

# City Branding for Cluj-Napoca. A Case of the Local Public Administration Initiative

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**Abstract**—The main aim of our present analysis is to identify those elements that are relevant for the branding project of Cluj-Napoca, Transylvania's most important economic center and a key destination of Romania. Therefore, starting from the city branding hexagon, the tool used by Simon Anholt for the elaboration of the City Brand Index, we attempt to identify those elements that are relevant for the branding project of the city initiated by the city hall of the municipality. Throughout our paper we are going to provide answers to several questions: *How do first year students enrolled at Universitatea Babeș-Bolyai perceive the city in relation with Transylvania? How is Cluj-Napoca's tourist potential appreciated by other Romanians? How do Romanian local public authorities understand to get involved in the branding processes of their cities? Are the websites of the city halls used as communication tools in the promotion of Romanian destinations?* The results of our paper rely on the finding of two different survey-based researches that we have undertaken in 2009, respectively on a thorough analysis of the websites of the city halls of Romania's county residences.

**Keywords**— *City branding for Cluj-Napoca, Image promotion by the means of official websites, Tourism and Public Administration.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

TODAY, destinations, be they tourist destinations – countries, regions and cities – or any kind of places (educational centers, administrative places, banking and financial centers, medical centers, technological sites, etc.), fiercely compete against each other on the international market in order to attract tourists and investors, respectively. Moreover, efforts are also undertaken with the aim to reduce the brain drain phenomenon and to determine the residents of specific destinations not to leave but to stay and develop their activities on site. While the first part is valid for all cases, the second part determines us to split places and destinations into two categories: attractive ones (which belong to or are themselves environments that are perceived as offering high living standards, good job opportunities, high quality education centers, proficient medical services, etc.); these manage to constitute genuine magnets for people and enterprises who opt to move there (national residents and immigrants), and unattractive ones, which belong to the category of “abandoned” places, wherefrom people and enterprises, too decide to move away, mainly because of the

shortcomings of the place (poor infrastructure, high unemployment, high cost of living combined with low incomes, unstable economic environment, unskilled workforce, increasing taxation, corruption, etc.).

### A. An Overview of Modern Romania's Image Promotion

In spite of the fact that “Romania has almost all the features to be one of the preferred tourist destinations: it is blessed with a beautiful landscape, it can offer different types of tourism (mountain tourism, heritage and cultural tourism, rural tourism, spa tourism, geotourism, MICE tourism – meeting, incentives, conferences and exhibitions – seaside tourism) and it has a diversified supply and lodging capacities” [4] the country is far from properly exploiting its tourist heritage.

Throughout the last two decades, post-communist Romania has been struggling to correct and improve its image abroad, to discover its national identity, to develop its destination image and to uncover and promote its national brand. Most of the attempts targeted the residents of foreign countries; only one was aimed at the Romanian public and none at the Romanians from abroad. Despite the fact that such attempts are usually considered to be laudable initiatives, most of Romania's branding projects have managed to gain notoriety because of the scandals mainly related to governmental expenditures and, unfortunately, they did not manage to generate the promised effects upon the targeted audiences.

At this point we consider that a brief overview of Romania's (tourism) promotion is needed, because of the fact that the very many changes in the promotion strategy of the country, in a very short time span has only managed to achieve high expenses without any significant results. Several attempts have been undertaken to promote Romania abroad (most of them being rather image-creation and image-promotion campaigns and not genuine branding campaigns); most of these have mainly focused on tourism promotion:

- 1996-1997: the picture album *Eternal and Fascinating Romania* (unfortunately the main outcome of this project was a negative one, as it was mainly associated to a huge scandal regarding governmental expenditures – the project was initiated in 1995-1996 by the Social-Democrat Government of that time and it was supposed to be implemented by Adrian Costea) [10];
- 1998-1999: the campaign *Come as a Tourist, Leave as a Friend* (the tourism promotion campaign was

abandoned after the occurrence of political changes and economic instability; target market: the USA);

- 1999: the campaign for promoting the *Solar Eclipse of August 1999*;
- 2001-2004: *Made in Romania* (the first campaign that attempted to promote Romanian products – based on a country of origin concept);
- 2003/4-2008: *Romania. Simply Surprising* (another tourism promotion campaign initiated in 2003/4 by the National Authority for Tourism – NAT, today the Ministry of Tourism);
- 2003-2004: the program *Dracula Park* (another generator of intense debates);
- 2006: *Romania – A Lesson of Life* (the single campaign addressing Romanian tourists);
- 2007: *Sibiu – European Capital of Culture* (perhaps, the first Romanian city brand, developed under the umbrella of the *European Capital of Culture*);
- 2007-2008: *Romania FabuloSpirit* (tourism promotion was carried out by two different authorities: NAT and the National Agency for Governmental Strategies, which unfortunately did not communicate with each other);
- 2008: *Romania. Piacere di conoscerti* and *Hola, soy Rumano* (two campaigns initiated by the National Agency for Governmental Strategies, aiming to repair the image damages of Romania in Italy and Spain);
- 2009: *Romania: Land of Choice* (tourism promotion strategy changes again, as political changes occur);
- 2009: *Braşov Be.Live it!* (the first independent branding project of a Romanian city);
- 2010: *Explore the Carpathian Garden!* (once again, governmental officials shift the strategy; a huge scandal starts immediately after the official launching of the logo at the World Exhibit from Shanghai).

The last four national campaigns (*Romania, Simply Surprising*; *FabuloSpirit*, *Romania: Land of Choice* and *Explore the Carpathian Garden!*) have generated many intense debates; they were either strongly argued against or loudly discussed (beginning with their logo, concept, message essence and ending up with ongoing scandals concerning the manner how governmental expenditures are being realized in Romania). Regrettably, the lack of a coherent long-lasting promotion strategy can be easily measured by analyzing the country’ international tourist activity and the country’s image abroad; yet, despite any significant outcomes, the budgets were considerable! Especially under the conditions of the current economic crisis, Romania is in deep need of a tourism promotion strategy. Moreover, it can be easily noticed that there exists a strong relationship between public administration institutions (from national to local levels) and the success or failure of any branding attempt (be it a national holistic branding strategy or a niche tourism one) clearly depends on the commitment of the persons who are involved in its

implementation.

*B. Romania’s Tourism in Figures*

A brief characterization of Romania’s tourist activity enables a better understanding of the poor contribution of the lack of strategic planning in the case of the country’s tourist promotion.

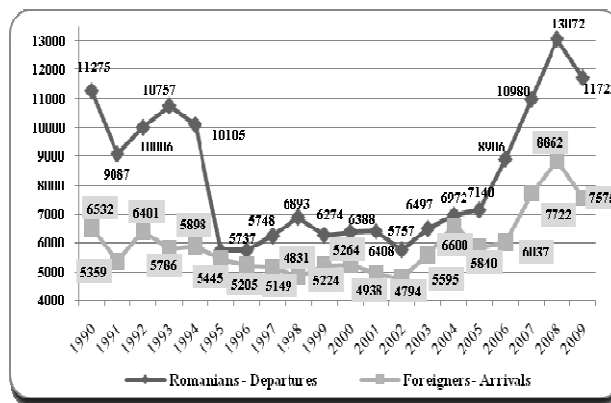


Fig. 1. Romania’s International Tourism at National Borders (expressed in Thousands of Persons) [INS]

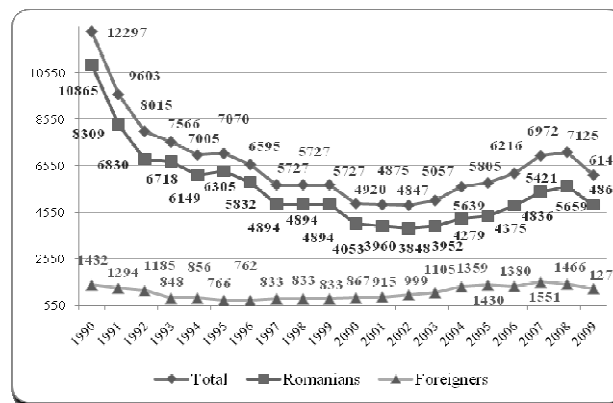


Fig. 2. Tourists Accommodated in Lodging Facilities (expressed in Thousands of Persons) [12]-[14]

The large majority of Romania’s tourists and visitors is provided by European countries, mainly by the EU members but also by other European countries; traditionally, percentages are registered around the same figures as in 2009:

- Europe generates 95.1 % of Romania’s foreign tourists;
- the Member States of the European Union account for 63.4 % of Romania’s international tourism; from among the EU members, the most important providers of tourists are:
  - Hungary with 38.5 %;
  - Bulgaria with 18.3 %;
  - Germany with 9.2 %; and
  - Italy with 7.8 %. [14]

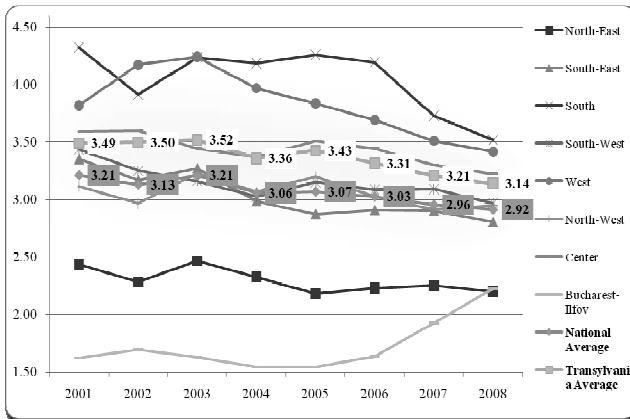


Fig. 3. Average Durations of Stay in Romania, by Region of Development, in Transylvania and at National Level [12]

The way Romania's tourism evolved throughout the eight years that were analyzed, proves the fact that the country has definitely become a short-stay destination. Average durations of stay between 1.5 and less than 4.5 nights are clearly associated with tourism types that are characterized by short-term stays:

- transit tourism;
- business tourism;
- cultural tourism;
- visiting of friends and relatives;
- city-breaks; and
- weekend breaks (seaside and mountain destinations).

The declining trend of the figures became more evident last year due to the combination of an underdeveloped tourist offer of the country and the economic crisis. Facts and figures [14] concerning last year reveal an unfortunate situation: a national occupancy rate of only 28.4 % (and still declining), which is definitely unable to provide any profits. Moreover it is absolutely clear that our country's offer of lodging facilities, does not respond to the needs of the tourists (both Romanian and foreign). This is valid especially under the conditions that "today's experienced and educated traveler is constantly changing his behavior. The ability to recognize and deal with changing factors in the environment is the only way to survive on a competitive marketplace. Tourists are also more conscious and better informed in food consumption. There is a significant number of them who expect the food to be a source of pleasure or even a pleasant experience or travel adventure." [5]

Clearly, foreign tourists represent a key source of economic development. Still, Romanian tourists must not be neglected, nor should be the Romanians who live abroad. Under the conditions of a general declining trend registered by the global tourist industry, with over 70 % of the Romanians spending their holidays at home [9], and many of the remainder travelling abroad, authorities have not yet managed to comprehend the importance of creating attractive tourist

products for local clients.

While governmental officials keep shifting from one strategy to another, we believe that starting at grassroots' level can be the winning solution. Therefore we intend to raise the problem of city branding in the case of Cluj-Napoca.

### C. Tourism in Cluj-Napoca at a Glance

The city of Cluj-Napoca has always attempted to take seriously its geographic, historic, cultural and economic position that grants it the title of Transylvania's Capital. Nevertheless, figures concerning the city's tourist activity have not yet confirmed this position.

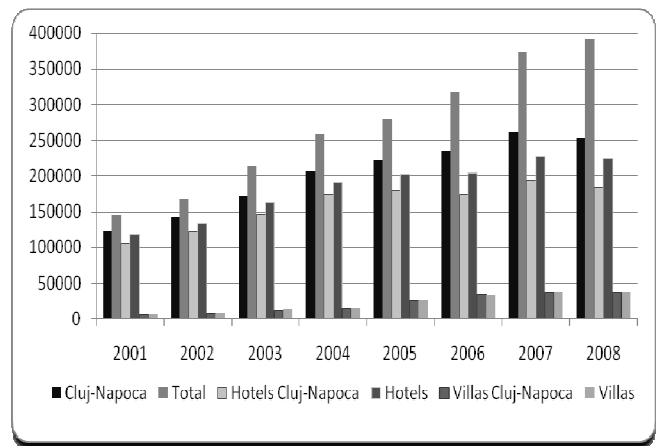


Fig. 4. Tourist Arrivals in Cluj-Napoca [12]

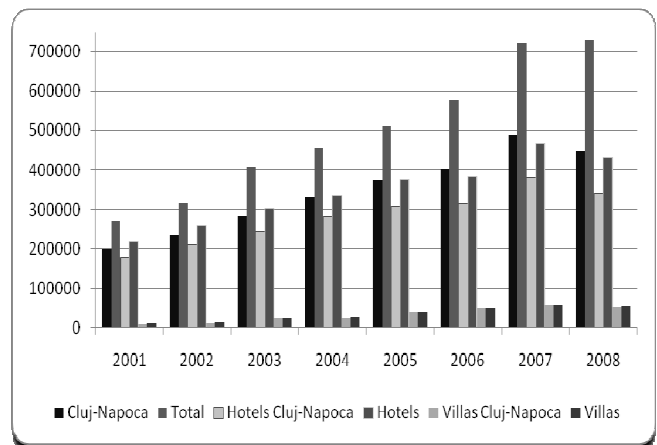


Fig. 5. Overnight Stays in Cluj-Napoca [12]

Figures N<sup>os</sup> 4 and 5 from above reveal the fact that the city of Cluj-Napoca accounts for most of the county's tourist activity; in fact, the next chart in Figure N<sup>o</sup> 6 presents the situation of how much of the county's tourist activity the city accounts for:

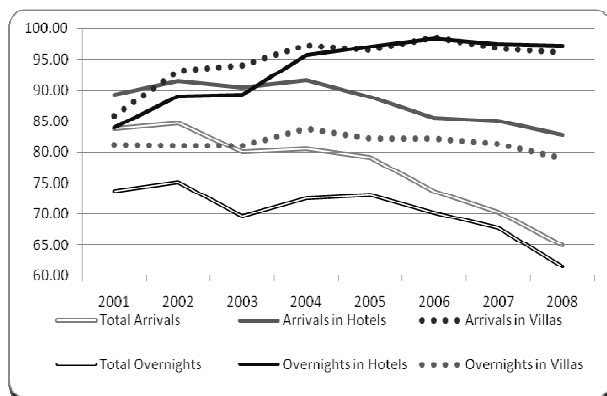


Fig. 6. Contribution of Cluj-Napoca to the Tourist Activity of the County of Cluj [12]

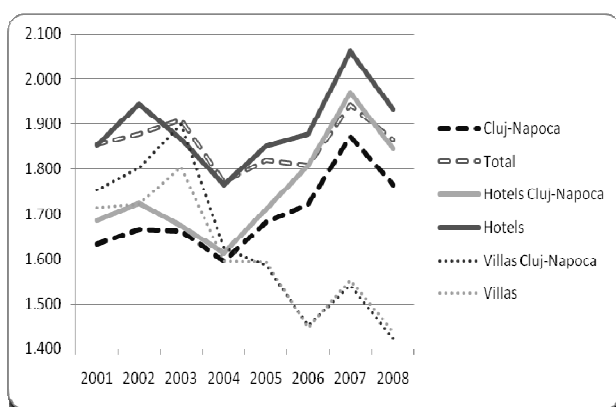


Fig. 7. Average Duration of Stay in Cluj-Napoca [12]

By briefly analyzing the two graphs from above, we may state that the municipality of Cluj-Napoca accounts for the large majority of the county's tourist activity. Although, generally speaking, the contribution of the city in the total arrivals and overnight stays in hotels and in the city have registered a continuous decrease, in 2008 nearly reaching 60 %, villas are dominated by the city's tourist activity.

The average durations of stay suggest that Cluj-Napoca is primarily a business destination; still, the figures could also be associated to cultural tourism. Due to the fact that business tourism undergoes a declining trend, hospitality operators should acknowledge that cultural tourism, city breaks and other types of tourism can provide the winning solution.

Moreover, because of the crisis action is needed in the direction of destination branding and in elaborating a strategy for the city. Accommodation facilities' owners face very poor occupation rates. They also seem to lack vision when it comes to targeting their market segments: most of them consider business tourism to be the driving factor of their enterprises and they tend to ignore the evidence...

Table 1. Net Usage Indices in Cluj County [13]

| Year | 2004  | 2005  | 2006  | 2007  | 2008  | 2009  |
|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| %    | 29.41 | 25.14 | 25.63 | 31.03 | 31.60 | 20.75 |

#### D. A Brief Overview of the Image of Cluj-Napoca throughout Time

Cluj-Napoca cannot be regarded otherwise than as the sum of everything it means: multicultural assets, a centuries-long tradition of higher education, remarkable personalities (from science to history, from medicine to literature), valuable pieces of architecture, interesting tourist and cultural attractions, an outstanding botanical garden, quickly developing business and economic center, lively entertainment, proficient medical services, competitive sports teams, relatively good access infrastructure, etc.

Throughout centuries, the life of the city has revolved around the Church and, of course, around the University, too. Everything changed after the instauration of the communist ruling in Romania. The former dictator, Nicolae Ceaușescu, had the dream of transforming Romania and all of its cultural poles into industrial production centers. Obviously, the communists' greatest problems were related to getting rid of the intellectuals and clerics, who – by means of knowledge and Christian values – represented a genuine threat for the “new man” project.

Despite having populated the cities with peasants who overnight became socialist workers (thus, losing their roots and values), after the events of December 1989, which led to the fall of communism and of the dictatorship, Romania has slightly begun to change its face and so did its major cities. Today, more than twenty years after 1989, neither Romania, nor its major regions and cities do not yet have a clear image within the eyes of foreigners; not even Romanians know for sure how to identify their country and its regions and cities.

Today's city of Cluj-Napoca is situated in the Western part of Transylvania's Depression, along the river Someș, in an area where the hills turn into mountains. Such places where the two geographic spaces intersect constitute the meeting place of two different categories of persons: those ones who live in the plains with those ones from the mountains with the purpose of exchanging goods.

In places such as this one, with fairs and markets, there have been established almost all Transylvanian towns: Brașov, Făgăraș, Sibiu, Orăștie, Sebeș, Deva, Blaj, Alba-Iulia, Turda, Dej, Jibou, Bistrița, Tîrgu Mureș, Reghin, Odorheiu Secuiesc. [1], [6]

Because of the fact that the purpose of this paper is not to present the history of the development of the city, we are going to resume to a brief illustration of the major stages in the city's development throughout history:

- the oldest human settlement discovered in Gura Baciului and in other areas from Cluj-Napoca (Memorandumului street, Mănăștur neighborhood), belong to the Neolithic culture (Starčevo-Criș, Early Neolithic) and are 6,000-5,500 years old – these are in fact the oldest remainings of the Neolithic culture ever discovered in Transylvania, not only in Cluj;
- vestiges belonging to the Late Neolithic (Vinca-Turdaș

culture) were discovered on the Northern side of Unirii Square;

- archaeological vestiges from the transition from Neolithic to Bronze Age were discovered in several places from Cluj-Napoca (Hoia forest, on the Citadel Hill, in the Central Cemetery, in the yard of the History Museum, on Feleacu hill, etc.), thus proving the intensive inhabitation of Cluj during those times;
- Bronze Age artifacts were discovered in the area of the Central Station, on Corneliu Coposu boulevard, in Hoia forest, etc.;
- traces belonging to the first stage of the Iron Age were identified near the University Central Library, on Pietroasa street, in Mănăştur neighborhood;
- the second period of the Iron Age (corresponding to the Dacian epoch) is less represented in Cluj compared to other Transylvanian towns; two Celtic-Dacian cemeteries were discovered at Apahida and Dezmir, proving the joint-living of the two people; a Dacian settlement was discovered near Someşeni baths;
- during the Roman conquest here there was established Napoca, initially as a village and later on it became a *Colonia* being than raised to the state of *municipium* (city); the Roman city was most probably situated in the old town of today's central area (between the streets: Samuil Micu and Emil Isaac (in the West), Octavian Petrovici and Andrei Şaguna (in the North), Bolyai János and Dávid Ferenc (in the East) and Napoca street and Eroilor boulevard (in the South); (see Fig. 1) unfortunately, most of the Antique vestiges are covered by the Mediaeval town, which makes it rather difficult if not impossible to uncover them;



Fig. 8. The Roman City of Cluj [16]

- after the Romans' Retreat the city continued to be inhabited but, like other Transylvanian towns between the 5<sup>th</sup> and the 9<sup>th</sup> Centuries, Cluj found itself in the way of various migratory peoples (Ostrogoths, Gepidaes and

Slavs);

- Mediaeval Cluj is linked to two very important historic sites, the earth fortification Calvaria Monastery (9<sup>th</sup> Century) and the civil settlement developed close to today's Museum Square; the environment was a multicultural one, bringing together three different populations: Romanians, Hungarians, and Germans;



Fig. 9. The Mediaeval City of Cluj [16]

- on the 19<sup>th</sup> of August 1316 King Carol Robert de Anjou raised the mediaeval settlement at the state of *civitas* (city), thus granting Cluj a series of privileges (the rights: to chose its own judge and priest, to own its lands, to benefit from tax exemptions all over Transylvania, etc.);
- the economic development of the city lead to its town-planning development, too as well as to the elevation of its cultural and educational activities;
- the modern town continued to development, extending its limits and systemizing its architecture, adopting modern transportation (railways and trams), developing its economic system (with local banks and credit enterprises);
- Cluj was the capital of the Principality of Transylvania until 1849, when the chair was moved to Sibiu;
- in 1869 the Great Principality of Transylvania lost its independence; the dual Austro-Hungarian Empire meant more oppression of the Romanians, which lead to new movements against the dominants; the end of the First World War brought the long-expected unification of Transylvania with Romania, which put an end to the Hungarian domination;
- between the two world wars the city's life flourished until its development was stopped by the ceasing of North-Western Transylvania to Hungary during the Second World-War, when Romanians were once again oppressed and pauperized;
- unfortunately, the end of the war was followed by the instauration of communism which meant on one hand heavy industrialization, nationalization of private enterprises, destruction of agriculture, and on the other hand the oppression of intellectuals and clerics and the

building of the “working class”. [1], [6]

Despite its long existence, of centuries, today Cluj-Napoca does not have a clear identity. We have presented the city’s development because we believe that its historic roots must be present in the city’s brand architecture.

#### E. The City’s Identity at the Beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

One of the first sketches of the city’s identity – although not intended so – is linked to the renowned Romanian playwright, Ion Luca Caragiale. The writer had at one point considered a “willing exile” in Transylvania. The purpose of his fleeing out of Bucharest (“little Paris”) was that of escaping from everything that was familiar to him, including the local people. After having thoroughly analyzed Braşov, Sibiu and Cluj, he finally made up his mind and... he moved to Berlin. Clearly, he refused Paris and Rome and manifested his clear preference towards a German, Middle-European culture (which could also be found in the three Transylvanian towns). [7]

According to Ion Vartic, the essayist Mihai Rădulescu is the one who offered in the 1950s explanations regarding the reasons why Caragiale had considered Cluj as a potential new home. The essayist was himself an escapee from Bucharest. Briefly, Rădulescu gives his own cultural-geographic definition of Cluj:

- “Cluj is a city that is neither «province» nor capital, and from here are driven both its drama and greatness” [7];
- it is not a “province” because provincial towns, that are primitive and culturally unfulfilled, gravitate like planets around their central suns, the capitals [7];
- the city is clearly not primitive, nor culturally unaccomplished, but, on the contrary it is egocentric and sufficient / proud within its borders of miniature metropolis; everything provides Cluj the statute of “miniature capital” [7]

As Rădulescu sees Cluj, there are three elements that grant the city this position of “miniature capital” [7]:

- geography: Cluj represents a “center of a homogenous citadel of Transylvania, far away from Bucharest and Budapest, isolated between the mountains together with its small Transylvanian state”;
- ethnicity: “within the city there exists a «mixture of people», who hypothetically would have to pull in equal measures towards Bucharest and Budapest” but instead of this from this multiethnic environment there grows a centripetal force, that makes the city revolve around itself;
- architecture and style: the history of Cluj and its architecture gives it the features of a genuine Central-European city, with a special air driven by the mixture of “the nude, uniform, functional German house and the French *hôtel particulière* of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century” to which there must be added the typical Austrian house or palace with inner balcony-corridors (for example, the *Bánffy palace*). From the point of view of its style [7], Cluj is

neither Romanian, nor Hungarian but Austrian (one may easily notice the Gothic and Baroque churches; the Florentine-like statue of Saint George killing the dragon; the Austrian Secession buildings *Urania*, *Astoria*, *Metropol*, etc.; the Jugend style palace of today’s Prefecture; the Neo-Gothic buildings at the beginning of Horea street, by the *Large Bridge*; the Eclectic buildings, such as the former *Hotel Continental / New York*; etc.; the building of the *Romanian National Theater* elevated by the Austrian enterprise “Fellner und Hemler”). Historically, Cluj achieved its greatness during the times of Maria-Theresa when it became the capital of the Autonomous Principality of Transylvania, being directly dependent from the Habsburg Crown, a possession of the Empire that was independent from Hungary. [7] The atmosphere and culture of a place strictly depend on the features of its people. Mr. Vartic describes them as being fully and authentically Transylvanian; that means: civilized and decent, of a certain “character”, mannered and formalists; they certainly lack: “slyness and superficiality” [7].

Synthesizing, we may refer to the conclusion of Ion Vartic, that throughout its history, Cluj sketched its own atmosphere and identity. “With the university, the library, the theatres, the operas, the academic college, the sportive park, the botanical garden, the exhibitions Cluj is meant to be a small-sized metropolis” like the German university towns [7]. Rădulescu perceived the city as an “antechamber of the Occident”; obviously, this was the Reason Caragiale had considered Cluj as a possible new home. Many other authors and personalities of Romanian, Hungarian and other nationalities have at different points discussed Cluj but the presentation of such approaches is not the key subject of this paper.

## II. PROBLEM FORMULATION

In 1996 Simon Anholt set the framework of nation branding and later on he expanded it upon cities, too. The specialist has created a complex tool that enables comparisons among nations and cities as destinations.

In the modern environment, characterized by fierce competition both at national and a local levels such approaches are extremely valuable. Resuming to elaborating fancy taglines, attractive brochures, videos or any other promotional materials, to investing considerable amounts of money in PR activities, etc. does not represent the winning solution unless destinations acknowledge the fact that they themselves need to change and to truly represent what they advertise. Otherwise any destination branding attempt is synonym with a waste of financial resources. “The only sure way places can change their images is by changing the way they behave: they need to focus on the things they make and do, not the things they say.” [11] Anholt’s city brand hexagon, as analyzed in the *City Brand Index* (CBI), provides information concerning:

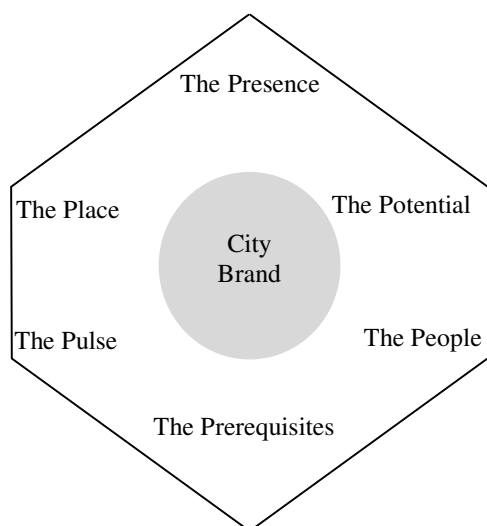


Fig. 10. The City Brand Hexagon [2]

- the *presence*, which indicates the notoriety and reveals the city's international status and standing;
- the *place*, that sums up the perceptions regarding the physical aspects of the city (how pleasant or unpleasant they imagine being outdoors and traveling around the city, how beautiful it is and how the climate is like);
- the *potential*, which refers to economic, educational, and health service opportunities that are offered by the city to its inhabitants, visitors, businesses and immigrants; the evaluation goes as far as measuring the city's capability to offer attractive jobs, well-developed educational infrastructure or good medical services;
- the *pulse*, that is associated with the city's appeal from the point of view of urban lifestyle, excitement and leisure offerings, both for long-term residents and for short-term visitors;
- the *people*, who give life to the city and who contribute to the city's attractiveness through their openness, communication skills, abilities and willingness or even through their behavior; they are strongly related to the safety image;
- the *prerequisites* (or the city's infrastructure), which definitely contribute(s) to the city's image from the point of view of the cost of living, the possibility of finding satisfactory affordable accommodation or public amenities, in general. [2]

The central issue of our present paper regards the identification of the elements that constitute the competitive forces of the city of Cluj-Napoca and which may and should be taken into consideration as pillars of the destination's branding projects. In this respect, starting from the fact that during the public meetings organized by the City Hall, students were identified as an essential ingredient of the city. Obviously, as we have pointed out in the first part of the paper, Cluj-Napoca has for centuries had its images closely linked to students, having been for centuries an academic city.

We attempt to find an answer to the following questions: *How do first year students enrolled at Universitatea Babeș-*

*Bolyai perceive the city in relation with Transylvania? How is Cluj-Napoca's tourist potential appreciated by other Romanians? How do Romanian local public authorities understand to get involved in the branding processes of their cities? Are the websites of the city halls used as communication tools in the promotion of Romanian destinations?*

### III. PROBLEM SOLUTION

During the spring of 2009, an online survey targeted at various Romanian groups of people was implemented; the 196 respondents who offered valid answers were structured as it follows: by gender: women (70 %) and men (30 %); by age groups: less than 25 years old (35 %), between 26 and 40 years (46 %) and over 40 years (19 %); by education groups: undergraduates and students (20 %), college and university graduates (44 %) and post-graduates (36 %); by permanent residences: from Cluj County (58 %), from other Transylvanian counties (26 %), and from the rest of Romania, other countries and not declared (17 %).

During a time-span of two weeks, from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 29<sup>th</sup> of October 2009, a number of 319 students were asked to mention the first three positive and three negative aspects they associate with Transylvania as a tourist destination. Because our analysis has revealed the fact that most of their spontaneous associations of the region were closely related to Cluj-Napoca, we are able to present some of their considerations regarding the city, too. Despite the fact that Cluj-Napoca is not included in the CBI, we have decided to adapt Anholt's brand hexagon in order to be able to later on compare our findings to the results of the city brand index. Given the profile of our research, the results obtained can only be regarded as qualitative ones; they are further on going to be used within quantitative investigations.

The investigated sample had the following structure: gender groups included: women (53 %) and men (45 %), and undeclared gender (2 %); ethnic and nationality groups were dominated by Romanians (87 %), then there followed: Hungarians (5 %), foreigners (4 %), and other and undeclared nationalities (4 %); the age groups massively included students aging between 18 and 25 (90 %), while the remainder were over 25 and undeclared; by permanent residences the sample had the following structure: from Cluj County (52 %), from other Transylvanian counties (31 %), and from the rest of Romania, other countries and not declared (17 %).

Our first research aimed at evaluating the tourist offer of Cluj-Napoca. Respondents were asked to rate the tourist offer of Cluj-Napoca on a five point scale, where 1 is very poor and 5 stands for excellent; the following results were obtained:

- religious tourism (3.12),
- cultural and educational tourism (3.44), and
- urban tourism (3.38).

The average values reveal that the tourist offer of the city is generally appreciated as satisfactory (definitely not “very good”). Because of the fact that urban tourism is usually associated with cultural tourism (this being, at this point, the best solution for Cluj-Napoca, as we have already pointed out above), we were interested to identify the most notorious attractions of the city. We are going to refer to them by types:

- museums (National Art Museum, Transylvanian History Museum, Ethnographic Museum, the museums of Universitatea Babeş-Bolyai, and the Pharmacy Museum);
- churches and cathedrals (Saint Michael Roman-Catholic church, Orthodox Cathedral, Greek-Catholic Cathedral, “Ioan Bob” Greek-Catholic church, Orthodox church on the hill, Franciscan church, and Calvaria Roman-Catholic church and the earth fortification around it);
- architecture works (the Bánffy Palace, the Citadel, the Tailors’ Tower, Calvaria earth fortification, Corvin house); and
- other attractions (Universitatea Babeş-Bolyai, the National Theater “Lucian Blaga” and the Romanian Opera, the Hungarian Theater and Opera, the Botanical Garden, the Central Park, several statues – Matei Corvin, Saint George killing the dragon, The Transylvanian School, Baba Novac, Lupa Capitolina, the Philharmonic, Roman vestiges).

Regarding the strengths and weaknesses of Cluj-Napoca, we may present the most frequently mentioned categories:

- positive aspects:
  - the city’s architecture;
  - the atmosphere (many young people and students, it is lively, here there are organized many cultural events);
  - adequate and sufficient accommodation facilities;
  - attractive cultural and historic objectives and tourist attractions (museums, libraries, bookstores, well developed cultural infrastructure, etc., top universities, monuments, etc.);
  - diversified gastronomic offer (many restaurants of all types);
  - the local public administration is interested to develop tourism (rehabilitation of down-town streets, walking areas, clean and tidy areas, there is a tourist information center down-town, the Tailors’ Tower was rehabilitated and it is included in the tourist circuit);
  - multicultural environment (diversity of cultures, religions and ethnicities, the spirit of Cluj-Napoca);
  - good living standard; the people (educated, civilized, with common sense, hospitable, open-minded, warm and friendly, hardworking, serious);
  - varied entertainment facilities (clubs, bars, discos, cafes, etc.);
  - good shopping places (two malls and several large

shopping centers, many cozy boutiques);

- green environment (Botanical Garden, Central Park and other parks, Hoia forest and the Ethnographic Museum, Făget woods, etc.); provided services are fair when regarded in relationship with the prices;
- negative aspects:
  - the local public administration seems to be rather criticized than praised (many beggars, poor signalization of less notorious tourist attractions, poor road infrastructure, low investments in tourism development, little implication in the rehabilitation of historic monuments and buildings, lack of cleanliness in peripheral neighborhoods, lack of parking places, poor organization and promotion of the destination, traffic jams, air pollution, etc.);
  - multiculturalism seems to be perceived as a negative aspect (especially by the young generation that is easily manipulated);
  - racist attitude of the students towards the Roma minority, etc.);
  - the relatively high living standard is perceived as a negative aspect because of the fact that prices are higher;
  - the people (besides the positive aspects from above, there are some negative ones, too: many pick-pockets and beggars, lack of education and civilization, etc.);
  - the city’s weather is rather shifty; provided services are perceived as poor.

Given the situation of Romania’s tourism we believe it is obvious that very much of the development of the country’s tourist industry depends on the manner in which local public administration representatives interfere. Such involvements can be carried out by means of a coherent tourist policy that is imperative for the revival of tourism and by delegating tasks to capable employees. Moreover, the cooperation among local authorities and specialists coming from the practice as well as also from the educational sides is more than welcome when it cities try to draw up development policies for the city. Any policy ought to aim at:

- the reduction of taxes;
- treating international tourism as an export activity;
- exempting the reinvested profit from taxes for a certain period of time;
- continuing the improvement of the legislative and institutional frameworks;
- involving the state in the financial support of tourism investments, especially of those of public interest (infrastructure), as well as the international and internal tourist promotion;
- developing the special professional training and the professional reorientation for the unemployed from the other economic sectors;



- founding the network of tourist education institutions integrated into the European network of tourist and hotel management education;
- correlating the programs and the development of tourism projects with the regional development programs (transportation, telecommunications, landscaping etc.);
- awarding a greater attention to opinion surveys;
- imposing quality brands, in order to increase the competitiveness on the tourist market and the acknowledgement of the service quality in tourism.” [3]

The present research also aims at determining the measure in which local public administration institutions contribute to the promotion of tourism, respectively to that of a city’s cultural tourism offer. An analysis was carried out at the level of the websites of the 41 city-halls of the county residence towns and of Bucharest. Although we expected the Romanian city-halls to be more involved in the life of the city and in the development of its tourist industry, the reality is different, as the results obtained throughout our analysis indicate:

- two of the 42 capitals of the counties, the “most important” towns of Romania, do not even have a website of their city-hall;
- roughly 90 % of the analyzed city-halls host a tourism-related section on their websites but:
  - only 81 % indicate the main attractions of the city;
  - even fewer mention the heritage sites 64 % of the city;
  - around 60 % of them provide information regarding the surrounding areas;
  - less than half of them, that is 48 %, offer information about the accommodation facilities;
  - very few (29 % for the restaurants and 21 % for the bars) provide on their websites gastronomic information (any sort of a general presentation, including menu and location details) of the;
- despite the fact that Romania claims to be a wine producer, as it possesses many wines, only one city-hall refers to those ones that are in its area, despite the fact that at least a quarter of the county residences have important wines in their close neighborhoods;
- foreign language communication is essential when a city or town addresses foreigners in order to attract them, either as plain visitors or as future entrepreneurs and business partners and, eventually, as investors; local officials have not yet understood this fact (or perhaps they rely on “online translators” or “translator sites”, which we do not recommend at all, because of the poor quality translations.

Table 2. Foreign Languages, Communication and Websites of the City-Halls

| Languages<br>Regions | En. | Fr. | Ger. | Hu. | It. | Sp. | Other |
|----------------------|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-------|
|----------------------|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-------|

| Languages<br>Regions | En.       | Fr.      | Ger.     | Hu.      | It.      | Sp.      | Other    |
|----------------------|-----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| North-East           | 2         | 1        | 0        | 0        | 0        | 0        | 0        |
| South-East           | 2         | 0        | 0        | 0        | 0        | 0        | 0        |
| South                | 3         | 1        | 0        | 0        | 0        | 0        | 0        |
| South-West           | 1         | 0        | 0        | 0        | 0        | 0        | 0        |
| West                 | 2         | 0        | 1        | 2        | 0        | 0        | 1        |
| North-West           | 5         | 2        | 2        | 2        | 0        | 0        | 0        |
| Center               | 4         | 1        | 2        | 3        | 0        | 1        | 1        |
| Bucharest-Ilfov      | 0         | 0        | 0        | 0        | 0        | 0        | 0        |
| <b>Total Romania</b> | <b>19</b> | <b>5</b> | <b>5</b> | <b>7</b> | <b>0</b> | <b>1</b> | <b>2</b> |

Obviously, being present on the Internet and doing so in a single language (Romanian) is equivalent to not being online at all. From among the eight regions of development, only three – West, North-West and Center – have in fact translated their websites into more than one or two foreign languages, the other institutions practically address only to the Romanians. We must also point out the fact that the overall quality of the tourism-related information provided by them is rather poor: most of the websites are crowded with unattractive texts (not to mention that they are written mainly in Romanian). From the 42 towns, only 25 have at least one Tourist Information Center.

Recently, the County Council (another local administration body) announced that there is going to be opened a second tourist information center in Cluj-Napoca, and that tourism promotion is going to be ensured by the means of some other ones in the smaller towns of the county and in the main resorts of Cluj County (such as Băișoara, Beliș and Mărișel).

Moreover, the City Hall has successfully applied for a project based on European Funds aimed at the development of a brand for Cluj-Napoca; the core idea is “Cluj-Napoca, Transylvania’s Treasure City”. [15] The attempt can be considered at least a bit courageous, due to the fact that the city, although beautiful and with a rich Mediaeval heritage, is not known as the host of any kind of a spectacular treasure, except for the liveliness of its students. But still, can this be considered sufficient when it comes to differentiation factors on a fiercely competitive market?!

#### IV. CONCLUSION

Obviously, Cluj-Napoca enjoys many positive aspects that can become pillars of the destination’s brand. Many of the appreciated qualities of the city can be also found in the ones mentioned over 60 years ago, therefore we may show that the city can continue to follow this line of an academic center that enjoys a rich cultural tourism potential that needs to be valorized. The local public administration representatives must concentrate on diminishing the impact of the aspects perceived as negative and must continue its attempt of branding the city as a (tourist) destination. Transforming Cluj-Napoca into a strong urban tourist destination can help the city strengthen its position of key business destination too. Anholt’s tool is going

to be refined and further used for the measurement of the city's image both among Romanians and among foreigners.

Last but not least, the development of the Romanian tourist and hospitality industry throughout the past twenty years has revealed the country faces deep problems when it comes to the financial impact of its tourism upon the economy; these are generated by a set of combined factors: poor quality of provided services, poor access infrastructure, relatively unattractive quality-price ratio, tax evasion and lack of professionalism both among service providers and authorities at most levels. Public representatives must understand that, for example, a lower taxation level for tourist activities can be expected on one hand to stimulate the legalization of more business activities (that nowadays function underground) and, on the other hand, to stimulate tourism consumption; moreover, high taxes determine illicit practices and contribute to the continuous decline of tourism demand. The tourist offer must also be shaped according to the requirements of the customer. Today, it has become clear that the classic form of tourism which "is known as a series of leisure time or sporting activities, involving visiting picturesque sights or scientifically, historically, geographically etc. relevant ones" [8] has changed.

Clearly, there are many other aspects that ought to be investigated when it comes to the branding of a city based on a core idea such as "Cluj-Napoca, Transylvania's Treasure City". Promises must be kept and, in this context, we cannot but wonder if the city has the capacity to live up to its claimed identity. Still, it is much better to start from somewhere, that not to try doing anything.

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