the promotional activities of the specific country, region or a city, the term "the place branding" is often used as a synonym for nation branding, marketing of destinations, marketing of places or geographical (territorial) marketing.

Cities and regions serve as a kind of concretization of the promise contained in the brand, and thus are a natural extension of the national brand. Of whether or not the idea of building a national brand is accepted by the leaders of regional and local authorities, its scope and widespread social acceptance will depend on (Hereźniak, 2011).

Branding is perhaps one of the strongest marketing tools available for experts in destinations marketing (Morgan *et al.*, 2002). A common strategy is that every country has a unique culture, landscape and cultural heritage, and particular places are exposed as locations friendly to tourists and visitors in the context of human hospitality and high standard of customer service and convenient facilities. As a result, the need to create the image of a place of a unique identity that will

distinguish a given destination from the competition is becoming more urgent (Venkatachalam, 2009). Thus, the purpose of place marketing is to increase the attractiveness of the place, so branding is not just an occasional promotional activity, but the holistic development process that affects the perception of the place. Territorial marketing makes people well aware of the attractiveness of specific destinations. For every place there is a possibility of indicating a combination of unique factors of attractiveness that will make the place stand out on the background of competition (Moilanen & Rainisto, 2009). According to this concept, a strong brand can:

1. change the perception of space, which may lose because of the poor image of a place among external and internal customer groups;
2. create a common vision for the future of the community and its development of the potential;
3. provide a coherent system of place representation;
4. strengthen local, regional and/or global awareness and position of the place;
5. change the negative stereotypes associated with a particular place and make it more attractive (*Branding your city*, 2006).

Nowadays, consumers approach the brand image in different ways. One can distinguish among three types of consumers, who are characterized by, among others, the fact that: (1) they are younger – and then pay more attention to brand image due to the increased desire for social acceptance; they are also more aware of the image, (2) the image is more important for people leaving alone, commonly called singles today (Lubowiecki-Vikuk, 2011) and couples than for larger families, and (3) less wealthy consumers pay more attention to brand image (Kumar & Steenkamp, 2010). But not only consumers are involved in building brand awareness. The idea of places branding is based on the activities of many entities who, directly or indirectly, choose something ordinary and improve it in such a way as to make it more valuable and meaningful (Bedbury & Fenichell, 2003), e.g. the organization of mass sporting events (see Fig. 1).

These entities are often referred to in literature as the so-called segments (target groups) of branding places. Among them, the most attention is devoted to: visitors (including tourists), residents and people who work and representatives of the business sector (Kotler & Gertner, 2002). Furthermore, in accordance with the communication model of places branding by Kavartzis (2004), the process of creating the image of the place is based on three types (sources) of communication: primary (1), which is based on the landscape, infrastructure, organizations, behaviors, secondary (2), including information, advertising, public relations, etc., and tertiary (3), which is word of mouth marketing. Special

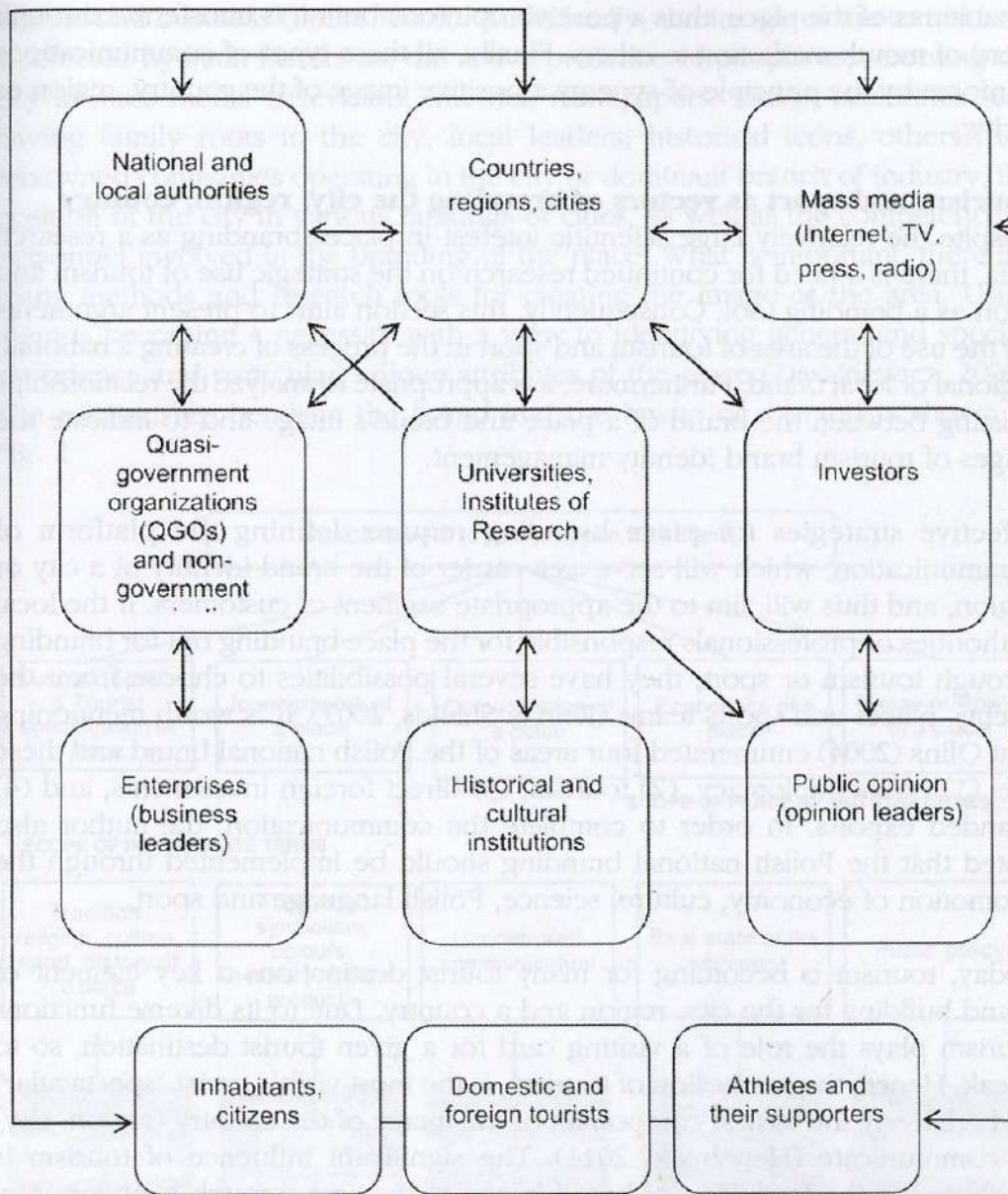


Fig. 1 Entities involved in the process of building the places branding (cities, region, country)

importance in shaping the brand image of a place belongs to the inhabitants of the area; hence, the local and regional authorities planning branding strategies should attempt to engage the local community in any such activities. Residents not only have great influence on other segments of branding, such as tourists, investors or public opinion, but they are also experts as the opinion leaders (Kavaratzis, 2009). The positive message about a given place is passed by the

inhabitants of the place, thus a positive opinion about it is transferred through word of mouth marketing to others. Finally, all these types of communications reinforce by the principle of synergy a positive image of the country, region or a city.

Tourism and sport as vectors of branding the city, region, country

Despite the relatively large scientific interest in places branding as a research area, there is a need for continued research on the strategic use of tourism and sport as a branding tool. Consequently, this section aims to present arguments for the use of the area of tourism and sport in the process of creating a national, regional or local brand. Furthermore, it is appropriate to analyze the relationships existing between the brand of a place and brand's image and to indicate the stages of tourism brand identity management.

Effective strategies for place branding require defining the platform of communication, which will serve as a carrier of the brand identity of a city or region, and thus will aim to the appropriate segment of customers. If the local authorities or professionals responsible for the place branding opt for branding through tourism or sport, they have several possibilities to choose from: the events, places and sports teams (Rein & Shields, 2007). It is worth mentioning that Olins (2004) enumerated four areas of the Polish national brand and these are: (1) public diplomacy, (2) tourism, (3) direct foreign investments, and (4) branded exports. In order to complete the communication, the author also noted that the Polish national branding should be implemented through the promotion of economy, culture, science, Polish language and sport.

Today, tourism is becoming for many tourist destinations a key element of brand building for the city, region and a country. Due to its diverse functions tourism plays the role of a visiting card for a given tourist destination, so to speak. Hence, the promotion of tourism, is the most visible, most "spectacular" and relatively the easiest component of the image of the country (region, city) to communicate (Hereźniak, 2011). The significant influence of tourism is attributed to the formation of brand image of the area through contemporary consumption patterns among heterogenic social groups and the increasing demand for tourism services. The ability to create the so-called unique offer of a place based on its authentic identity, which distinguishes it from other places of a similar profile, allows preserving the interest of potential tourists (Hereźniak, 2011). Bearing in mind the so-called brand identity in relation to tourist destination, one can agree with Łuczak (2010), who concludes that the identity of a tourist destination is determined by factors associated with its location, with its natural beauty, culture, heritage, own branded products, and factors associated with its policies, investments or the ability to attract new residents,

visitors and business (Freire, 2009). Additionally, the image of the tourist area is affected by such factors as: the active presence of people representing the city in mass media (television, Internet, newspapers, radio), celebrities (e.g. having family roots in the city, local leaders, historical icons, others), the renowned companies operating in the city or dominant branch of industry, the position of the city in various rankings of cities, as well as the competence of personnel involved in the branding of the place. What is important, there are many methods and research tools for creating the image of the area. Using them is becoming a necessity with a view to identifying general and specific experience and particular, unique attributes of the place (Daszkiewicz, 2009). The relationship between the brand and the image of a brand is shown in Fig. 2.

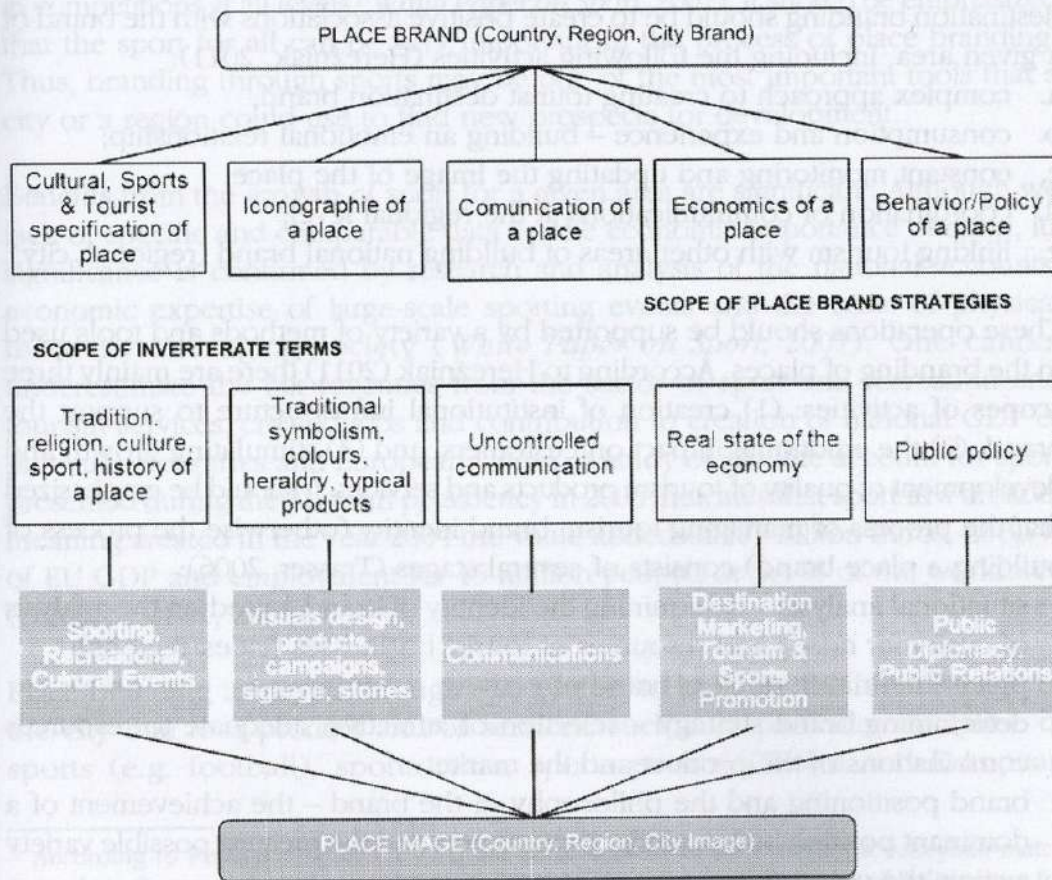


Fig. 2 The relationship between the brand of the place (country, region, city) and its image

Source: own study with changes based on: Eitel & Spiekermann (2007, 6); Anholt (2007, 26); Olins (2004, 23-26)

It appears that not all factors which influence the formation of a national brand image can be controlled. This refers in particular to factors such as cultural, sports and religious traditions related to the place and its history, the symbolism of the country, the national colors, uncontrolled communication, the actual economic situation of the state and domestic politics. However, there are factors based on which one may develop strategies to create a brand of the city or region. These include tourist, sports and cultural image of a tourist destination, its graphic visualizations, monitored communications, economy and local politics.

The essence of branding the area through tourist products (brands) is the ability to create the so-called unique offer of a place based on its authentic identity, which distinguishes it from other places of a similar profile and allows to maintain interest among present and potential tourists. Therefore, the aim of tourist destination branding should be to create positive associations with the brand of a given area, including the following activities (Hereźniak, 2011):

- a. complex approach to creating tourist destination brand;
- b. consumption and experience – building an emotional relationship;
- c. constant monitoring and updating the image of the place;
- d. coordination of communications at the regional level;
- e. linking tourism with other areas of building national brand (regional, city).

These operations should be supported by a variety of methods and tools used in the branding of places. According to Hereźniak (2011) there are mainly three scopes of activities: (1) creation of institutional infrastructure to support the brand, (2) the emotional impact on customers, and (3) stimulating growth and development of quality of tourism products and services. It should be emphasized that the process of managing tourism brand identity (otherwise the process of building a place brand) consists of several stages (Trasser, 2006):

- situational analysis – determining the identity of brand, based on the analysis of customer needs and resources of tourist businesses (cities/regions);
- precise definition of clear brand objectives;
- determining brand strategy – selection of attractive, adequate to resources combinations of the product and the market;
- brand positioning and the philosophy of the brand – the achievement of a dominant position in the minds of consumers and the greatest possible variety against the competition;
- development – integration – the penetration of brand – the concretization of the application of marketing instruments to ensure the coherent implementation of the brand concepts;
- monitoring adaptation of the brand.

Undoubtedly, according to Matecki (2010) that just next to tourism, sport is essential in shaping the image of the place. Due to its various components, such as: the universal nature – sport does not create any barriers due to: geographical distance, age, sex, religion, or race; a wide coverage of activities (local, national, international), visible and dynamic image of sports brand, considerable interest in the mass media (mainly television) and recently prevailing fashion for a healthy (active) lifestyle – sport gives the possibility to intensify the tourist destination on a larger scale.

Sport should not be identified only with competitive or professional sport. Under the *European Charter for Sport* – sports are all forms of physical activity which, through casual or organized participation affect the development or improving physical and mental fitness, social relationships or obtaining results in competitions at all levels (*White Paper on Sport*, 2007). It should be emphasized that the sport for all can be very important in the process of place branding. Thus, branding through sports may be one of the most important tools that a city or a region could use to find new prospects for development.

Benefits from the growth of sport for a given area are significant. Although we lack of specific and comparable data on the economic importance of sport, its significance is confirmed by research and analysis of the national accounts, economic expertise of large-scale sporting events and the costs of physical inactivity and aging society (*White Paper on Sport*, 2007). One cannot underestimate the tax revenues from the sector of sport and recreation and tourism services, created jobs and contribution to creation of national GDP of particular countries and European Union. A study of satellite account for sport presented during the Austrian presidency in 2006 indicates that sport in a broader meaning created in the year 2004 the value added of 407 billion Euros, or 3.7% of EU GDP and employment for 15 million people, or 5.4 % of the workforce (Dimitrov *et al.*, 2006).

Place branding achieved through sport refers to building the brand image of the city due to a product and/or services, such as a particular discipline of sports (e.g. football), sports team, sports events¹ (World and European

¹ According to Pentagon Research – on the 26 of September 2010 during a volleyball match Poland vs. Germany (broadcasted by: Polsat TV) the fans exposed 49 names of Polish cities for a total time of 1236 seconds (the commercial value of PLN 2.3 million). Such cities as Konin, Biala Podlaska, Tychy, Złotoryja, Kępno, have gained the most of commercial value by this (...) during a match Lech Poznan vs. FC Salzburg (broadcasted by: TV4) the Polish flag on the T-shirts of Poles was clearly visible for nearly 500 seconds. The total commercial value of exposure of the Polish flag, only in these two emissions in the television amounted to PLN 2.35 million.

Championships), sport facilities, known athletes², institutions (clubs, organizations), and even sports equipment manufacturers (Sliwowski & Kropielnicki, 2007). Sporting events are increasingly being used to build the brand of places, and therefore they should be an obligatory part of the city development strategy. The scope of the organization of these events (Zalech, 2010) presents different opportunities for development, while at the same time creates various types of threats and makes quite high demands (Chalip & Costa, 2005), e.g. organizational problems.

One of the best examples of national branding based on sport is the organization of sport events of international rank, such as the Olympic Games, World Cup or European Championships. In organizing these types of events, countries, regions and cities see their unique opportunity not only for socio-economic, cultural and tourist development of the area, but also for repositioning of the brand of the place (Brown *et al.*, 2002). As regards building the brand identity based on the teams/clubs, there are two options. The first possibility concerns the adoption by the commercial sports club the name of the city, which sponsors and supports the club, while the second possibility implies the use of the national team in a sport discipline that can be branded export product of the country. The platform of the place is in turn the latest branding strategy, and requires the integration and full involvement of the sport sector in the process of place branding (Rein & Shields, 2007). Therefore sports shows, modern sports and recreation infrastructure and successful teams/clubs, can help to improve the brand image of a tourist destination. In many cases large sport events tend to be a strong magnet for visitors, tourists and investors.

Sport is an important area of marketing innovation, because of the apparent benefits, emotional warmth growing between places and their markets and the ability to attract different consumer groups. Trend of development of sports places lasts as long as the countries (regions, cities) have the capital to refer to sports teams, events and celebrities that are included in their brands. At present, in most cases the places are just at the beginning of the development of infrastructure supporting the development of branding based on sport and they are looking for the right combination of strategies to ensure the effectiveness of sport initiatives (Rein & Shields, 2007). The segmentation is essential here, because in an increasingly competitive global market, it is the key in achieving success in sports ventures.

² As the precursor of the promotion of places should be considered the ski jumper Adam Malysz, who made famous Wisła – a Polish town. The brand of particular cities became: a sailor – Mateusz Kusznierewicz (Gdansk), tennis players – Agnieszka and Urszula Radwanska (Krakow), Maja Włoszczowska (Jelenia Góra) – mountain bike rider, athletes – Lidia Chojecka (Siedlce), and Renata Plis (Swinoujście), handball players from Ostrowia (Ostrow Wielkopolski), and others.

The progress of branding culture through sports is inevitable in the face of legitimate competition and to organize priorities. It may be so, according to Rein and Shields (2007) that the brand strategies of the future will be more transitory in nature and will require constant adjustments in the market taking into account the sudden changes of resources and technological innovations. In the present evolving environment, the concept of a sport brand is an essential element which could serve both as a central component (core) or a valuable complement to the general position of the place's brand. These are long-term measures, requiring considerable financial expenditures and rational and coherent marketing strategy. In the process of creating the image of the city or region, one can involve sports organizations like sports clubs or associations whose activities are remarkably distinguished from the competition. Often the benefits from this type of sponsoring cooperation between the local or regional authorities and sports clubs may be reciprocal for both parties (Leberman *et al.*, 2006).

Place branding in Poland on the selected examples

Building the place brand – as shown in previous discussion – creates opportunities for the development of countries, cities and regions, resulting in changes on the level, quality and style of life of local communities and the public face of the place. Therefore, the purpose of this subsection is to present the specific actions to create Polish brands of places, including two important areas: tourism and sport. Poland feel urgency in building its own brand as it is seen to be a crucial marketing tool in today's globalized world (Fujita & Dinnie, 2010).

National Branding – Poland

Poland is situated in Central and Eastern Europe. This is a country of rich and diverse history, a good geographical location, with delicious cuisine and hospitable people. The well-known Polish people are for example Lech Walesa, Pope John Paul II, Frederic Chopin, Copernicus, and Maria Skłodowska-Curie.

The idea of a country as a brand "Poland" actually exists, which is not a common thing and is the privilege of only a few dozen countries (in the most serious studies Poland oscillates at the beginning of the fourth ten), but the brand "Poland" is blurred, not very expressive, and still weak. Thus, the Polish tourism as a brand is still poorly recognized, although recently this situation changes to Poland's advantage. Cities are the product of which the selling and value are the largest and therefore by intensifying their promotion, we can expect that in the future they will "pull up" the other products (Marketing Strategy of the Polish Tourism Sector in Years 2008-2015, 2008). Polish tourist products directed

to encourage international travelers to relax in this country are urban tourism, cultural tourism and business tourism. For domestic tourists two products are offered: tourism resorts (primarily realized at the Polish seaside) and cultural tourism with a focus on cultural events, sports and others. It is necessary to combine tourism services sector with other sectors of the Polish economy and stakeholders of large national reputation (Boruc, 2008).

Tourism is more often than sports associated with Poland³ – mainly by the citizens of China, Germany and the Netherlands. Currently, foreign mass media show the Polish sport in the not too advantageous conditions (such as football hooligans fighting, corruption, etc.), which in turn negatively affects the image of the country. This situation may however change due to UEFA EURO 2012. This is a significant advantage for the country's image and the cities (Warsaw, Poznan, Wroclaw, Gdansk), which received the rights to co-organize this outstanding sport event.

City Branding – Poznan and Warsaw

Poznan, despite numerous attempts to change its image, was usually associated quite traditionally. Although the inhabitants were described as entrepreneurial, economical (or still worse, stingy), and Poznan itself was well perceived: as a Western-like city, and business friendly, Poznan was never associated either with the culture or historical heritage, or a good place for entertainment and recreation (Goździor, 2010-2011). Today the city is recognized as a place of new technologies, and the most important is a technology to achieve success. Capital of Wielkopolska combines the potential of the business center, allowing for realization of professional ambitions, with a wide range of leisure and entertainment activities, according to the motto: "*City of Work and City of Play*" (*Superbrands Poland*, 2011).

In the opinion of the territorial marketing professionals Poznan definitely stands out from the other Polish cities and becomes a determinant of a new quality, which has been frequently appreciated by many representatives of the marketing industry. The innovative⁴ approach of the city authorities (including urban office workers, acting as a brand manager) to promote its brand can be seen in the coherence and consistency of the objectives of a communication strategy

³ There is also no doubt that today, the Polish food products (meat products, alcohol, bread) usually affect the image of the national brand (*Image Studies of Poland and Polish Economy in Countries of Main Economic Partners*, 2011)

⁴ Here, innovative products have been created such as: "Poznan at half price", or weekend hotels and restaurants offer at half price, and the first in Poland action "Night of museums".

adopted in 2009. Today the city is the leader in spending funds⁵ for its promotion, including funds related to UEFA EURO 2012 (the first stadium in the country for this special sports event was opened here). In addition, one of the strongest sports brands in the country is a football club from Poznan – Lech Poznan.

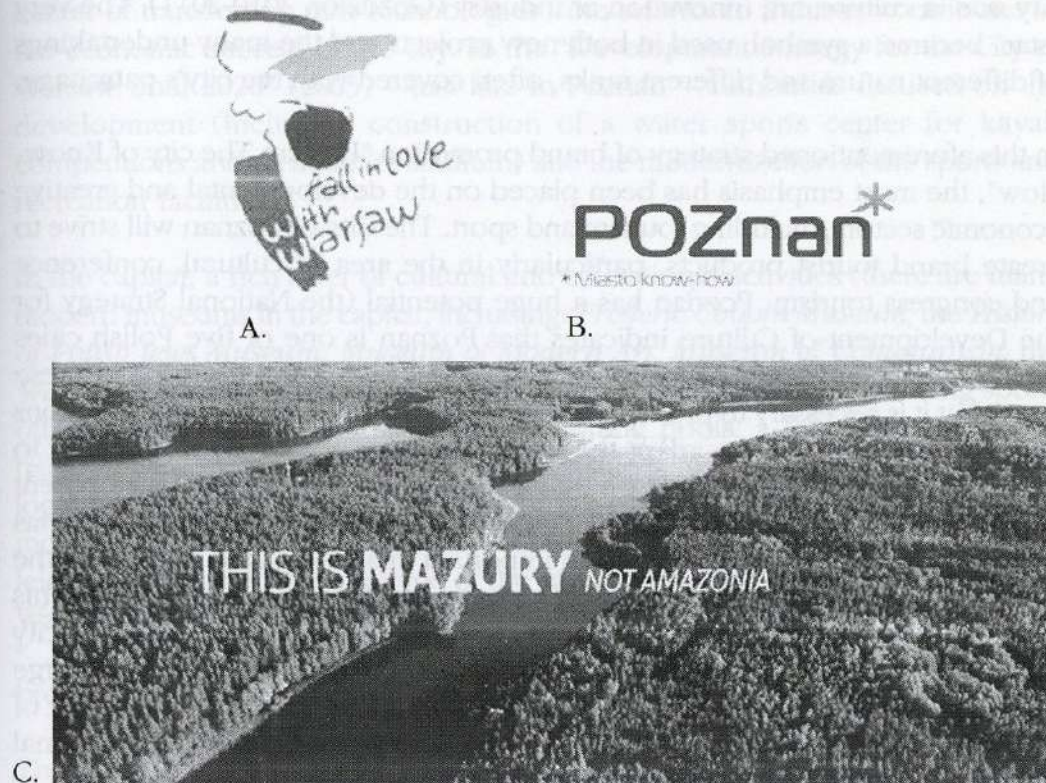


Fig. 3 Brands of places: A. Warsaw, B. Poznan (the city of know-how), C. Masuria District

Source: A : <http://herb.um.warszawa.pl/>; B: <http://www.poznan.pl/mim/public/sport/pages.html>; C: <http://www.votemazury.org/en/download.html>

The essence of Poznan branding is to refer to specific expressions of the city's acts of success. An important element of communication has become a logo (see Fig. 3.B): POZ is an acronym from the words: Work-Praca, Rest-Odpoczynek (comprehended by providing by the city various forms of leisure activities including sport, culture and tourism), Living-Zamieszkanie. Moreover, the phrase

⁵ As it is generally known, the costs of creating the images of places are not low. In 2010, in Poznan for the promotion nearly PLN 22 million was spent (in 2009 – PLN 25 million) – the budget alone for the new city's commercial (destined for foreign markets) amounted to PLN 1.2 million. The funds are collected from various sources, according to the 70/30 principle – which says that 30% of the budget for each event organized by the city is assigned for the promotion (Gołdzior 2010/2011, 141).

is an abbreviation of the Poznan airport's name, recognizable on the international market. In the name of the city, the Polish letter "ń" was replaced by a blue asterisk (*) because, first, the readability of the logo was thereby easier for foreigners, and secondly, it was wished to show how the "know-how" of the city acts in culture, art, innovation or industry (Goździor, 2010-2011). The very "star" became a symbol, used in both new projects and the many undertakings of different nature and different ranks, often covered with the city's patronage.

In this aforementioned strategy of brand promotion "Poznan The city of Know-How", the most emphasis has been placed on the developmental and creative economic sectors, including tourism and sport. The City of Poznan will strive to create brand tourist products, particularly in the area of cultural, conference and congress tourism. Poznan has a huge potential (the National Strategy for the Development of Culture indicates that Poznan is one of five Polish cities with a significant potential for the development of cultural tourism) in these areas, but it is necessary to promote and integrate the offers of various institutions and entities, as well as to adapt the offer to tourists' expectation. In order to achieve a considerable position on the cultural tourism market, a Development Programme for the National Tourist Product of the "Royal-Imperial Route" has been devised and this will become an important image – related product of the city, continuously stimulating the development of a local tourist economy. This will result in the formation of Poznan's image as a touristically attractive city that offers a clearly recognizable tourist product. Poznan is one of those large and historical Polish cities that meets many conditions to become the host of conferences, congresses, meetings and cultural and sports events of national and international importance (Development strategy for the city of Poznan to 2030, 2010).

The "Sporting Poznan" program aims primarily at the increase in Poznan's importance as a centre of sports in Europe, and the improvement of the quality of life with regard to the available forms of spending free time. Apart from the preparation of the proper sports and recreation infrastructures, the key factor affecting the popularity of sport for all among Poznan inhabitants is the promotion of the idea of a healthy, active lifestyle. In addition, Poznan as a centre of sports must have an effective university centre training coaches, sports managers with high qualifications and skills. One of the planned activities of this strategy is recognizing sports as an element of identity of the City of Poznan and an instrument for the creation of its image (Development strategy for the city of Poznan to 2030, 2010).

On the other hand, Warsaw – the Polish capital, in view of the adopted communication strategy is to become an appealing and modern metropolis,

attracting new residents from around the world. Currently, Warsaw successfully competes with other centers in Europe and the world in terms of the number of completed investment projects of private nature and friendly atmosphere for all types of economic activity (Superbrands Poland, 2011). The role of a vibrant center of transferring new technologies from science to industry contributes to the economic success of the city. In the "Development Strategy for the City of Warsaw until 2020" (2005) – just like in Poznan – authorities focused on the development (including construction of a water sports center for kayak competitions and an athletics stadium) and the modernization of the sports and recreation facilities.

In the capital, a rich offer of cultural and educational activities (there are many modern museums in the capital, including: *Frederic Chopin Museum*, the *History of Polish Jews Museum*, *Museum of Modern Art*, *Museum of Communism*, the *Warsaw Uprising Museum*, and others.) is complemented by an amazing sports offer, thanks to many stadiums, 40 swimming pools, a few dozen of sports halls, a year-long open slope with a lift for skiers, ice rinks for skating, trails for jogging lovers and cycling trails. Warsaw is a city of tourism, annually visited by more than 12 million people who come here for various reasons (business, leisure & tourism). The logotype of the capital (see Fig. 3.A) – "Fall in love with Warsaw..." – in various combinations ("...for Christmas", "...sports", "...green", "...for the summer", "...at night", etc.) shows the different faces of the city and broad range of services available.

The year 2010 was a special time for the promotion of the city. Because of the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of Frederic Chopin, many musical and cultural projects were carried out in Warsaw (for example multimedia benches playing music composed by Chopin, the Chopin Museum opening, the promotional film "Chopin's Warsaw", the launch of applications for mobile phones and iPhone informing about initiatives related to Chopin, a publication of the book "Chopin's Warsaw", an advertising campaign inviting to the city of Chopin as shown on CNN, BBC and social networking sites, and numerous other musical events - e.g. a Festival "Chopin and His Europe"), an event which echoed all around the world. On the other hand, the year 2011 is a time in which the eyes of the world of science have been turned to M. Skłodowska-Curie, who after receiving over a hundred years ago the second Nobel Prize is the world's only woman - scientist honored with this prize in two different fields of science (Superbrands Poland, 2011). As an interesting aspect of the city branding one may perceive a competition among pastry chefs, in which a new cake was created specifically for Warsaw citizens – a cake called "Zygmuntowka" (named after the Polish king – Sigismund III Vasa, who ruled

between 1587-1632, this is an almond bun filled with chocolate, cranberries and whipped cream, decorated with a “crown” made of meringue).

Regional Branding – Masuria District

The Brand “Masuria – a Wonder of Nature” (see Fig. 3.C) is mainly associated with active forms of recreation in the Warmia and Mazury district, which is related to the widespread perceiving of the region as an area of exceptional natural beauty and amazing landscapes (the Great Lakes). Tourists particularly appreciate the contact with nature and clean environment (Superbrands Poland, 2011). From 2010 onwards, this region aspires to be one of the “7 New Wonders of Nature”. This potential will be used in the implementation of strategy for the promotion and development of Warmia and Mazury Voivodship, which is becoming an identifiable leader in sustainable development.

The brand “Masuria – a Wonder of Nature” promotes not only the Masuria District, but also the entire region. Warmia and Masuria is not only the lakes but also the surrounding forests. The landscapes of Warmia and Mazury are an exception in the world (a complex of more than 2,700 lakes). A unique attraction is the Elbląg Channel, which is over 144 km of the way along water and land with the system of locks and five slipways enabling an uninterrupted sailing. In addition, almost a one third of the Masurian area is inhabited by endangered species of plants and animals.

The slogan “Masuria – a Wonder of Nature” wins the rankings of a catch phrase which would best encourage Poles to visit a given city or a region (Superbrands Poland, 2011). The brand has become one of the strongest Polish brands in the frames of a territorial marketing especially during the so-called global financial crisis, and the catch phrase “Masuria – a Wonder of Nature” has been a registered slogan from 2009 onwards. Moreover, the idea of the campaign “Masuria – a Wonder of Nature” has been several times honored for all promotional activities, including the category: Marketing of Places – a competition that is a part of the Festival for the Promotion of Cities and Regions – Europe’s largest territorial marketing event; the official website of the campaign www.MazuryCudNatury.org was awarded a “Webstarfestival” – a prestigious prize in the competition promoting the best Polish websites and internet campaigns. Promotional activities of this region were also expanded with a new medium – MazuryCudNatury.TV – an online television. For spending an active vacation there, tourists are encouraged by famous Polish athletes, politicians, musicians, actors and others.

Conclusions

Sports and tourism as the areas of image creation of a certain place, may serve not only to the place’s promotion, but should also become an element of

competitive advantage. Consequently, the entities co-operating in branding of places (see Fig. 1) should take into account the competitive approach in planning the development of the country, city, or a region, considering at the same time the positive changes in growth and progress in the economic system, socio-cultural and natural system, and others.

In the course of that analysis, it appears that Poland needs a systematic and consistent process of building its awareness of the brand "Poland", not only on the European scene, but also at the international forum. In applying the idea of branding places, cities and regions do significantly better, though. The reason perhaps is that the authorities of territorial units are able to and clearly want to present the strengths of their cities with greater ease, thus encouraging to visit them for a variety of purposes: investment, urbanization, as well as tourism and sports – at the same time, improving the quality of life of local communities.

In response to the issue of territorial marketing, as taken by the authors, it was found that:

1. creating the branding of sites through sport and tourism is an increasingly more frequent subject of scientific investigations, among representatives mainly from the economically developed countries. Bearing in mind the development of research in the area of B+R and the effects of globalization (including significant consumerism in sport and recreation services and tourism, technology development, individualized needs of societies), it seems that such an initiative is justified, and also it becomes a necessity to undertake more detailed market research in leisure and sport sciences, in order to develop common organizational conditions
2. sports and recreational activities and tourism are being increasingly used by Polish entities as elements of creating the branding of places, with the difference that the process is quite diversified in terms of its effects. While presentation of an image of Polish cities, or regions is quite clear and precise, the national brand is not clearly defined. The reason for this might be that in the process of creating a national brand "Poland" is not involved only one specialized entity, but many institutions including: the Ministry of Sport and Tourism, Ministry of Economy, the Polish Tourist Organisation and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It should be assumed that multidirectional tasks performed by these entities and the lack of a coherent concept for national branding - in spite of the significant potential of Poland - contributed to this state of affairs.

In conclusion, nowadays there is an important need for the branding of sites - also through sport and tourism - in order to increase the competitiveness of a

given country, region and / or a city. The Polish case illustrates how difficult this process is. Indeed, a common barrier turns out to be the absence of synergy of actions among state bodies and the lack of a clear vision and direction of development. However, bearing in mind the fact that Poland has not yet organized any sports large events of international rank, one should try to understand the lack of experience in this area. Undoubtedly, the opportunity to draw attention to the essence of creating a place's brand image will be organizing the European Football Championship EURO 2012, which will clearly affect the level, quality and lifestyle of the Polish community and the external image of our country. Nevertheless, sport and tourism should be one of the elements of the strategy for development of these sites, which have a significant potential in this area.

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