

PLACE BRANDING: A CHALLENGING PROCESS FOR BUCHAREST THE CAPITAL CITY OF ROMANIA

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Abstract: Marketing places though a relatively new activity has grown in importance as countries, regions and individual destinations such as cities compete with one another to attract investment and visitors. Almost every other region or important city will have at least one basic strategy to market itself for one or the other reason: investors or visitors. The dimension of marketing grows complex when a capital city needs being promoted. Recently for Romania, marketing its capital city using its identity and personality is a matter of crucial importance when considering competition. The identity of the capital city of an European country member could prove itself a challenging process given the fact that there are several common grounds, including uniformity, the group member would gave. As a result, individual, independent marketing becomes a necessity in order to differentiate and make the capital city visible and recognisable. Competition is the other aspect requiring clear, visible identity. In order to compete effectively, it is essential to identify the critical success factors and ensure these are incorporated into one's strategic planning. Even from a tourist point of view place and destination marketing indicate that image and identity play an important role in differentiating between similar alternatives. This paper is focusing on action undertaken so far by Bucharest, the capital city of Romania, to market itself and to build a brand. It is also presenting experts opinion and comments on results, assessing the place branding process, discussing its stages and situation as they are at present.

Key words: Place branding, Destination branding, City image, City identity.

Introduction

As the economic, social and political competition among cities has become a growing process, among many other aspects, places have felt the need to differentiate among themselves. They started to differentiate from each other, to signal out their individuality in pursuit of various economic, political or socio-psychological objectives.

Globalization of trade, investment, and labour markets results in increasing transport and communication and implicitly reducing distance. Therefore competition among cities is also increasing, sometimes becoming

fiercer. One aspect of this competition is the image of places held by residents, investors or visitors, and one instrument of public place management authorities is the creation or manipulation of such images.

Recently almost every government is more or less attempting to shape a specifically-designed place identity and promote it through images to targeted markets, whether external or internal, intended to attract investors or visitors. This practice is almost as old as the government itself. In this context, Romanian Government and Bucharest local authorities can be regarded as a special case study concerning their attitude and actions related to both national identity and the image of the country's capital. This paper is largely focusing on country marketing in addition to a more

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particular insight into place marketing and city branding of the country's capital, the city of Bucharest.

Marketing and branding Bucharest, should be largely dependent on the construction, communication and management of the city's image at least theoretically, simply because encounters between city and its residents, visitors, investors take place through perceptions and images. Marketing therefore cannot be considered other than 'the conscious and planned practice of signification and representation' (Firat & Venkatesh 1993, p. 246), which in turn is the starting point for examining place branding.

In city marketing and especially in the case of the city's existing residents, consumer's orientation would have to focus on how the residents encounter the city they live in, how they make sense of it, which physical, symbolic or other elements they evaluate in order to make their assessment of the city. Cultural geography, among the fields of geography, has dealt with such matters and has developed an understanding and methodology of analysis, useful at this point. According to Crang (1998) and Holloway & Hubbard (2001), people make sense of places or construct places in their minds through three processes. First, through planned interventions such as planning, urban design; second, through the way in which they or others use specific places; and third, through various forms of place representations such as films, novels, paintings, news reports and so on. It is generally acknowledged that people encounter places through perceptions and images. As Holloway & Hubbard (2001, p. 48) describe this, interactions with places may be 'through direct experience of the environment or indirectly through media representations'. However, what is critical is how this information is processed, via mental processes of cognition, to form stable and learned images of place, which are the basis for our everyday interactions with the environment. It is the mental maps and images that individuals create to allow them to navigate through complex reality, because 'our surroundings are often more complex than the sense we make of them'. Branding deals

specifically with such mental images. Place branding centres on people's perceptions and images and puts them at the heart of constructed, orchestrated activities, designed to shape the place and its future. Managing the place brand becomes an attempt to influence and treat those mental maps in a way that is favourable to the present circumstances and future needs of the place.

Place branding and place marketing

According to Ashworth (Ashworth and Voogd, 1988), selling places is a recently new idea which caught the attention of public planners in the 1980's. Since then, a considerable amount of literature on both marketing and branding places has been produced on aspects starting with defining place marketing and place branding, explaining how they work, and structuring their expertise. One of the most debated aspects is the one concerning the fact that places (countries, nations, regions, cities) are not simple products which can be marketed and branded as commodities. As a result, marketing and branding a place is not a simple application of product marketing and branding to places. Currently there is a general agreement in the marketing literature that the place brand is more than an identified name given to a product, it is also not only a synonym for a slogan issued by authorities. According to Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2005: 3), "places do not suddenly acquire a new identity thanks to a slogan or a memorable logo". The same aspect is argued and discussed by Anholt (2005), according to whom simple communications are no substitute for policies, while constructing and altering the image of a country or a city requires more substantial efforts than graphic design, advertising or PR campaigns. Flashy slogans and logos, pretty or picturesque images may be useful as instruments for marketing and branding a place in both cases, nation and cities, but they cannot substitute the existence of a coherent strategy.

According to Kotler (Kotler et al., 1999:63) place marketing is defined as "a place planning procedure concerning the satisfaction of the needs of target markets".

This is seen as successful if and when the two main parameters are satisfied: the enterprises' and the residents' satisfaction during the purchase of goods and services that the place provides and, secondly, the satisfaction of the expectations of potential target markets. In conclusion, according to the same author, successful place marketing involves the satisfaction of both internal and external stakeholders.

On the other hand, branding as defined by Keller (2003:26) is "a product, but one that adds other dimensions that differentiate it in some way from other products designed to satisfy the same need". Generally speaking, branding has all to do with basically creating an emotional connection with consumers through developing and emphasizing a unique personality characteristics or image. When geographic locations and/or organizations (countries, nations, regions, and cities) require branding, the goal is to simply make people aware of the location and then produce desirable associations to construct a favourable image to attract either visits or businesses or both.

Literature abounds in defining, explaining, discussing and arguing place marketing and place branding, its importance and the existing experiences. As a result, branding seems to be one particular chapter in place marketing. The same literature is also raising the case of the importance of place marketing and place branding in the modern competition when it comes to places selling, themselves. However, there are voices warning of a variety of dangers among which: treating place brands like commercial brands, as there are fundamental differences between the two (Fan, 2005); place branding is based on places being not quite what they are, introducing the discussion about what places can appear to be in the grip of a permanent identity crisis (Anholt, 2008). Hence there are authors starting with Anholt, who replaced brand with competitive identity. However, to keep this simple, the point is that place marketing and place branding is a distinctive sort of action involving distinctive methodology and techniques.

A brand as the core element of the process of branding embodies a whole set of

physical, social, psychological, traditional attributes, perceptions and beliefs associated with the place – country, nation, region, city. In other words, a brand is something distinctive through its positioning in the competition through its personality comprising a unique combination of functional attributes and symbolic values. Constructing a place brand is evidently a deliberate process, selecting the above mentioned attributes and associating them with the assumed features in order to add a certain value. As far as the evolution of place branding is concerned, city/destination branding precedes country branding as this normally requires a more holistic and creative approach.

According to the same Anholt (2008), place branding is based on five essential aspects. Places need to communicate with the outside world in a clear coordinated way; use an image in order to make reputation understood; use equity with the idea that reputation is a value of an asset which needs management; have a purpose, implying a powerful dynamic brand management; use innovation in influencing international public opinion. These aspects are normally seen by experts around the world as a starting point for policy makers in their attempts of constructing place branding of substance as strategy.

As far as Romania and its capital city are concerned, after 20 years of economic transition from a highly centralised communist economy towards a free, capitalist market-oriented one, they are still at a very early stage of developing a coherent branding strategy. This situation seems not to have changed or become more dynamic even after Romania joining the EU in 2007. The country brand, similarly to most of the other former communist countries in Central Eastern Europe, seems to emerge rather than be constructed, created, shaped, promoted and controlled in any organised manner. Interestingly enough, the country doesn't seem to completely lack intention or action. Searching the literature and the history of the undertaken events over the past 20 years, one can draw the conclusion that the process (conferences, debates, workshops, discussions

and limited public surveys) in itself is rather more important than the result. A variety of authorities, institutions and bodies starting with the Government itself and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, National Board for Strategic Development, Ministry of Regional Development and Housing, Ministry of Communication and Information Society, Ministry for SMEs, Trade and Business Environment, Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure, Ministry of Tourism, followed by the National Chamber of Commerce and Investment Promotion Agencies - all in all, these can be regarded as a variety of uncoordinated efforts with very little impact and even less results both externally and internally.

Place branding (both country and city) is a common aim for either attracting investors or visitors being aware that simple promotional campaigns aiming to increase investors' and visitors' awareness of a country and its localities proved to have limited impact: having a country and city brand is still crucially necessary to attract both investors and visitors. Even so, branding is not enough - and in Romania's case, modern infrastructure is more than a must in addition to skilled force, favourable tax policies and returns on investment. Romania is evidently a special case with a medium to large amount of money spent on developing a country brand, a significant large number of emigrants working abroad and very low label costs compared to almost every other European Union country except Bulgaria. Up until now, out of the uncoordinated and various attempts to construct a country brand, there are three basic promotion techniques that investment promotion agencies applied: erratic investment generation, erratic investors' services and inconsistent image building. Theoretically, the image building action and the investment service activities have had, as an ultimate aim, the attraction of more investment. Unfortunately the results have been of little impact, mainly due to political and economical instability. In terms of image building this reality meant that the investment agencies shifted their focus and

almost every other attempt, campaign and action have been abandoned, and replaced by a completely new one.

In both cases of attracting investors and visitors, Romania has managed to generate some in its early years of transition without even being concerned of any general image building. Romanian government and authorities have recently started to be concerned about image building and image techniques. As far as attracting investors is concerned, according to the *Ernst & Young Attractiveness Survey 2006* (which is ranking the European countries based on investors' perception and their relevance to branding) Romania, along with the Czech Republic and Poland, have a better image than reality and is facing the challenge to put its image into reality. This survey is basically outlining the major findings and compares image (perception) with reality. Out of 15 countries Romania scores 10 in the section of ranking image compared to 12 in the section of reality (ranking of Foreign Direct Investment). In conclusion, Romania is relying on a better image than reality.

The place image

The most important role in place branding is played by the place image and the way this is "manipulated" (Ashworth, 1994). The author considers that "places can only be sold through rigorous selection of its features in a place image" (Ashworth 1994: 128). In more detail, the place image is a construct of beliefs, impressions, ideas, perceptions of individuals of different components of the nation, parts of a country, areas of a city. Almost all place images are constructed using a large pre-existing store of information, feelings, expectations, of individuals who have physically visited the place or not. Consequently, a place image is very much a projected image.

Experts on place images largely indicate two types of such projected images: a) the intentional image (result of a promotional activity); b) the unintentional image (result of the information from other sources). When it

comes to place image, both Romania as a country and its capital, the city of Bucharest, it becomes rapidly evident that the case is of some sort of particularity. Neither Romania, nor Bucharest are presently the holders of particularly positive images. The most interesting result, at least in Bucharest's case and of its capital, is the relationship between the lack of a coherent existence of an intentional image and the restricted and occasional unintentional image.

If *Nation Brands Index* and *City Brands Image* are considered to be able to understand campaigns of place branding, Romania's and Bucharest's situation clears up with not very encouraging news in terms of image. *The Anholt-GfK Roper Nation Brands Index* measures the power and quality of each country's 'brand image' by combining the following six dimensions: exports, governance, culture and heritage, people, tourism and investment, and immigration. *The City Brands Index* measures the quality of the city "brand image" by analysing the following dimensions: presence, place, prerequisites, people, pulse, and potential. (<http://www.gfkamerica.com/>). Romania managed to make it on the list with other surveyed nations during one of the waves of the *NBI* analysis, but does not score high enough to be included among the 50 most powerful branded nations. Bucharest as a capital city hasn't managed the same performance by not being listed among the surveyed international city brands.

Projected place images/brands of Bucharest

Romania's capital, the city of Bucharest, is one of the newest significant European capitals. Bucharest is the 6th most populated (1931236 inhabitants) capital of the European Union after London, Berlin, Madrid, Rome and Paris. Bucharest's geographical location is not outstanding, being located in open plain, in the south-western part of the country. It is not one of Romania's most picturesque cities, but it does concentrate most of the foreign investments, most of the industrial, administrative, cultural and educational activity.

As any capital city, Bucharest is heavily oriented to production and trading economy, combining a high social wage with considerable exports. Being the official administrative centre, it concentrates all of the national governmental institutions and authorities, meaning the offices that serve the administrative needs for political, commercial, cultural, educational and tourism functions. Bucharest, according to several sources, remained the country's most important cultural centre, concentrating the most associated bodies, also the largest educational centre, particularly in high education, concentrating some of Romania's largest either state-owned or private universities. Following the country's patterns, the tertiary and the quaternary sectors dominate employment. Bucharest, even though it is the capital city, experiences a paradox - the paradox of peripheral nature resulted from its geographical location which sometimes exaggerates problems of economic axes.

In terms of tourism, Bucharest manages to attract the largest number of tourists and stopovers (Table 1). At the end of 2008, before the economic crisis reached Romania, Bucharest had very optimistic plans and views as far as investment and tourist infrastructure development was concerned, relying on an ambitious forecast on attracting tourists (tables 2,3 and 4).

This optimistic plan is the result of a huge demand of quality accommodation and tourist services. Bucharest as a capital city failed for more than 15 years after the collapse of communism to invest and develop a market of tourism accommodation correlated to its new political status. Hence a significant shortage of accommodation and tourist facilities at all levels especially in the private sector. With Romania joining the EU and a short period of economic recovery of about and year and a half, entrepreneurs, business people and investors saw the potential of a growing market and the significant profit. As a result a considerable amount of building projects and building sites where authorised, financed and opened. The target segments are also visible in tables 2 and 3, with the sector catering for business and meetings/conference being predominant.

Table 1. Tourist arrivals in Bucharest

YEAR	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
1 Tourist arrivals in accommodation units									
Total number of tourists	481,723	471,126	521,670	543,876	652,663	739,012	815,784	908,921	1,012,537
Domestic tourists arrivals	196,919	187,467	223,494	219,720	255,940	289,318	334,265	372,046	414,087
International tourist arrivals	284,749	283,659	298,176	324,156	396,723	449,694	481,519	536,875	598,616
2. Stays over night									
Total number of stays over night	955,346	946,748	1,013,043	1,130,156	1,270,383	1,365,956	1,540,554	1,866,217	2,259,989
Total of domestic of stays over night	418,792	376,191	404,295	453,462	491,408	543,943	690,578	819,973	973,307
Total of foreign of stays over night	537,248	570,557	608,748	676,694	778,975	822,013	849,976	1,046,244	1,287,926
3 Accommodation units	2,565,521	2,814,376	3,025,180	2,997,561	3,422,643	3,455,334	3,945,231	4,332,982	4,757,614
4 Occupancy degree (%)	33.4	33.6	33.5	37.7	37.1	39.5	39	43.1	47.5

Source: Bucharest Town Hall, Department of Tourism

Table 2. Hotels market in Bucharest – annual growth rate

	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011
Business	17%	20%	16%	12%	9%
Meetings and conferences	12%	15%	18%	22%	11%
Holidays	14%	18%	20%	22%	12%

Source: Bucharest Town Hall, Department of Tourism

Table 3. Bucharest – market segmentation

Market segmentdemand
Business	66%
Meetings and conferences	21%
Holidays	13%
Total	100%

Source: Bucharest Town Hall, Department of Tourism

Table 4. New hotels in Bucharest

Opening date	No of rooms
July – December 2007	500
2008	2005
2009	1315
2010	1276
2011	1273
Total – 54 months	6369

Source: Bucharest Town Hall, Department of Tourism

At an international level, the Bucharest / Budapest confusion is still very common at all social levels. Paradoxically this is for the advantage of Bucharest, as the city itself doesn't seem to have managed to attract much attention and is the owner of a negative image, both externally and internally, unlike Budapest. The paradox deepens when ethnical issues are considered. Bucharest has clearly an image issue to seriously consider. However Bucharest is undoubtedly the largest city in Romania and the most important. Its population grew dramatically over the past 70 years of existence mainly due to economic internal migration. The process continues, as it still attracts young qualified labour force from all of Romania's provinces. Its population can hardly be considered of Bucharest pedigree, being rather a mosaic. The city has a typical cultural distinctiveness and more than anything a strong sense of identity as a capital city extended to its inhabitants. In addition

Bucharest uses its entire historic reputation to add personality to the city.

These attributes are definitely providing Bucharest with a particular self confidence, not always shared by other large cities. As a result, germs of competition undertaken by other cities have been seeded. Both the self confidence and competitive spirit is attached and extended to its inhabitants by the inhabitants of the competitor cities. Bucharest is traditionally associated with its patron, St. Dimitrie. This is name is frequently used by Romanians and found in the shortened form of Mitică. Mitică is also a core character in the literary work of one of Romania's most famous and representative writer, I.L. Caragiale who lived and published his work at the time when Bucharest was working hard at becoming the 'Little Paris of East'. Caragiale's work and characters are strongly related to the spirit, the sense and features of Bucharest and of its inhabitants with the most astonishing fact that an overwhelming reality of his depicted reality still applies.

Bucharest – the 'Little Paris of East'. As mentioned above, in the 1930's up until the 1940's and further, Romania experienced a period of modernization with an associated image attached and promoted even abroad. Bucharest after several years of hard work serious investment, applied development strategies managed to resemble in appearance at a significantly smaller scale with Paris by copying it in its large boulevards and some classic architecture buildings and palaces. Bucharest's best ever branded image was that of the 'Little Paris of East' and it enjoyed it for several decades. It was first of all recognised and taken in by the rest of the country with pride and respect, used as a symbol of modernity. The brand 'Little Paris of East' was successful, efficient and of considerable impact. It certainly put Bucharest on Europe's map of capital cities.

Communist Bucharest – the city of its megalomaniac dictator. Communist Bucharest is already notorious for its architecture atrocities, slightly exaggerated in comparison to what the other communist capitals have done to their cities. Communist Bucharest became to foreigners just another communist capital behind the Iron Curtain, a label which

Bucharest has failed and is still failing to explore and exploit. Its very negative image during those years transcended time and ghosts around these days. Reality was worth than just another capital behind the Iron Curtain, with a whole team of communist planners, builders and architects under the command of their dictator determined to build a new city. Valuable heritage was lost and replaced with structures of socialist realism culminating with Palace of Parliament or the famous People's House. At the moment of communism collapsing, the People's House was not finished. Internationally, communist Bucharest as opposed to communist Romania did not experience the same degree of positive impact and efficiency in branding itself. As a matter of fact communist Bucharest was hardly recognised or heard of even though it became an almost compact mammoth bloc land erratically interrupted by socialist institutional mega structures. Internally communist Bucharest became headquarter of atrocities, the place where bad news came from.

Post communist European Bucharest. Over the past 10 – 15 years for many Romanians and Bucharest inhabitants, returning and somehow trying to reverse to the stage of Little Paris was a need supported and encouraged by the anarchic, unstable and chaotic evolution. In many people's eyes, Bucharest society started to be more and more similar to Caragiale's society. Bucharest inhabitants were perceived as resembling in their defining and outlining features Caragiale's characters. Interestingly enough the extension lost the power of irony, wit and humour Caragiale put into his characters and kept the very negative aspects to help in emerging this new prototype of Bucharester called by the rest of the country Mitică, regardless of the fact that the most majority of Bucharest population is nowadays formed of outsiders. Mitică, both in Caragiale's times and nowadays is a limited educated, with little civic sense, corrupt, with a questionable sets of moral values, and a changing personality person. Mitică is a negative symbol used by non-Bucharesters to portray, outline and emphasize the questionable personality of the inhabitants of their capital. This is definitely

not a positive image and it is used mainly by inhabitants of competition cities. The perception of modern Mitică is that of loud 'manele'¹ listeners, sausage eaters, beer drinkers, and arrogant bastards, not very different from their ancestors. Foreign visitors do not record much difference in their perception of Bucharest inhabitants.

The paradox, confusion and complexity of the post-communist European Bucharest, apart from the urban chaos, are set into the mixture of symbols. On one hand, internally, Bucharest's inhabitants (regardless of their provenience) are negatively labelled or associated with a nickname born during the days of capitalist stylish Little Paris of East, capital of a thriving monarchy. On the other, they are the inhabitants of a city which is externally recognised and associated with a communist building, the People's House, including the House of Mitică, a house rejected as a symbol, meaning and concept by everybody, pedigree/non pedigree Mitică or non-Bucharester Romanians. The paradox becomes more complex with the fact that in reality the People's House once finished and functional does symbolise the city's present reality and its inhabitants' situation.

Bucharest image branding process - as opposed to the national image one - is even less noticeable, some experts considering it practically inexistent. In reality the city does well, better than the country itself, but its image is much less favourable and known. The Bucharest/Budapest dilemma is still very frequent. It has become obvious that the lack of a strategic branding policy sets Bucharest among the lowest rated European capitals as a brand and as opposed to the fact it is Europe's 6th largest capital city. The branding of Bucharest is no doubts lacking in coordination among the elements of reputation management (place branding, public and cultural diplomacy). Synergy and

collaboration among these functions is practically non-existent.

Bucharest's lack of coherent images, or at least of clearly recognisable ones, is also the result of a late start. Authorities (governmental and local) have become aware of the importance of a brand image surprisingly late. Their action is still empirical and inefficient due to a lack of perspective, vision and competence in dealing with bad and negative image. It became more than evident that by doing almost nothing Bucharest is being given a symbol in the body of the People's House, Bucharest is acquiring an identity, whether Romanians like it not (figure 1).

During interviews conducted by the authors with the Bucharest mayor, Sorin Oprescu, and one of the vice-mayors, as well as other Bucharest City Hall authorities, including the Chief Architect, two particular aspects came out. The first is concerning the fact that authorities, similar to most of the Romanians, seem to be stuck to the image of Bucharest as the 'Little Paris of East' without deeply considering this aspect. In trying to continue to retrieve this idyllic image and put it back into reality, authorities seem to be driven by nostalgia and the spirit of the golden age of the city and its life. The fact that the reality of a new European Bucharest has been left with extremely little in common with the old inter-war Bucharest is not a point, even though authorities have encountered and are aware of the difficulties to actually getting any results. Secondly, the interviewed authorities seemed very much controlled and overwhelmed, feeling helpless, almost paralysed, by the city's negative image. This situation is actually correct when one sets itself such unrealistic standards to match and reality might prove it is impossible anyway. When alternative opportunities to consider as core pillars and the perspective for positioning the future image of the city were suggested, authorities show interest. The idea of persevering in the attempts of reconstructing an idyllic long lost Bucharest appeared of no vision, especially when there are there are capital cities such as Prague and Budapest nearby.

¹*Manele*, *sg. manea* - music genre mainly derived from Turkish and Arabic love songs, with oriental and Roma folk music influences that appeared in the late 90s and became very popular in South-Eastern Europe. Lyrics usually refer to self-lamentation, obscenity, pointless ego-praising and material values, being very contested by intellectuals.



Figure 1. People's House

Source: <http://www.flickr.com/photos/10548975@No8/2253394880/in/photostream/>

Branding Bucharest is not an easy job and there is little time left. City Hall authorities have undertaken a series of measures and actions in order to have more efficient attempts. Unfortunately they are by far too little and too laid back for results to come out. As a result, Bucharest is still keeping its no-destination position for both attracting investors and visitors. Its image continues to build itself outside the borders of the country with the People's House as the established symbol of both the capital city and the country.

Both the existing country image (mostly blurred) and the Bucharest's image (mostly negative) are highly politicised and became the victim of domestic politics. In addition, there has been no agreement among the different political parties about how or by whom reputation of both country and Bucharest should be managed internally and externally. Currently, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Tourism share limited and selected responsibility in dealing with image and branding. Their activity is highly politicised, usually guaranteeing little stability, support and continuity.

The modest situation of branding Bucharest as well as branding Romania is also the result of the existence of no strategic coordination, collaboration and communication among the two above mentioned authorities, other institutions and actors erratically involved.

One common process is that of one particular branding action to be passed on from one organization/set of organizations to

another/others which results in a lack of *continuity and strategic approach*.

Conclusion

As stated above, the images of Romania and its capital city Bucharest lack a *clear distinction*. The most recent Bucharest logo is dull and resembles many other logo elements in the country logos of Turkey, Hungary, Croatia. In effect, the Bucharest logo and image is based on core ideas similar to other cities' and countries', leaving basically very little space for distinction.

The only mega-distinctive element, the People's House, is controversial and disputed, therefore hesitantly used and promoted. This is the result of the disputed feelings of Bucharesters towards the monument, in addition to the planner's obsolete idea to try to reconstruct "Little Paris". Bucharest is also very similar as a capital city to most of the former capital cities in terms of economy, infrastructure and housing, which makes the process of distinctiveness complicated by definition. Evidence of lack of *professional, coherent planning* is only worsening its situation. However, there is a clear distinction between Bucharest and former communist capitals as well as other cities, namely the complete lack of messages and slogans. Basically, Bucharest is probably the only European capital which never had a slogan of its own or a message built in its image.

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