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DEFINING PLACE BRAND IDENTITY:
METHODS AND DETERMINANTS OF APPLICATION

Place or destination branding has become a very popular approach to manage and foster the development of cities, regions and countries. To make the process more efficient, there is a need to develop tools for place brand identification. The authors present four methods that allow specification of place brand identity (they are: Brand Identity Prism, Brand DNA, Brand Code and Bull's eye). Critical analysis of the above methods is provided and one of them is applied to Poznan agglomeration — a big city with neighboring communes. Such an administrative unit causes special challenges for branding, as its process embraces more than one place and one identity.
Keywords: place brand identity, agglomeration, metropolis, Poznan.

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ІДЕНТИФІКАЦІЯ ТОПОГРАФІЧНИХ БРЕНДІВ ТУРИЗМУ:
МЕТОДИ І ФАКТОРИ ЗАСТОСУВАННЯ

У статті описано, як брендування туристичних локацій стало дуже популярним підходом до управління і стимулювання розвитку міст, регіонів і країн. Щоб зробити цей процес більш ефективним, необхідно розробити засоби індивідуалізації бренду. Представлено чотири методи, які дозволяють ідентифікувати бренд, один з них застосований до Познаньської агломерації, яка включає місто Познань і навколишні населені пункти. Така адміністративна одиниця особливо складна в брендуванні, тому що включає в себе більше однієї географічної локації і більше одного бренду.
Ключові слова: ідентифікація топографічних брендів, агломерація, мегаполіс, Познань.
Рис. 5. Літ. 25.

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ИДЕНТИФИКАЦИЯ ТОПОГРАФИЧЕСКИХ БРЕНДОВ ТУРИЗМА:
МЕТОДЫ И ФАКТОРЫ ПРИМЕНЕНИЯ

В статье описано, как брендирование туристических локаций стало очень популярным подходом к управлению и стимулированию развития городов, регионов и стран. Чтобы сделать этот процесс более эффективным, необходимо разработать средства индивидуализации бренда. Представлено четыре метода, которые позволяют идентифицировать бренд, один из них применен к Познаньской агломерации, которая включает город Познань и окружающие населенные пункты. Такая административная единица особенно сложна в брендинге, так как включает в себя более одной географической локации и более одного бренда.
Ключевые слова: идентификация топографических брендов, агломерация, мегаполис, Познань.

1. Place brand identity

Place marketing and recently place branding have become widely discussed approaches to support places' growth and development (e.g. Kotler et al. 1993; Matson, 1994; Olins, 2002; Kavaratzis, 2004; Anholt, 2005). National, regional and local authorities attempt to embrace these concepts in an effort to successfully manage competitive places (Kotler & Gertner 2002) in a wide range of areas and

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segments such as: tourists, investors, residents, students or skilled workforces to name few. At the same time place branding is often seen as a panacea and not as a well understood process for attracting desired segments and promoting places (Papadopoulos & Heslop, 2002; Kavaratzis, 2004; Parkerson & Saunders, 2005; Anholt, 2006).

Despite a growing amount of literature devoted to place branding, there is still a noticeable lack of agreement regarding the semantic space of the notions of brand, image, identity and reputation (eg. Olins, 2003). Yet, as far as the role of differentiation is concerned, Hankinson and Cowking (1993) state that a brand is a symbol that codifies the image a producer likes to portray. A place brand should therefore be considered from: the senders' perspective – as the projection of place identity, and the receivers' perspective – as the image of a place.

According to Kall (2001), "the purpose of identity is to define the meaning, intention and reason for the brand; the identity needs to precede the image". In this way, the branding process relates directly to place management. It means that all activities undertaken by the place's authorities are aiming at regulating (changing, reinforcing or forming) buyers' perceptions about the place that is being branded. To this end, place managers utilise a range of marketing instruments that create and preserve the place brand identity.

In this particular context, the literature often points to corporate branding (Ashworth, Voogd, 1990; Balmer, Gray, 2003; Kotler et al., 1999; Rainisto, 2003; Trueman et al., 2004). Similar to corporate identity, place identity is defined as "the sum of its characteristic features and activities which differentiate it from other entities" (Klage, 1991). It is therefore subject to planning and intentional arrangement of activities within a place. Consequently, the image is the reflection of this identity, the reaction to this message in the minds of recipients.

According to Aaker, there are three notions related to brand identity. First, the brand essence, captures the brand values and vision in an ambivalent timeless identity statement. Aaker sees this as the internal magnet that keeps the core identity element connected (Aaker, 2000). Secondly, the core identity that represents the essence of the brand and contains the associations that are most likely to remain constant over time (Aaker, 1996). Last, the extended brand identity fulfils completeness of the brand providing a consistent direction of the brand. Where core elements are timeless, the extended identity contains elements that do not belong to the timeless foundation of the brand identity (Aaker, 1996).

The biggest challenge in the branding process is to define the heart of the brand identity and its starting point, that is a brand essence. Brand essence is usually defined in one sentence or short statement that reflects the idea behind the brand concept. Different methods are applied to find the most appropriate brand essence and its superstructure. The most popular ones are presented below.

2. Methods of defining the brand identity

2.1. Brand Identity Prism. Kapferer has developed a brand identity prism where he distinguishes the sender and recipient sides, plus an externalisation and internalisation side (Van Haaften, 2011). The six identity facets express the tangible and intangible characteristics of the brand (see figure 1) and give it a unique authority and legitimacy of values and benefits (Kapferer, 1992).
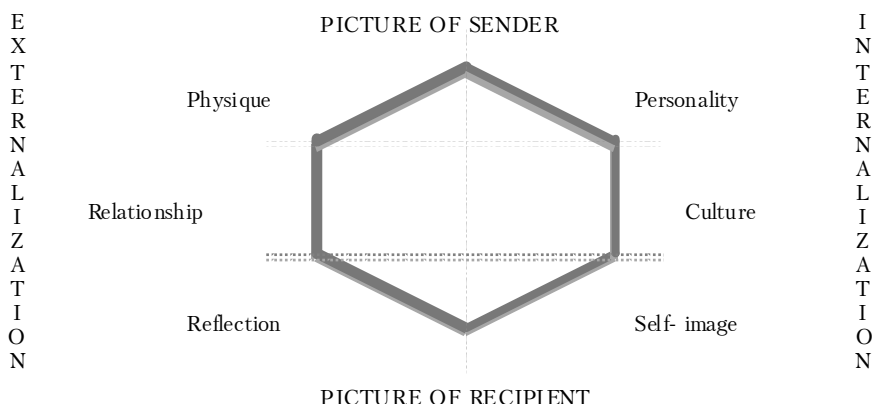
PICTURE OF SENDER

E X T E R N A L I Z A T I O N (left vertical)   I N T E R N A L I Z A T I O N (right vertical)

Physique   Personality

Relationship   Culture

Reflection   Self-image

PICTURE OF RECIPIENT

Figure 1. **Brand identity prism and three-tier pyramid** *(Kapferer, 1992)*

    The six facets of the identity prism define the brand identity from different perspectives and set the boundaries within it which are free to change or to develop in time (Kapferer, 1992) and can be described as: 1. Physique − an exterior tangible facet communicating physical specificities, colour, form and brand qualities. Physique is the starting point of branding and therefore it forms the brands backbone. 2. Personality − an internal intangible facet which forms the character, soul and brand personality which are relevant for brands. 3. Culture − an internal intangible facet to integrate the brand into the organization which is essential in differentiating brands. 4. Relationship − an exterior facet with tangible and intangible areas, defines the behaviour that indentifies the brand − the way the brand connect to its customers. 5. Reflection − an external intangible facet reflecting the customer as he or she wishes to be seen as a result of using a brand, the so-called target outward's mirror. 6. Self-image − an external intangible facet reflecting the customer attitude towards the brand. These inner thoughts connect personal inner relationships with the brand.

    While the Kapferer Brand Prism method works for numerous consumer goods brands, its application to place brands is restricted. The method's key limitation is its synthetic nature which involves focusing on distinct and unambiguously defined brand areas. In the context of place brands, the abundance of target groups and the complexity of the place product largely hinder adoption of the Brand Prism as a tool for building up a brand identity. The method may prove useful only with reference to small territorial areas focused on a single, narrowly-defined group (e.g. inhabitants) with a strong and clear point of difference.

    2.2. The Brand DNA. The Brand DNA concept of defining a brand identity assumes that, like a living organism, a brand breathes, moves, evolves and adapts to its surroundings. Its core genetic structure is composed of elements and attributes unique to a brand's origins and environment. The Brand DNA is the genetic code that should guide the growth, development, and overall evolution of the brand. The concept consists of four basic elements that constitute the brand: values, style, differentiation and standards (see Figure 2).
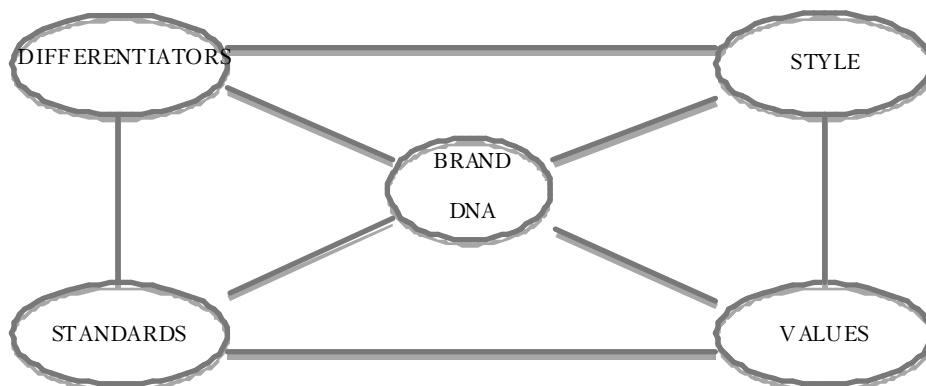
Figure 2. **The Brand DNA** (Chapman, Tulien, 2010)

Values in the concept are the guiding principles that reflect a brand's core ideology. The values determine all brand activity involving inside and outside organization decisions and actions. Successful linking of values to operational activities influences the most important strategic areas – relationships and reputation.

Brand style refers to brand personality and defines the way of presenting and delivering products and services. According to brand style, relations with the clients, staff and vendors should be described.

Differentiators are the unique and distinctive capabilities that enhance the brand to the business and customers. Brand distinctive capabilities can be a tremendous source of competitive advantage. Differentiation is a critical step if a brand is to set itself apart in the market place and occupy a distinctive position in the consumer's mind. Differentiation should be based on market areas in which the brand operates and can achieve an expert position.

Brand standards are levels of performance excellence across the internal and external organizational levels. Standards refer to four basic elements: employees, customers, processes and finance. Standards are the most tangible and measurable elements of the Brand DNA concept (Chapman, Tulien, 2010).

Defining a brand with respect to the 4 areas described above makes it possible to verify the brand's operational activity like its DNA. Owing to its reference to a living organism, the Brand DNA method seems to be also applicable in the context of a place brand identity. Each of the described elements can be developed in detail with the specific features of the place product considered. However, the method does not take into account a consumer insight. Practice shows that place management authorities lack the skills and knowledge indispensable to brand management. This is why inclusion of a consumer insight of different target groups seems to be a fundamental element of the place brand identity.

2.3. The Brand Code. Just like the Brand DNA model, the Brand Code concept relies on defining a brand as a living organism. This approach has been gaining support among academics and practitioners. The Brand Code model defines brand identity in six fundamental areas: mission, vision, values, product/benefit, positioning and styling (see Figure 3).
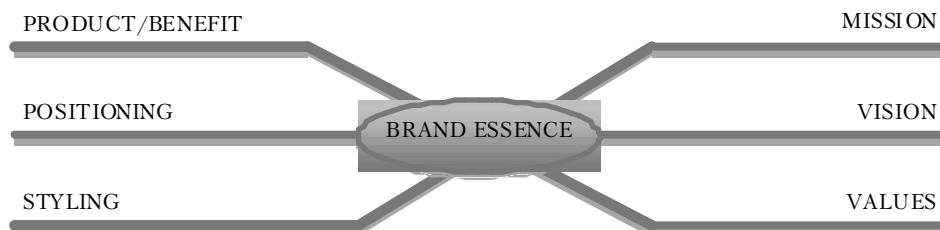
PRODUCT/BENEFIT   MISSION

POSITIONING   BRAND ESSENCE   VISION

STYLING   VALUES

Figure 3. **The Brand Code** *(Gad, 2001)*

Mission focuses on the brand's social role and the public benefits derived by the brand. Vision defines the brand's future, indicating possible directions of development which will ensure the brand's specific position in the market and in the audience's minds. Due to its vision, a brand does not focus only on ongoing activities but is also engaged in activities ensuring its desired position in the future. Values build up brand identity and are an important identification benchmark for the audience. Values make a brand credible and customer-friendly. Product/benefit is inherent in product features and of significance to the target group. Positioning consists in defining a brand in the context of its competitors and brand differentiation. Styling is defined by means of brand personality; it determines the communication style.

Developing the specific elements of the Brand Code results in defining the brand essence; it is the basis for developing the brand slogan which communicates the brand identity in a creative and synthetic way.

The Brand Code method contains additional elements of importance from the point of view of place brand management: the brand's social role and the vision of its future. Both elements are of special significance in the context of place brand management as decisions made by local authorities largely rely on the social aspect of the brand's functioning and the consequences of activities for future place development. However, just like with Brand DNA, it does not take into account a consumer insight which is a key for place brands and should reflect the needs and values of numerous target groups.

2.4. The Bull's Eye. The concept of the "Bull's eye" defines six key elements which establish the brand identity. They include (see figure 4):

a) the values represented by the brand — defining reference areas important to the brand;

b) brand personality — describing the brand in the context of psychological positioning;

c) brand proposition — a generally defined brand offer for the target group;

d) functional and emotional benefits;

e) substantiation — as the basis for the benefits' credibility;

f) brand essence/core — a crucial, abridged definition of the brand differentiator which should underlie positioning.

The starting point in defining specific elements is an insight into the needs, expectations and viewpoint of the target group. Due to the large number of target groups related to a place brand, analyses should focus primarily on areas common to various groups with the significance factor included. The Bull's Eye method of brand identity results in formulating a consumer takeout — the desired way in which the target group perceives the brand.
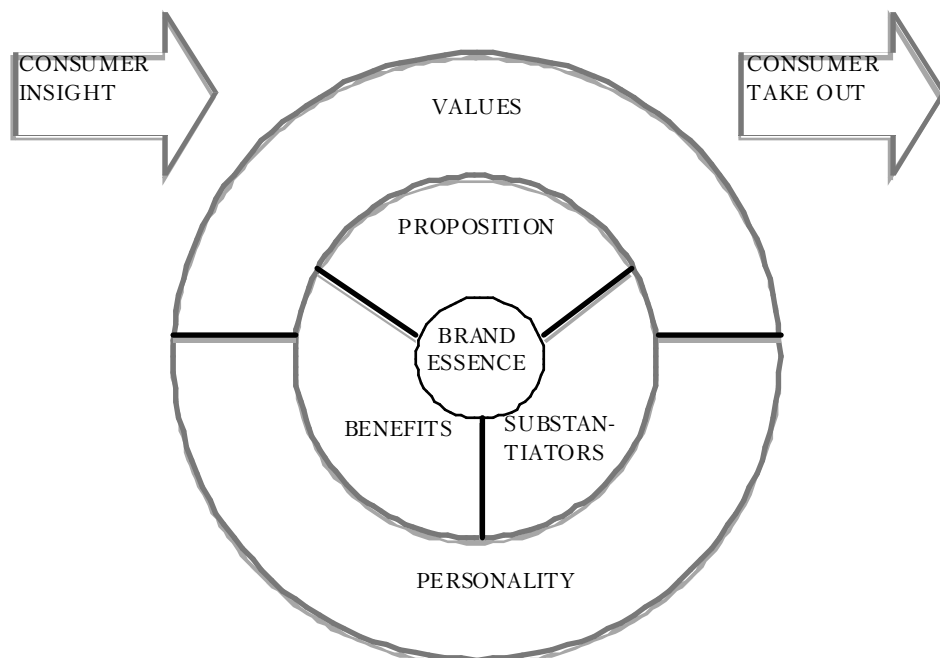
Figure 4. **The Bull's Eye**
(The Appletiser Brand Book, company internal documents, 2007)

Among the presented methods, the Bull's Eye concept is the most developed method of defining a brand identity. Bearing in mind management's poor experience in place brand management, this method seems to embrace the basic elements of identity in the most comprehensive way. At the same time, complementing the method with aspects related to the consumer insight and takeout allows better understanding of the essence of brand identity from the point of view of the target group.

In following section, implementation of the above method will be presented by the case of Poznan Agglomeration (Metropolitan) Brand. The project "Functioning and development directions of Poznan Agglomeration" has been carried out since 2009 by the Centre of Metropolitan Studies based in Poznan. The authors were responsible for the "Marketing of Poznan Agglomeration" part of the project.

3. Characteristics of Poznan agglomeration area

The Poznan Agglomeration is one of 10 agglomerations set up as a bottom-up initiative in Poland since 2005. They have various names: partnership agreement, metropolitan area, agglomeration, metropolis and metropolitan transportation association. All these entities make a big city (a metropolis; or sometimes two cities as it is in case of Polish associations) and its area of impact. By definition, such areas are characterized by a high level of development and high density of key functions of a metropolis. These areas are growth triggers with regards to production, job market, innovations, technology and social and cultural life.

Poznan, like the whole of the Wielkopolska region (one of 16 voivodeships-regions in Poland), is famous in Poland for its traditionally high level of work discipline and robust economy. Poznan is home to 8 public universities and 17 smaller, mostly

private-run colleges and institutions of higher education, attended by 133 thousand of students. Poznan attracts tourists also with events and its numerous examples of secular and sacral architecture, representing all styles and historical epochs.

The neighboring communes strengthen the city assets in all areas: tourism, business and residents environment. Almost 10% of businesses in the region of Wielkopolska operate in the Poznan District. Among the prevalent sectors are trade and services, followed by industry, real estate services and construction. The largest growth is observed in financial services and real estate sectors. Among others, it is so due to the Poznan International Fair, which attracts traders from all over the world. Close proximity to this large market affects entrepreneurs' decisions regarding the location of their businesses, and they choose not only Poznan but also communes around the city. Businesses operating in the area (more than 110,000 private companies) enjoy well-developed networks of institutions supporting entrepreneurship that are located in Poznan. Poznan Science and Technology Park, along with other research and development institutions, actively cooperates with entrepreneurs which form a driving force for the modern economy. Moreover, the number of companies with foreign capital participation is growing. Favorable location of the agglomeration in terms of transportation accessibility, well-developed road infrastructure and several warehouses constitute a superior logistical base (Global Arena, 2011).

The Poznan Agglomeration is quite diversified in terms of its tourist values. Most of its communes have a broad spectrum of cultural, natural, recreational and specialist values. Some of sports and recreation facilities host international sports events (Malta Sailing Regatta, the City Stadium in Poznan expanded for the EURO 2012 football championships), others are available to local residents.

More and more Poznan residents choose neighboring communes as their place to live. As a result, the development of transport and tourist-recreational infrastructure and foremost building of a common development strategy is required since nearly one million people influence the bloom of the city of Poznan and other communes. Among these needs, common marketing strategy is one of the urgent points to be developed, in order to meet the expectations of internal and external targets of the new identity coming into being. The starting point in this area is a brand strategy and more precisely, the definition of a brand identity.

The key issue in the process of creating the brand identity for Poznan Agglomeration is to define the common areas of identity between the brand of Poznan City and the emerging brand of Poznan Agglomeration. It is also crucial to identify the relations between them.

The analysis of European cases (Florek & Janiszewska, 2010) has shown that there is a wide spectrum of possibilities in this matter — from very tied, actually identical identities, to complete independence.

In the authors' opinion, in order to bulid a strong and competitive territorial unit in the case of Poznan Agglomeration, the concept of its brand should be strongly tied to the premises of central city's brand strategy. Such close support of the city brand is motivated by the fact, that, on the one side, the city of Poznan needs the communes' potential to became a metropolis (it is one of the goal of Poznan development strategy), and on the other hand, the communes need the city to develop themselves and to fulfill the needs of their residents, who benefit from the central city's strength. What

is more, Poznan has a stronger and clearer image (due to brand and promotion strategy being already implemented) than the agglomeration since it is a new form of territory. The simultaneous introduction of a separate agglomeration brand strategy could result in confusion of targets' perceptions and awareness.

The city of Poznan offers at the same time a possibility to transfer its image as a strong big city in many areas (business, culture, education etc.) to neighboring communes. These in turn, make available their potential assets (among others: recreational areas, investment grounds, housing construction) to the city. In other words, we can observe a mutual transfer of benefits.

As a result, only jointly Poznan and Poznan agglomeration communes have the potential and possibility to build a new quality, and thereby a new brand – metropolitan brand. The assumption thus has been made that Poznan Agglomeration brand should be transformed into a metropolitan brand.

As already mentioned, the foundation of all activities related to a place brand is the definition of its identity, and more precisely, its brand essence. In the case of the Poznan Agglomeration, it is recommended for the relations between the city brand and the agglomeration brand to be robust and close, based upon mutual benefits with minimum autonomy maintained (although the ideal and target solution is to treat the city and the agglomeration as a single cohesive organism – a metropolis). Therefore it has been assumed that the Poznan Agglomeration brand should draw on the values and the identity of the Poznan city brand while its strength consists in the unity and cooperation with the entire agglomeration.

4. The bull's eye method for the Poznan agglomeration brand

The project for the Poznan Agglomeration relies on the Bull's Eye concept which includes elements indispensable to the brand in a comprehensive way. When selecting the concept, the complex nature of the place brand was considered both in the realm of the multitude of target groups, competition and features of a place product.

At stage one of the project, four basic target groups were identified for the Poznan Agglomeration with the respective needs and opinions as the basis for defining the insight:

— the residents of the city of Poznan – "I live in a big city but I am aware that the quality of my life depends also on the potential and opportunities offered by the surrounding communes" (recreation areas, business opportunities, accommodation – the price and quality ratio etc.);

— the residents of the agglomeration's communes – "I live a quiet life in a small commune but I am aware that the proximity and the potential of a big city (Poznan) improves the quality of my life" (the cultural and educational offers, business standards, the trade offer);

— investors – "I am looking for a place to grow my business. I am looking for competent, highly skilled employees. I appreciate experience and quality as well as a modern approach to business";

— tourists – "when I travel I appreciate good organization, efficient and competent services, comprehensive solutions".

As a consequence of the adopted assumption of strong relations between the Poznan city brand and the agglomeration, the agglomeration brand values were defined with respect to the values inherent in the city brand identity (see Figure 5).
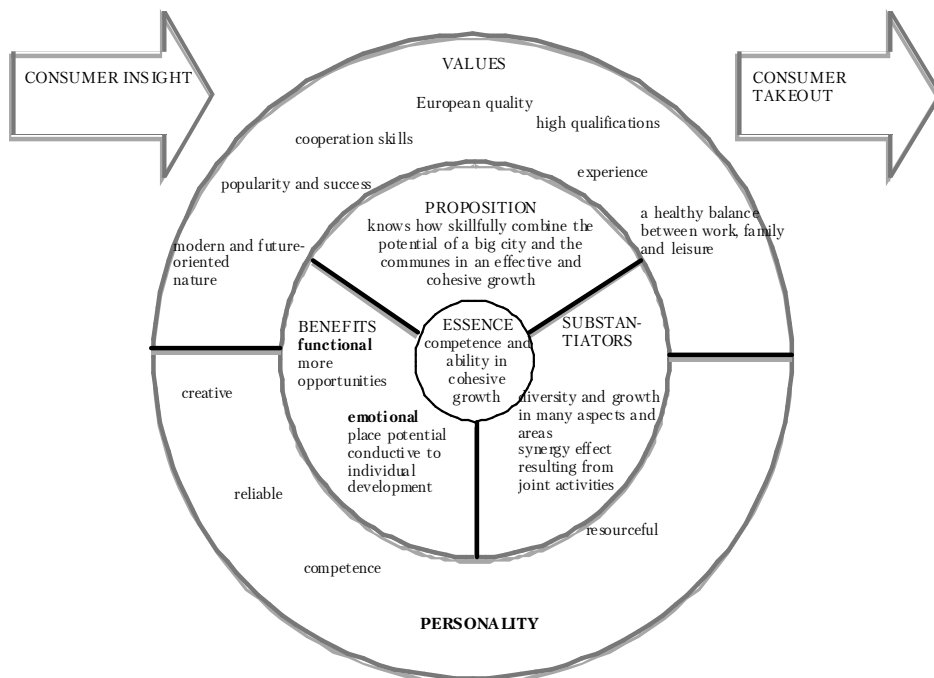
Figure 5. **The Bull's Eye for Poznan Agglomeration**

The Poznan brand is based on knowledge and skills, due to which all activities and undertakings in Poznan are organised and executed in a professional way. Over a 1000 year old efficiency tradition is an inspiration for the initiatives in the city. The brand idea is verbalised in basic brand communication. The motto accompanying the logo for Polish market is "Poznan. Miasto know-how" ("Poznan. The city of know-how").

As a consequence of Poznan branding strategy the basic values of an agglomeration include: quality; a combination of competence and high qualifications; skills (for an agglomeration, especially in the context of cooperation between territorial units); experience, popularity and success; a modern and future-oriented nature; a healthy balance between work, family and leisure (as a value characteristic of agglomeration growth). These values should set the direction for the agglomeration's growth with the activities aligned with the directions.

Similarly, the agglomeration brand personality was inspired by the identity of the city of Poznan and values like competence and resourceful. Ingenuity was developed into creativity while spontaneity was developed into activity with added features like reliability and good organization which may form the basis for benefits offered by a brand within an agglomeration (see Figure 5).

At the stage of preliminary work on the Poznan Agglomeration brand identity, the brand benefits were defined in a very general way; therefore later on they need to be identified in a more detailed fashion. From the residents' point of view, the basic functional values of a metropolis lie in the work opportunities, education, entertainment and recreation. In the emotional sphere, this place potential is conducive to

individual development and building a sense of identity with a place. Investors benefit from better business growth opportunities. Tourists are offered safety and high quality services in the form of well-thought and comprehensive tourist products. The offered benefits are justified by the diversity and growth of the Poznan Agglomeration in many aspects and areas (tourism and recreation, robust and dynamic Polish and foreign companies, universities, land for housing development, cultural and sports events) as well as the synergy effect resulting from joint activities of the agglomeration units which offer strength, dynamics and growth potential as well as more opportunities for all target groups.

Analyses of specific elements of brand identity resulted in defining the brand essence for the Poznan Agglomeration. The identity was defined as "competence and ability in cohesive growth" (see figure 5). The metropolis identity described in the Bull's Eye approach was also included into the following positioning statement:

Due to reliability, European quality, experience, competence and creativity, the Poznan Agglomeration knows how to skilfully combine the potential of a big city and the communes in effective and cohesive growth toward a modern metropolis. The metropolitan character contributes to a higher standard of living of all inhabitants and possible creation of a robust image of a modern and dynamically growing successful area.

The effects of defined brand identity are captured in the desired takeouts. Takeout relates to stakeholders' and target groups' needs, attitudes and expectations defined in their insights:

— the residents of the city of Poznan and the residents of the agglomeration's communes — "I have a higher life standard and more opportunities for my individual development — we have a better life together";

— investors — "Poznan Agglomeration increases the popularity and success of my business";

— tourists — "Poznan Agglomeration gives me the safety and comfort feeling when I'm on holiday".

Such takeouts are also the basis for verification of brand identity activities on different levels, that should be monitored in order to track the level of concurrence of brand identity implementation.

Application of the Bull's Eye method allows a comprehensive definition, identification and arrangement of the elements in the context of all entities within a metropolis. The defined brand identity and positioning statement provides the basis for devising a cohesive marketing strategy. Moreover, the defined brand identity will be the basis for further research related to developing the system of visual identity for the Poznan metropolis to communicate the key elements of identity. Brand identity will also serve as a verification tool in planning marketing activities for the Poznan metropolis brand.

5. Conclusions

Place branding is a relatively new area of marketing application. So are the methods of defining the place brand identity. The paper briefly discussed several approaches that enable to find out "the essence" of the place brand. Among these, Bull's eye method has been chosen as the most appropriate one since it takes into account the insights of place potential beneficiaries. Its application was presented by

the case of Poznan Agglomeration that is a special kind of territorial unit and an example of a complicated and complex product at the same time. From this point of view, the Bull's eye method appears to be the most adequate and useful in place brand management process. However, its appropriateness can be only verified over a certain period since the branding process needs time to prove the identity chosen and the way it was selected were the most adequate.

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Стаття надійшла до редакції 17.07.2013.