

WHAT CITY HAS THE BEST IMAGE?

An Analysis of Media
Coverage of 20 Large Cities



This study analyzes the media coverage of 20 large cities between 2008 and 2012. We identify and evaluate eight city profiles in terms of their image. Finally, we discuss some strategies that city managers can consider for improving an unfavorable city image.

Pascual Berrone

Joan Enric Ricart

Carlos Carrasco

WHAT CITY HAS THE BEST IMAGE?

AN ANALYSIS OF MEDIA COVERAGE OF 20 LARGE CITIES

THE IMPORTANCE OF A GOOD IMAGE FOR CITIES

The image of a city is of strategic importance as it affects a number of relevant decisions. For instance, a good city image can enhance tourism as visitors tend to decide where to go based on a city's attractiveness. A good city image invites domestic and foreign investors, even during periods of instability. A good city image can also facilitate the attraction and retention of talent. Thus, as cities experience increased competition for businesses, tourists and resources, mayors and urban planners around the world have become increasingly eager to associate their cities with a superior image and are working actively to promote a positive and attractive image for their cities. Which city has been successful in this process? How have different city images evolved in the past? What lessons can city managers learn from this? The goal of this report is to find answers to these questions.

MEDIA COVERAGE AS A PROXY FOR CITY IMAGE

The image of a city is made up of a network of interrelated elements that summarizes what we know about the place and the feelings it evokes. Social science researchers have shown that the media plays a key role in the process of forming a city's image. That is, how a city is represented in news media and the patterns of coverage are factors that determine its image. The media can influence the general public, decision makers and even a city's inhabitants both negatively and positively. When the media focuses on negative events, such as crime, violence and social problems, it damages the city image. Conversely, when the media highlights positive aspects, such as sports events and cultural developments, it has a salutatory effect on the city image. Thus, media portrayal can affect the knowledge structure that people develop regarding a city and it can be an active participant in the process of the formation of stereotypes. As a result, the analysis of media coverage as an approximation is a valid tool to assess the city image.

Sample and Methodology

- In order to analyze the media coverage of major cities around the world, we collaborated with Media Tenor, a media research institute that focuses on media analysis. The

analysis included media from eight different countries and comprised a total of 21 media sources. These media sources are: Germany [ARD Tagesschau, ARD Tagesthemen, ZDF heute, ZDF heute journal, RTL Aktuell], France [Le Journal 20.00 (TF1)], Italy [RAI 1 (TGI)], Spain [Telediario-2 21.00 (TVE1)], Switzerland [SF Tagesschau], the United Kingdom [Ten o'clock News (BBC 1), News at Ten (ITV), BBC 2 (Newsnight)], the United States [ABC, CBS, NBC, FOX] and South Africa [Afrikaans News (SABC2), SABC 3 News @

- 18h30, SABC 3: News @ One, Sotho News, Zulu/Xhosa News]. The analysis was for media reports between 2008 and 2012. The analysis was exhaustive for all cases, except for the Spanish media in 2012, which was only partially included.
- We followed a number of steps to calculate a measurement for city image. News reports and articles where a city was mentioned were identified between 2008 and 2012 by searching for the city's name. A total of 42,836 news items mentioning city names were collected during the period of analysis. News articles were then content-analyzed and coded as positive, neutral or negative. For the positive and neutral cases¹, we assigned a value of 1, while for the negative cases we assigned a value of -1 as they reflected "image-challenging" news item. Later, we used the Janis-Fadner coefficient of imbalance (see Appendix A) to construct our ranking system for city image. This coefficient has the advantage that it measures the relative proportion of endorsing and challenging news items, allowing for the comparison of cities of different sizes. For each year, we ranked cities based on the Janis-Fadner coefficient. Finally, in order to facilitate interpretation, we assigned points to cities from 1 to 20 by inverting their ranking position (e.g., the city that ranked 1st received 20 points, the city that ranked 2nd received 19 points, and so on).
- To keep the analysis within a manageable scope, we focused on the 20 largest cities. The cities included in the analysis are: Amsterdam, Athens, Barcelona, Berlin, Brussels, Cairo, London, Los Angeles, Madrid, Moscow, Munich, New York, Paris, Prague, Rio de Janeiro, Rome, Shanghai, Tokyo, Warsaw, and Zurich. The city profiles are based on information from the Euromonitor Passport Cities database.

¹ As is customary in media analyses, we grouped the positive and neutral categories. The reason is that while neutral news does not emphasize any positive aspect of a given city, it does help to raise awareness about it.

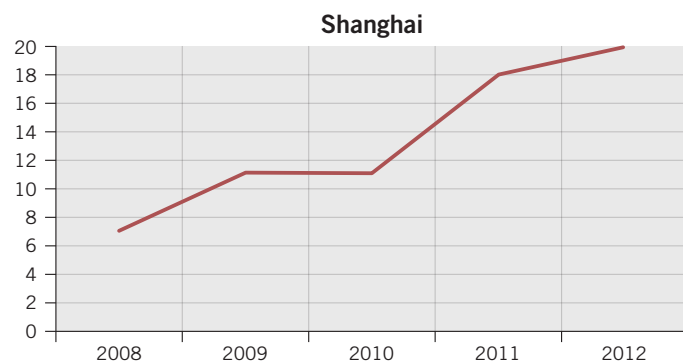
CITY PROFILES

We graphed the evolution of the media coverage for each of the 20 cities in our sample. After careful analysis, we were able to identify some distinctive patterns, which are labeled and explained below.

Rising Star

A “rising star” is a city that has risen in the rankings during recent years and now enjoys an attractive position. Cities in this category are highly innovative and at the vanguard of urban living. However, they face the challenge of maintaining the growth path and/or their top position.

Cases in point: Shanghai, London, Prague



Shanghai is the city in China's administrative system that has a different status; it is a directly administered municipality, the equivalent to what is known in other countries as a province or a state. Even though Shanghai is home to only 2% of China's population, the city generated 5% of the country's GDP (6% of the country's GDP in business services in 2011). Shanghai, located in the Yangtze River Delta in East China, is the most populated city in the People's Republic of China and a key economic hub, with a total population of more than 20 million residents.

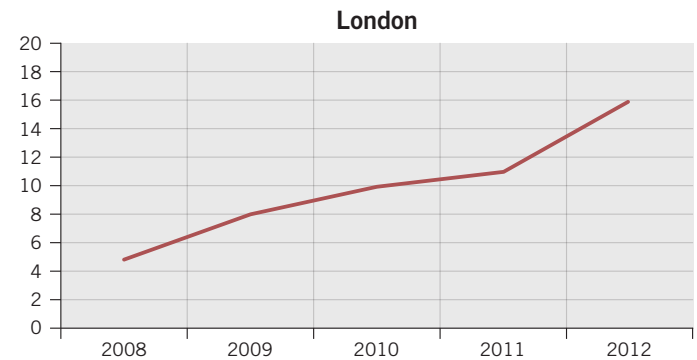
Since 2008 it has been one of the “rising stars” for different reasons. With an annual 7.8% increase in GDP (following the general trend in China's total GDP), it is experiencing rapid economic and social improvement, leading to an increase in standards of living.



Shanghai has positive media exposure mainly thanks to its success in the stock market (it has become one of the most important financial centers in the world) and sports-related events, like Formula 1. This positive media coverage grew especially from

2010 to 2011 due to the city's hosting of the World Aquatics Championship.

Nevertheless, this trend in positive coverage was partly interrupted in 2010 when a fire destroyed a 28-story high-rise apartment building, killing more than 50 people and injuring more than 70, which accounts for the decline in the positive coverage growth observed.



London is the biggest metropolitan area in the United Kingdom and the largest city in the European Union, being home to more than eight million people. Since the Roman Empire, it has been an increasingly important city, starting as a small settlement and becoming the capital of the British Empire. Despite its impressive longevity, London has experienced some hard times too, suffering greatly during the Blitz period of World War II. The 1970s and 1980s were years of economic difficulties and social unrest, but London managed to turn itself back into an international economic and cultural hub by the 1990s.

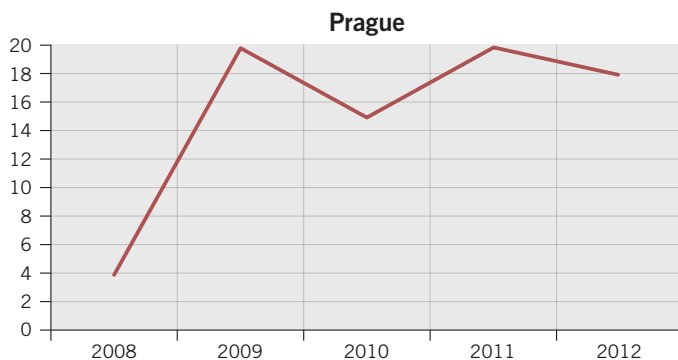


It is part of the “rising stars” category because of its growing trend over the analyzed period. Although 44% of its GDP is thanks to business services (only comparable to cities such as New York and Paris), its positive media coverage is mainly on cultural topics (theater, cinema, exhibitions, etc.) and sporting events (mainly soccer and tennis). The media presence is especially important for London since commerce and retail activities in the city are greatly fueled by its nearly 18 million tourists annually, ranking among the most visited places in the world.

Before the acceleration shown in 2011 and 2012, positive media coverage tended to show slow growth as a result of the student protests that occurred in late 2010, the Tottenham riots in 2011 and various violent crimes reported in the news from 2008 to 2012.

The most growth occurred in 2011 and 2012, when London organized the Olympic Games from July 27, 2012 to August 12,

2012, rising from 11 to 16 points in our inverted Janis-Fadner coefficient ranking. Tony Blair said that it might be a decade before the success of Olympics Games could be judged,² but it seems clear that, at least in terms of media coverage, the benefits have already had an effect.



The city of Prague was founded in the 9th century and has a long history of turbulence, unrest and political downturns. It was occupied by the Germans, held under the Communist regime, and it was the setting of the Velvet Revolution in 1989. It was not until 1992 that Prague became the capital city of the newly formed Czech Republic. During the Communist regime, the city had a period of great expansion due to rapid urbanization, and it continued to expand during the 1990s. While it has a dense core urban area, it is worth noting that the aggregate metropolitan area also includes the surrounding Central Bohemia Region (home to 50% of the population of the metropolitan area). Even though the city's residents on average do not tend to be more car-biased than the country as a whole, the city's growth forces a higher density of vehicles within the metropolitan area, causing serious issues related to pollution and traffic congestion.



In terms of economic performance, in 2011 Prague produced 37% of the country's GDP and employed only 26% of the country's total workforce. Regarding the economic sector, commerce is the most important of the city, representing 30% of its GDP and 32% of its employment. At the same time, the importance of manufacturing has been declining over time. The whole Czech Republic is a big pole of FDI attraction – together with Estonia, in 2011 it topped the ranking of Eastern European countries by FDI per capita and over 50% of the total accumulated FDI into the Czech Republic has landed within the urban core of Prague.

Tourism is another outstanding economic sector thanks to the city's historical landmarks and well-developed travel infrastructure. The estimated total number of non-resident visitors in accommodation establishments in the central Prague area reached 4.1 million. This signifies that the Prague metropolitan area accounts for 67% of total arrivals of foreign tourists in the Czech Republic. In concrete terms, Germans represent up to 15% of all non-Czech visitors to the city, while Russian tourists are the non-resident visitors who stay for the longest periods of time.

The majority of Prague's negative media coverage is about diplomacy and political issues within the EU, though it also includes the topics of tax and foreign policy. However, what is most striking is that the positive news reports from Prague are usually on the same topics. In that sense, it could be a good idea for the city to try to diversify media appearances toward less sensitive topics, promoting more neutral or positive news based on cultural or sports-related news.

Rising Star Lessons

Cities in the “rising stars” category are among the best cities in our ranking of media coverage and city image. Despite the fact that they are very different and have diverse characteristics and challenges, we have tried to identify some core lessons that can be learned from our top performers:

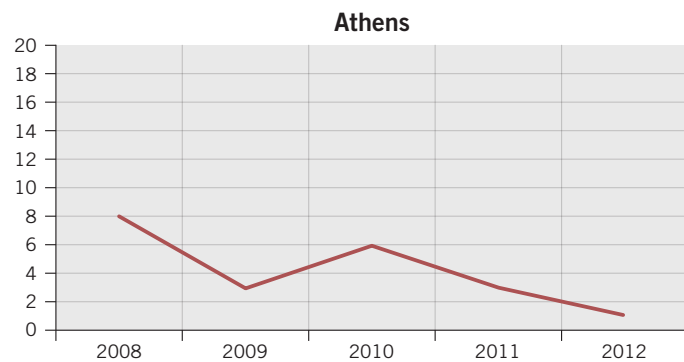
- **Sports-related news is positive.** Whether hosting the Olympic Games, the FIFA World Cup or the World Aquatics Championship, having a global sporting event can direct media attention to the city. With one of these events, the world's attention is focused on the host, not just in terms of quantity but in terms of quality since (if handled properly) the majority of the appearances in the news will be positive.
- **Politics are a double-edged sword.** Especially in the case of Prague, political news is a source of positive and negative media coverage, often at the same time. If the city is often mentioned in reference to politics, leaders and managers should take into account the delicate balance between positive and negative media appearances.
- **Being a business hub is being a good business.** Worldwide awareness about a city increases if it is a business hub, since these stories tend to account for a large part of all media news.

Despite these lessons, these cities need to keep working to consolidate their position. As we will see later on in this report, one single negative event, such as an accident or a catastrophe, can destroy the positive city image that the city has worked so hard to build. Cities with a generally positive image like our rising stars need strategies to feed and maintain their image.

Free Faller

A “free faller” city is just the opposite of the previous pattern; it has declined in the ranking during recent years and now stands in a relatively low position. Cities in this category have shown a downward trend, so the main challenge they face is to turn this trend around.

² Tony Blair tells London 2012 critics to show “a bit of pride.” *The Guardian*, July 25, 2012: http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2012/jul/25/tony-blair-london-2012-critics?CMP=twl_fd

Cases in point: Athens, Moscow

Despite several problems with urban planning and development during the 20th century, the 2004 Olympic Games gave a great transformation opportunity to the capital of Greece – Athens. Transport infrastructure, pedestrian zones and other major projects to improve city image took place during the years leading up to the worldwide sports event.



More than a third of Greece's population lives in Athens and its urban surrounding area: 4.1 million people in 2011. This makes Athens the largest urban metropolis in the country. At the same time, it covers more than 3,400 sq. km, or 3% of the national territory, and accounts for 48% of the country's total GDP and 51% of Greece's GDP by tertiary sector.

The main source of Athens' media appearances is political torment and civil unrest as evidenced through riots, protests, terrorism and politically-motivated crimes. Another source of negative media coverage was the forest fires that occurred during the summer of 2009, lowering the Janis-Fadner coefficient from 8 points in 2008 to 3 points in 2009. Since 2010, in addition to the social unrest, a bad economic situation has had a large presence in the media coverage of Athens, mainly due to a workforce that has contracted by 12% during the period from 2006 to 2011, one of the largest drops worldwide in the measure of an employed population.

The chart clearly shows one of the worst periods in Athens' modern history: an economic downturn that raised many socio-economic problems like criminality and homelessness, affecting the overall media coverage of the city.

Although in 1712 Moscow lost its capital status to St. Petersburg, which would remain the case for almost 200 years, the city has continued to be the center of Russia's political life and it has been the leading city in terms of population, culture, science and industrial output in Russia for centuries.



Despite all of the astonishing statistics, Moscow does not have positive media coverage. There are many reasons, which range from political unrest to violent crime, terrorism and government scandals. The two major reasons for such a low valuation are: the suicide bombing during rush hour in the Moscow Metro on March 20, 2010 and the plane crash that occurred in Moscow on December 29, 2012.



Positive media coverage in Moscow is usually related to space exploration and travel or winter sports, but clearly this is not enough to boost the positive coverage of the city.

Free Fallers Lessons

Free falling cities are those that are facing a declining positive image, especially in recent years. These cities face the challenge of reversing this trend. Some reasons for a fall may be:

- **Political unrest is bad for your city image.** Strikes, riots and protests have a negative influence on the media perception of your city. Actually, this is a more advanced stage of the negative effects of politics as a double-edged sword, as discussed above.
- **Terrorism is your worst enemy.** Terrorist attacks are the most harmful events for the image of a city, since they cause pronounced falls due to the widespread coverage they receive from worldwide media.
- **Natural disasters and human accidents have a high impact.** Natural disasters and accidents like plane or train crashes are another source of a pronounced fall in a city's image. Despite the fact that they are usually uncontrollable events, the negative impact is remarkable.

Politics and its ultimate expression of violence, terrorism, are human-created problems that can be difficult to solve since the

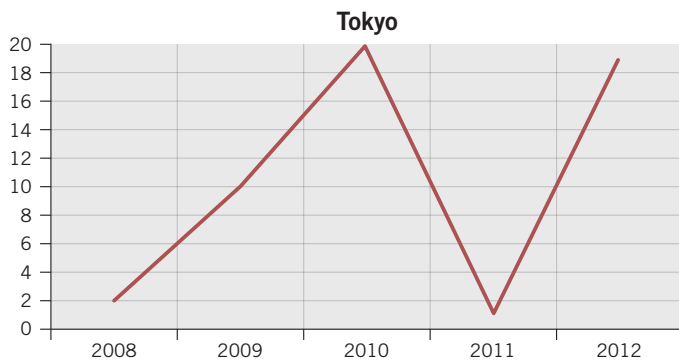
source of the problem and the source of the solution are usually the same: political institutions. This means that if the city wants to improve its image, it has to change itself or other institutions (central or regional government, for example), which could require facing difficulties such as political culture, institutional path dependency and other factors beyond the control of the city, like international politics.

Natural disasters and human accidents arise as hard-to-solve problems too. Hurricanes, floods or planes crashing at the city airport are beyond the control of a mayor, making it difficult to provide a helpful response for avoiding the negative influence on the image of the city. While these events are out of the mayor's direct influence, good infrastructures and well-planned urbanism can reduce the negative effects of this kind of events by enabling rapid responses.

Phoenix

Just like the mythical bird, the “phoenix” is a city that is able to rapidly regain or even improve its position, despite negative events that have affected its image. Phoenix cities are characterized by a high degree of resilience.

Cases in point: Tokyo, Rio de Janeiro, Zurich, Berlin



Tokyo is located on Honshu Island, the largest island in the Japanese archipelago. The metropolitan area stretches over 13,425 sq. km. (4% of the national territory), making it the world's most populous metropolis. In 2011, the population was more than 36 million, with 13 million in the core urban area.

Tokyo has experienced rapid growth, especially during the 1960s and the 1980s. The capital of Japan currently has the highest productivity (in terms of GDP per employee) in the country, with business services making up the most important sector in terms of GDP share. It accounts for nearly one-third of the country's total GDP and is one of the most economically robust cities in the world.

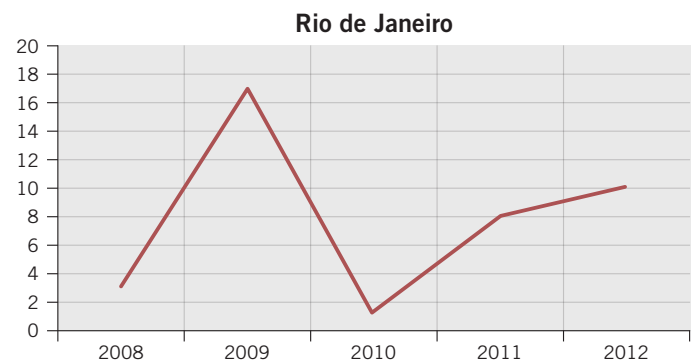
Tokyo's success would not be possible without an effective infrastructure network of roads, rail routes and airports (its main exponents being Haneda and Narita). It helps that Tokyo is the location for the headquarters of many Japanese and foreign firms, housing 47 of Japan's 64 Fortune Global 500 companies.

Despite all of the positive outcomes, Japan suffered negative media coverage in 2008 due to the Akhikara massacre. In 2011 it fell again following the earthquake and the nuclear safety problems it faced as a result. Although the nuclear problem occurred

in Fukushima, the media coverage was centered on the political response of the Tokyo-based ministers. Tokyo's main positive media appearances involve technology, the environment or the natural sciences. As has been the case for many other cities, the Olympics Games are expected to generate an increase in the neutral or positive media coverage of Tokyo.



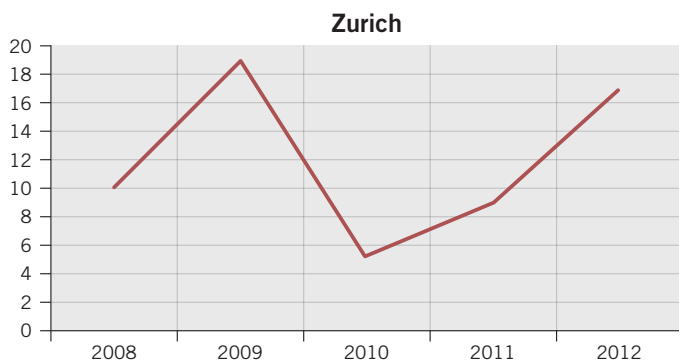
Brazil has a booming economy and Rio de Janeiro is one of the best examples of growth and economic performance in the country. The city is home to the biggest Brazilian companies and is the location for numerous cultural and architectonic landmarks that belong to its historical heritage. The city, founded by Portuguese explorers during the 16th century, soon became a leading location for sugar cane production and coffee exports. The economic structure changed during the 20th century, shifting from agriculture to industrial sectors.



The metropolitan area of Rio de Janeiro is second in the country in terms of population, after São Paulo, with more than 12 million people (6.4 million in the core urban area). The city's main economic sector is services, with around 82% of its GDP generated by service industries. Although it has historically been a production center for sugar cane and coffee, currently the manufacturing is concentrated in the oil and gas industries. Offshore oil discoveries in 2006 and the city's selection as host

for the 2014 World Cup and the 2016 Olympic Games have increased Rio de Janeiro's GDP, accounting for more than 8% of Brazil's total GDP.

Rio de Janeiro is located in a tropical area, sometimes facing mosquito-related diseases. Actually, in 2008 that was the main cause of a drop in positive media coverage: the dengue epidemic. During the first half of 2008 more than 55,000 cases of dengue were identified, and the disease killed 67 people in Rio de Janeiro. An improvement in the city's image can be observed in 2009, when Rio was selected as the host city for the 2016 Olympic Games. As a result, foreign investment between 2010 and 2011 grew twice as fast in Rio as it did in Sao Paulo. The subsequent downturn the following year was mainly caused by the floods and mudslides that affected Rio de Janeiro in April 2010, killing 212 people and leaving 15,000 more homeless. Despite some positive news in 2011, related either to cultural events or the Olympic Games project, the improvement in positive media coverage was not as high as it would have been without the news items related to violent crime, especially the Tasso de Silveira Municipal School shooting, where a former student killed 12 children. In 2012, there was a mix of positive and negative news, ranging from environmental issues to diplomacy or sustainable development in general.



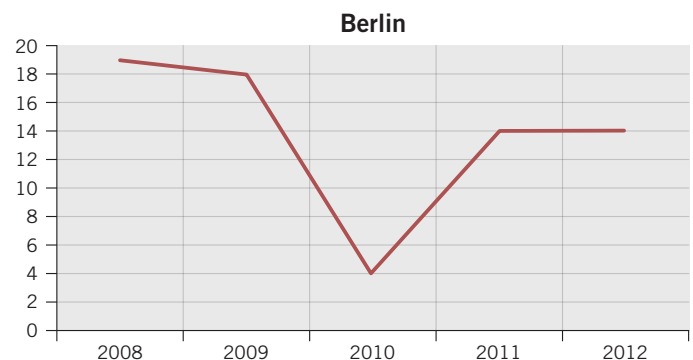
Zurich has 1.4 million people, accounting for only 26% of the metropolitan area's inhabitants. This figure can be explained by the large suburbanization process that occurred beginning in the 1950s. In comparison, Zurich accounted for 87% of the metropolitan area population in 1950. The city expanded and sprawled, growing with a polycentric structure, but with the Zurich metropolitan area acting as a unified labor pool and growing by 7% since 2006.



Zurich's economy relies heavily on financial services, insurance and asset management, with the public sector being the main employer in the city, generating 25% of the Swiss GDP. The

unemployment rate is lower than in the rest of Switzerland: 3% versus 4% during the 2006-2011 period. These statistics are combined with high workforce participation rates: 90% of the population, aged 15-64.

In general, media coverage of Zurich in 2008 was positive, except for two multi-million dollar robberies in just two weeks, which included the theft of masterpieces by Picasso and Monet. In 2009, Zurich had fewer appearances in the media than in 2008, but all of them were positive, especially thanks to the FIFA Ballon d'Or ceremony. In 2010 Zurich suffered a downturn in its media image, mainly because of news related to crime and corruption. The recovery came in 2011 with news on exhibitions and movies, increasing further in 2012 thanks to music, cinema, theater and cultural events.



Berlin is the political center of Germany and has the largest concentration of public service jobs in the country: 39% of its workforce. In fact, politics has shaped recent city development. Berlin remained politically divided until the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and, despite major investments and years of growth there are still differences between the East and the West of the city.



Metropolitan Berlin's GDP is the second highest in Germany, behind Munich, and generates 6% of country's total GDP, with 6% of the total population. Tourism is becoming more important as it continues to grow year after year (a 9% increase from 2009). With 10 million visitors in 2011, Berlin is one of the most visited tourist destinations in the European Union. The high number of tourists has a strong influence on consumer expenditure for recreation and culture, which makes up 12% of total spending in the city.

Despite the city's positive image, Berlin's positive media coverage began to decline in 2009, with a big fall in 2010 and a recovery (and stagnation) during 2011-2012. The negative

news coming from the German capital was mainly focused on the role of sharia, the relationship between religion and state, monetary policy or general finance. On the other hand, positive news was centered on exhibitions, the visual arts and other cultural topics.

Phoenix Lessons

Phoenix cities have faced a high downgrade in image due to different reasons but have managed to recover it in recent years. Thanks to these cases, we can identify two types of lessons: positive and negative.

- **Terrorism, diseases, natural disasters and criminality.** As with previous city profiles, these are main sources of a negative image. Especially in the case of terrorism and natural disasters, the negative effect can even be fatal. To illustrate the effect and the negative influence of these events, Rio de Janeiro fell from the 17th position in 2009 to the lowest position after the city suffered floods. The same happened in Tokyo: after the Fukushima crisis, Japan's capital fell from the very top of to ranking to the bottom in 2011. In some case, as happened with Berlin, it is the result of politics.
- **Sporting events, a road to recovery.** The election of Rio de Janeiro as the host for the 2016 Olympic Games had a big influence on recovering the positive image after the dengue epidemic, boosting the point value for the city from just 3 points up to 17.
- **Cultural and economic performance, part of the solution.** A vibrant economy is not only important in terms of development and socioeconomic status, but also in terms of positive city image. Tokyo recovered from the 2011 crisis thanks to new technological discoveries and Zurich recovered thanks to different cultural activities held in the city.

As in previous cases, terrorism or natural catastrophes are the worst enemy of a city's image. Despite that, if a city suffers a terrorist attack or a natural disaster, there is still a light at the end of the tunnel. Cities can manage to see big improvements thanks to sporting events or news that is tied in with economic performance while providing quick responses to unforeseen events.

Consolidated Patterns

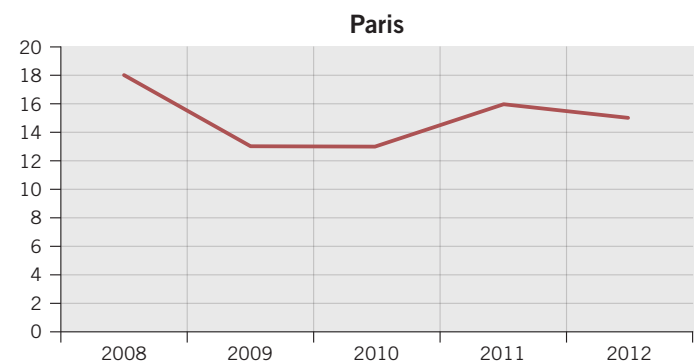
Cities classified as consolidated are those that have managed to stay quite stable in a given position in the ranking during the period of analysis. Cities in this category enjoy a consistent image. However, in the absence of major events, the pattern also reflects that changes from a given position are difficult because images are slow to change, particularly for the better. The challenge for these cities is to maintain or improve their position in the future. We subdivide this group into three levels of consolidation: Winners, Middle Area, and Laggards.

Consolidated Winners

Cities classified as consolidated winners are those that have managed to stay at the top of the ranking during the period of analysis. Cities in this category enjoy a persistent positive image.

The challenge for these cities is to maintain their position in the future. As the old adage says: "When you're on top there's only one way to go."

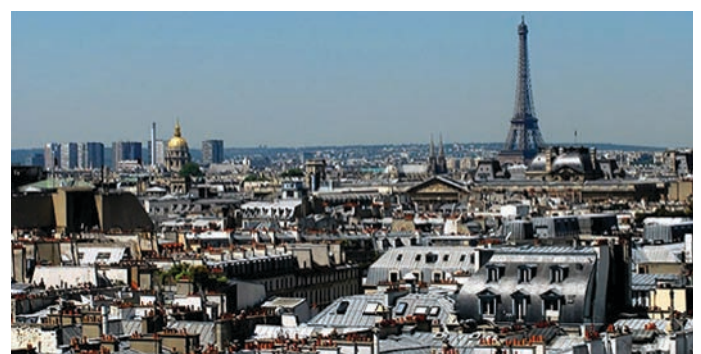
Case in point: Paris



For centuries, Paris has been the most influential city in France. It has been the scenario of many important events in human history: the Renaissance, the French Revolution and the student riots of 1968. After World War II, Paris began a process of urban renewal ranging from economic changes to reorganizing the transportation network.

Although the city accounts for less than 19% of country's population (24% of the urban population in France), it generates more than 30% of France's total GDP. This distribution is even higher if we take a look at business services, where Paris alone represents 40% of the country's GDP. This percentage is only exceeded by London.

As in the cases of London and Barcelona, Paris is a major tourist destination, which makes its city image an important aspect of economic growth. Every year the French capital receives more than 15 million international visitors, 1.2 million coming from the United States, and around 45% of the total visitors coming for business-related trips.



Negative news in Paris is focused on violent crimes, strikes, political unrest and, especially in 2010, on the theft of five paintings from the Paris Museum of Modern Art, including a Picasso worth millions of euros. In contrast, the usual Parisian appearance in the media is centered on positive news. Cycling, rugby, soccer, tennis and sports in general are the main source of positive media coverage, but cultural topics such as theater, music and exhibitions also make Paris appear positively in communication media, fueling the perception of the city as "the fashion capital of the world."

Consolidated Winner Lessons

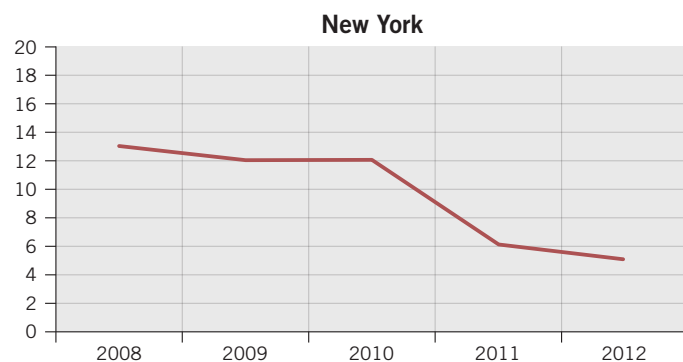
Paris is the only city considered a consolidated winner. This is how the French capital managed to do it:

- **Criminality and social unrest still pose a problem.** It is true that Paris appears to be the city with the most sustained positive image in our period of analysis but this is not a guarantee of the absence of negative publicity. The French capital did suffer from social unrest and riots in previous years. Criminality is also an important issue and a burden to the city, partially reducing the influence of positive news.
- **Sports and culture are its main allies.** We have seen the importance of sports on the image of cities and Paris is the host of a multitude of sporting events that help the city to (over)compensate for the negative influence of social problems. This means that the city is often viewed in relation to this kind of news, promoting a general positive image and enjoying a positive stereotype. The Tour de France, the Roland Garros or the Paris Masters are examples of internationally well-known sporting events contributing annually to the positive image of the city.

Consolidated in the Middle Area

Cities classified as consolidated in the middle area are those that stayed in the medium ranking positions during the period of analysis. Cities in this category may have a positive image but are struggling to perform in some areas at the same time. The challenge for these cities is to overcome their struggle to gain a better position in the future.

Cases in point: New York, Barcelona, Munich, Brussels, Los Angeles



New York has become one of the biggest centers for business, culture and finance in the world. In fact, it is the biggest city in the world in terms of GDP from business services; this sector generates 46% of New York's GDP. At the same time, and thanks to advanced infrastructures (five airports and the third largest container port in the United States) and a large pool of skilled labor, the city's productivity level (GDP per employee) is higher than anywhere else in the country.

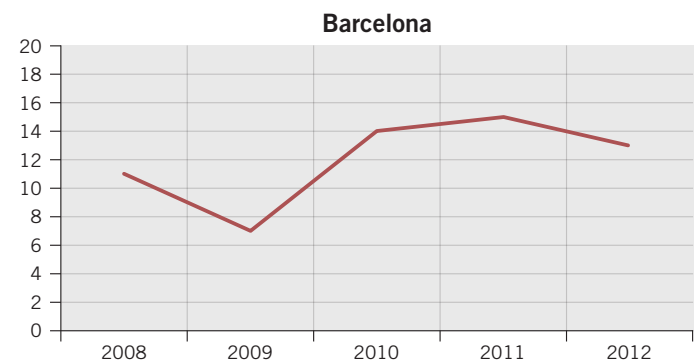
These reasons can partially explain why so many people visit the city on business or as tourists. New York is also the home of the U.S. fashion, retail and gastronomy centers, attracting domestic and international shoppers and tourists. Thanks to its five airports,

especially the John F. Kennedy International Airport, which handles more international traffic than any other airport in the country, New York is a major international destination.



Despite all its good things, New York faces several problems in terms of positive media coverage. The negative news reports range over a wide spectrum, from accidents and terrorism to court cases and violent crimes. The biggest fall in positive coverage began in 2011, mainly due to the hurricane Irene (2011), hurricane Sandy (2012) and the Strauss-Khan case. Natural disasters are beyond the control of the city, so we can expect to see an improvement of the New York image in the coming years.

Positive media coverage in New York tends to center on culture, celebrities, music, tourism, exhibitions or the U.S. Open.



Barcelona is the second largest city in Spain, with a metropolitan population of more than 4.5 million people, and the primary industrial hub of the country. Despite a decline in manufacturing in the city, it still generates 16% of the total manufacturing GDP in Spain. The largest economic sector of the city is commerce, thanks to well-developed supporting infrastructure and high tourist flows. Several of these infrastructure projects were developed during the Barcelona Olympics in 1992; improvements in the airport and the port (the Port of Barcelona generates more than 32,000 jobs and handles 23% of Spain's international traffic), new rail and road infrastructures or new metro lines.

Investments in new infrastructures were linked to other projects, like changes in urban planning, redefining spaces to foster knowledge-based and high-tech industries, etc. Developed between the 1990s and 2000s, Barcelona's strategic plans allowed for increased capacity for early response to problems in the city and for opportunities in terms of economic development.



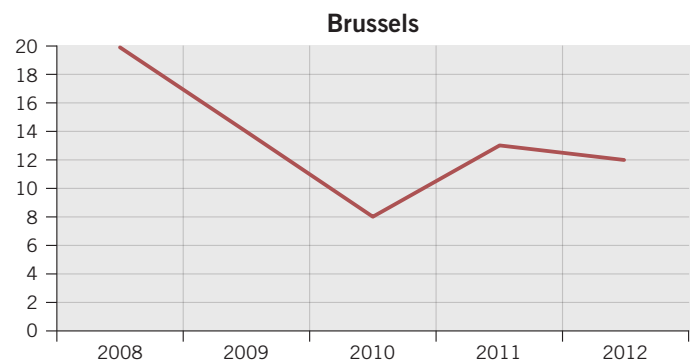
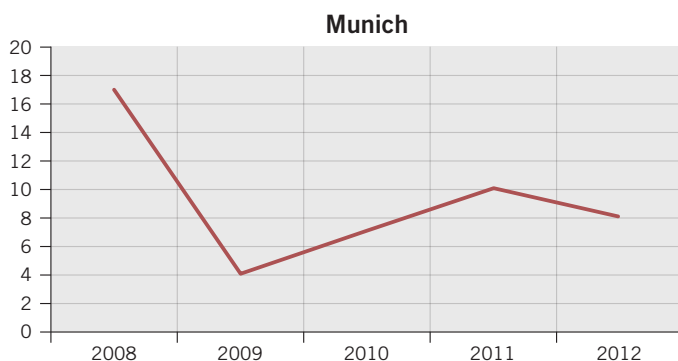
The main focus of positive media coverage involves sports-related news, ranging from soccer to tennis, motor sports or Formula 1, but also topics associated with culture and music festivals. There is no single focus of negative media coverage since it can include criminality, theft, strikes, court cases or traffic accidents.

As happened in London, media coverage is especially important in the case of Barcelona. The capital of Catalonia is one of the most visited tourist destinations in Europe. Its architecture, monuments, sporting events and culture attract more than seven million tourist visits per year, which is a clear success story if we take into account that, in 1981, Barcelona had just 700,000 visitors. But for Barcelona, tourism is just one dimension of the wide international promotion strategy that has been applied over the past 25 years: the city image is also important to attract foreign investors and entrepreneurs.

In 2008, the city had a highly positive media presence thanks to sports and cultural news. Winter sports, soccer, visual arts, theater or exhibitions accounted for the majority of Munich's positive appearances. The situation changed in 2009 due to several violent crimes reported by the media. From 2010 to 2011 the trend started to grow again, driven by sports and cultural news. In 2012, news on accidents, crime, illegal drugs, domestic security and politics dragged the trend down once again.



Brussels is not only the capital of Belgium, but also the capital of the European Union. Although the "capital of the European Union" is just a nickname, it is appropriate given the fact that Brussels is home to key European Institutions like the European Commission or the European Parliament. Of course, those are a big source of revenue for the city: between 40,000 and 50,000 EU employees live in Brussels (10% of the city's population) and business tourism generates around 2.2 million overnight stays.



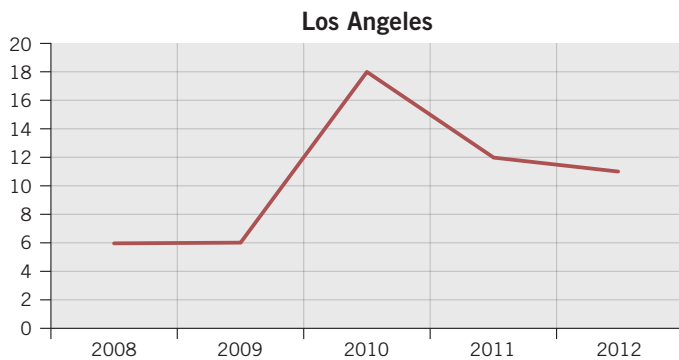
Munich is located in southeastern Germany in the state of Bavaria. With 1.4 million residents (3% of the country's population), Munich is the third city in Germany in terms of population and accounts for 5% of the total German GDP. The economy of the city relies heavily on business services and manufacturing. Business services activities in Munich account for 8% of German GDP in this area and they employ a quarter of the metropolis's workforce. At the same time, the sector produces 39% of Munich's GDP. Another important sector is manufacturing, making up to 20% of the city's GDP thanks to the automotive and aerospace industries based in Munich.

The Olympic Games (held in 1972) were a turning point in Munich's urban development. Until that year, the city was growing into the periphery, building new areas for residential and commercial uses. After the Olympic Games, the strategy changed. Following the trend observed in different European cities, redevelopment of inner city areas became a priority.

Actually, business services are the dominant sector as they account for 39% of Brussels' GDP (41% of the country's total) and employ 25% of its population. However, the biggest share of employment is public services thanks to the EU, NATO and other international institutions; 34% of the population is employed in this sector. The large number of decision-making institutions also boosts the presence of consulting, lobbying and law services.

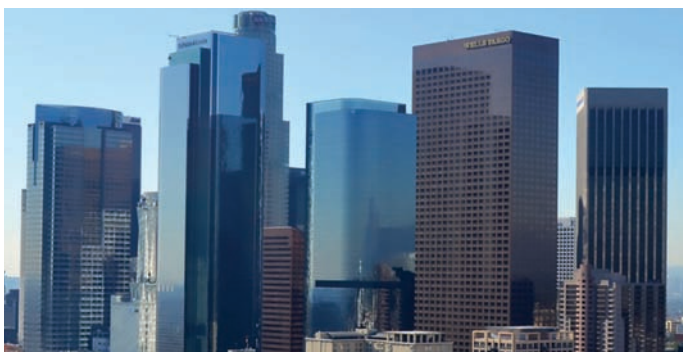


In 2008, Brussels was the city that had the best image in our sample. However, this situation started to change in 2009, when strikes, political unrest and diplomacy issues began to appear repeatedly in the media. Then a drop occurred in 2010. The Halle train collision, where two trains collided about 14 kilometers outside of Brussels, was the main reason for the city image's downturn. The recovery took place in 2011 thanks to political and diplomatic news, feeding the image of Brussels as the political center of Europe. The small decrease in 2012 was due to political and economic news related to the euro currency.



Los Angeles is the second largest metropolitan area in United States, just after New York. Founded in 1850, Los Angeles now has 3.9 million people. Los Angeles has taken advantage of its geographical position and has become a major hub for health-care and the logistics industry. The city is characterized by a vibrant commercial sector, accounting for 35% of employment and 27% of the city's GDP. Like New York or Chicago, although to a lesser extent, Los Angeles has a large share of its GDP coming from business services (35%).

However, Los Angeles is known worldwide for the movies and the entertainment industry based in the city. Hollywood has contributed to the city image as one of the major cultural centers in the world. This fact has attracted other kinds of culture and artists like musicians and dancers.



Despite this positive description, during the first period of our analysis, Los Angeles had a relatively bad image because of the 2008 train collision in Chatsworth, the California wildfires in November of 2008 and the Covina massacre that occurred on December 24th, where nine people were killed. The situation did not get any better in 2009, mainly because of the death of Michael Jackson. The Oscars and other movie awards helped Los Angeles to recover a positive image while reducing negative appearances in the media. Court cases and crime made the city's image drop again in 2011, maintaining this trend through

2012. Overall, the combination of negative and positive news positions Los Angeles as a mid-tier city.

Consolidated in the Middle Area Lessons

This is the group of cities with the most cases. Still, there are some differences in how each city managed its image:

- Politics, accidents, criminality and natural disasters (again)**
 are reasons that explain why some cities are stalled in the middle area of the rank scale depending on the specific causes of each case. These are all negative reports but they do not have as big an effect as terrorism in terms of city image.
- Culture and sports provide a formula for positive city image.**
 Although they face different problems in terms of positive news, the examples in this group show a similar pattern: culture and sports arise as a good source for positive city image. The effect is greater wherever the event is reported.

Consolidated Laggards

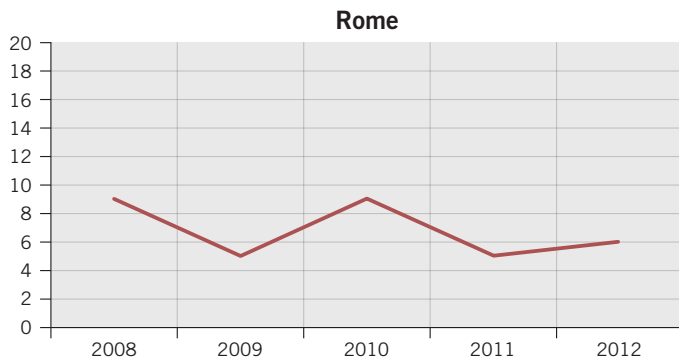
Just as the previous case, cities in this category have shown a steady position throughout the period of analysis. However, the main difference is that their positions were closer to the bottom of the ranking. Cities in this category have a rather persistent negative image. The challenge for these cities is to turn their position around in the future.

Case in point: Rome

Rome, along with Paris, London and Barcelona, is one of the top tourist destinations in Europe, thanks to its historic background and heritage. The city is home to a large number of historic sites like the Colosseum and the Pantheon, as well as ancient fountains and piazzas. In fact, Rome is considered to be the world's largest open-air museum.

It is also a center for national politics, culture and religion, and Rome has the second largest economy in Italy after Milan, producing 9% of the country's GDP. In fact, Rome has a large public services sector, employing 36% of its population and producing 29% of its GDP. It may not seem like a strange situation, taking into account that Rome is the capital and serves as the main location for a large part of the country's administrative functions. However, the business services sector employs just 18% of the population and generates 34.3% of the city's GDP.

In terms of media coverage, Rome has a persistent negative image. The reasons vary from violent crimes to theft, traffic accidents, political unrest or right-wing extremism. The Rome Film Festival or the Master Series Rome tennis tournament mitigated the situation in 2010 but, among other negative topics, the sexual abuse scandals involving the Vatican or the Occupy protesters riot were the main focus of negative appearances in 2009 and 2011, respectively. Particularly, the Vatican exerts a large amount of influence on Rome's appearances in the media, for better or for worse. Given the recent positive media coverage that Pope Francis received during 2013 (e.g., Time magazine named him person of the year just nine months into his papacy), we can expect to see an improvement in Rome's image.



Consolidated Lagger Lessons

Rome is the only example of a consolidated lagger in our sample. The reasons for the consolidation are similar to those of the previous group. However, despite positive appearances in the media, the Italian capital still seems to have a persistent negative image. Observations that can be made are similar to those of the cities in the previous group:

- **Sports and culture slightly improve the city image.** As is the case with many other cities in our analysis, sports and culture have a positive effect on city image. But, as Rome exemplifies, it is not enough.
- **Crime and politics interfere with Rome's image.** Despite several positive appearances, the city has a bad image. Crime, riots and the influence that the Vatican has over the city exert a pressing force when the city tries to improve its image.

Rome has positive appearances in the media and still ranks as a low performer since the number of negative news reports exceeds those that are positive throughout the period of analysis, making it a hard trend to change. As such, improving its position is still a challenge for the city.



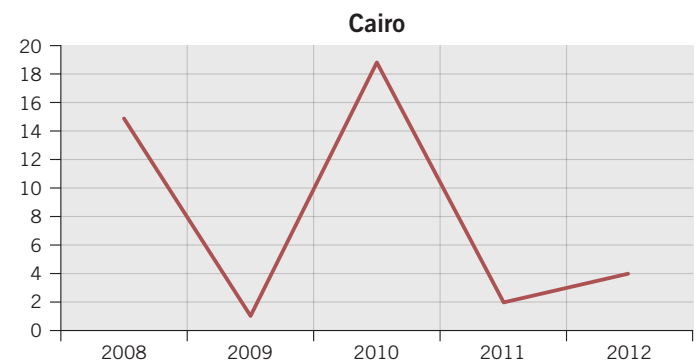
Rollercoasters

Cities classified as rollercoasters have displayed a varied trend during the period of analysis. Cities in this category experience big jumps and drops in their image. The challenge for these cities is to keep the positive aspects that led them to the top and minimize or eliminate the ones that put them at the bottom.

Cases in point: Cairo, Amsterdam

Cairo was founded in the 10th century and the majority of its development occurred in the 19th century. Between 1947 and 1966, its population doubled from three to six million. By 1996

the Egyptian capital had grown to 13 million, and it reached 20 million in 2011.



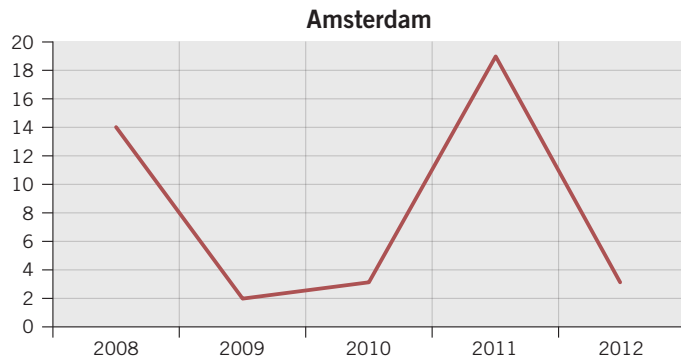
The economy of Cairo is oriented toward manufacturing (making up 38% of its GDP and 21% of its employment). It is also the highest contributor to Egypt's GDP, with more than one-third of the country's GDP generated in the capital. Another important sector is construction, especially due to the massive building projects that have fostered urban growth and boosted the real state economy.



Cairo's economy also relies on tourism and retail as a source of revenue. It is ranked second in the Middle East and Africa in terms of international visitors, just after Dubai. In 2012, 3.3 million tourists visited the city drawn by sites like the pyramids of Giza. As with all cities that rely largely on tourism, a positive image is crucial.

While coming from a relatively good image in 2008, the February 2009 terrorist attacks in Cairo caused a big drop in the city's positive media appearances. The trend changed in 2010 thanks to a peaceful situation and to the Cairo International Film Festival which, since 1976, has aimed to bring together movie professionals to compete in three categories: Arab feature films, human rights films and international feature films. The positive media coverage of Cairo dropped again in February 2011 because of the occupation of Tahrir Square and the political unrest that commenced shortly after. Since then, Cairo's appearances in the media have been focused on its political uprisings, domestic security and social unrest.

Amsterdam, the capital city of the Netherlands, accounts for 13% of the country's GDP. Most of the city's GDP, 40%, is generated by business services (Amsterdam is one of the top cities in Europe for doing business according to Cushman & Wakefield). Manufacturing and commerce are two of the most beneficial sectors in Amsterdam, thanks to its first-level port and international airport.



Tourism is also an important sector for Amsterdam. The city offers a large range of cultural activities like exhibitions, theaters or music festivals, along with a vivid nightlife. Another characteristic of the city is the use of bicycles. It is estimated that, although Amsterdam has 766,000 habitants, there are about 881,000 bikes.



Amsterdam had a good position in terms of positive media coverage in 2008, but the perception changed in 2009, when a Turkish Airlines plane crashed at Schiphol Airport, killing nine people. The city image was not made better, as 2010 was filled with anti-Semitic news, domestic security issues and other minor accidents. The trend made a big shift in 2011 thanks to tourism and sports-related media appearances, only to fall again in 2012 after a train crash occurred in Amsterdam leaving one person dead and 125 injured.

Rollercoaster Lessons

Despite the eclectic behaviors displayed through an analysis of Amsterdam and Cairo, the trend does not seem strange if we take into account our previous lessons:

- **Terrorism, accidents and politics as main reasons behind that behavior.** The plane crash in Amsterdam, the terrorist attacks in Cairo and the political unrest affecting both cities are the main sources of a negative image. Like in previous cases, plane or train accidents had a huge negative effect over their city image, while politics have a less (but still notable) negative influence.
- **Tourism for Amsterdam; a peaceful situation for Cairo.** In spite of having few appearances in the media (which in some cases is a good sign), both cities managed to improve their image, through tourism-related news in the case of Amsterdam and fewer appearances in the case of the Egyptian capital.

Amsterdam and Cairo are very different cities. Still, they displayed similar behavior in terms of media coverage with very striking

negative events having taken place in both cities. Despite this situation, their paths toward improving the city image was not through more positive news but by appearing mainly in neutral and descriptive news, increasing the appearance of calm.

Bell Shape

A city that displays a bell-shaped trend is one that manages to enhance its image at the beginning of the analysis period up to a point, but then its position in the ranking declines. This category can be seen as a prelude to other categories, both positive (Phoenix) or negative (Rollercoaster or Free Faller).

Cases in point: Madrid, Warsaw

Madrid, the capital of Spain, is also the country's most populated city, accounting for 14% of Spain's population. During the 2006-2011 period, Madrid's population increased by 9%, doubling the country's average, a sign of its attractiveness.



The economy of the city is service-oriented, business services being the fastest-growing sector, which generate 29% of Madrid's GDP. However, this situation is relatively recent, since business services only surpassed the commercial sector in 2006. In fact, Madrid is the home of international companies and banks from all over the world. Despite being an economic hub, Madrid did not escape the Spanish economic crisis. In 2009, Madrid's GDP fell by 3-4%, following the country's trend. The weak situation of the country as a whole, and the city of Madrid in particular, kept unemployment high, with percentages reaching 17% of the active population. Despite some positive trends, Madrid's media coverage has followed a different path.



While we can observe slight growth trending from 2008 to 2010 and then leveling off in 2011, the positive media coverage of Madrid fell dramatically in 2012. The period of growth (2008-2010) was mainly driven by sports and cultural news. Soccer,

tennis, exhibitions or music events pushed up the city's image but everything changed after 2011. The political unrest and uprisings started to appear in the media, pushing aside any positive news reports. Spain's economic situation was not (and still it is not) a help. The big fall came in 2012 with the "Madrid Arena" tragedy, where a human stampede during a macro party led to five deaths.

Warsaw has been the capital of Poland since the 16th century. However, its political status has changed several times: under the Prussian annexation, the rule of Imperial Russia, German occupation, and the Communist regime. It was during German occupation and the Communist regime that Warsaw suffered major changes to its urban structure. After World War II the city was devastated, so the Soviets implemented a reconstruction plan based on Communist-style, prefabricated buildings.



Today Warsaw has 1.7 million citizens, only 9% of the country's population. Despite this low percentage of the population given Poland's total inhabitants, the city produces 16% of country's total GDP, making it the economic and political center of the country.

Despite the fact that business services are the fastest growing sector in the city, Warsaw's GDP is based mainly on commerce (36%). Before 2012, the city experienced major development in its infrastructure in preparation for the European Football Championship, amplifying trade and commerce within the Polish and global markets.



Warsaw is definitely a bell-shaped city in terms of media coverage. News on its rapid development and foreign policy granted the city many positive media appearances during 2009 and 2010. In 2011, terrorism caused a downturn in Warsaw's positive media coverage and then it had a little rebound in 2012 due to the European Football Championship (the quarter final and semifinal were played there).

Bell Shape Lessons

Warsaw has a sharper bell-shaped curve than Madrid. Still, both cities share common points though there are also some differences:

- **Common positive points: sports and culture.** At peak times, sports news pushed up the positive image of both cities.
- **Common negative points: accidents and terrorism.** Like in many other cities, terrorism and accidents or catastrophes had a negative influence on the city image.
- **Different points: politics.** As pointed out in previous city profiles, politics is a double-edged sword. Sometimes, like in the case of Warsaw, it can be a source of positive news while in others, like Madrid, it is a source of negative news.

Both cities follow the pattern described in previous cases, with accidents and terrorism having quite a negative effect on city image. The same can be said of politics: whereas in some cases it is a source of positive news, in others it can have a negative influence.

CONCLUSIONS

Knowing a city's image is a key element in the diagnosis of the overall urban structure, which should serve as the basis for city planning. Our main findings are:

- **News related to sports (especially big events) tends to be positive.** These reports in the media usually focus on the winners of sports competitions, so they often associate a city (consciously or unconsciously) with a positive image, helping the cognitive process to achieve a positive perception or, at least, awareness about the city. In other words, these events put the city on the map.

In terms of economic benefits, these spotlight events can boost the city by improving domestic/foreign investment and public/private investment. Furthermore, since the world's attention will be on the host city, one can expect short-term and mid-term benefits for the tourist sector. In the short term, hosting a worldwide event generates a growth trend in hotels, restaurants, retail stores and other tourist facilities. At the same time, it has a mid-term positive effect; an increase of visitors and tourists, not just during the event but in the period that follows, bringing more consumer expenditure.

Of course, every action has its own uncertainties. Large-scale investments in infrastructure are risky. The world's attention will be placed on the host city so it is under pressure to meet the building deadlines or manage the event without any major scandals or accidents.

Hosting a major event is not a foolproof strategy. In fact, it can be hampered by other variables, more specifically human factors and natural factors.

- **Human Factors: crime and terrorism hold the highest risk for the city image.** Human-induced violence (whether socially or politically motivated) is probably the worst problem

in terms of city image. The global positioning of the city is highly vulnerable to terrorist attacks to a greater extent than other negative situations. Media tends to pay more attention to unexpected human-induced situations than other events, amplifying the effect on the public's memories and causing a greater shock to the city image. At the same time, cities with high media coverage can become a more appealing target for terrorists since they guarantee much more international media presence for the attack. Crime has a similar negative influence, with a smaller but longerlasting effect. While terrorism can have a huge effect in a given year, crime tends to be associated with a longer recovery period.

- **Natural Factors: hurricanes, floods or fire disasters are also a big threat to the city image.** Natural disasters have a similar effect: a negative influence on an outsider's perception of the city. Urban agglomerations are growing fast and that translates into an increased risk of disease transmission, a higher number of potential victims in the case of a natural disaster and, due to crowding and dense conditions, tough challenges associated with managing those situations.

The big urban shift in developing countries (where fast-growing cities are located) and the lack of adequate growth strategies add extra risks to the situation. The shortage of appropriate urban planning makes those cities especially vulnerable to natural disasters. The presence of slums or the absence of mitigation efforts to reduce the impact of risky events ends up creating greater hazards for the city.

Strategies for Improving the City Image

As we have seen, city image is extremely sensitive to a range of positive and negative events, becoming one of the key issues in policy making and urban strategy. Since cities are under pressure to compete with each other, the importance of strategy has become heavier (Budd, 1998; Turok 2004). Cities develop plans to attract more talent, more investments, more events or more visitors, meaning that city image is already a key tool for success. Of course, each city is different. Each one has its own idiosyncrasies, challenges, history and objectives, so "one size fits all" solutions are not an option.

Based on Avraham 2004, we have identified five strategies to help cities deal with the positive and negative effects of previously analyzed media appearances. In order to improve its image and avoid and respond to crisis situations, cities have to take into account:

1. Encouraging visits to the city;
2. Hosting spotlight events;
3. Solving the problem that led to the formation of the negative image;
4. Delivering counter-stereotypical messages;
5. Acknowledging the negative image.

1. Encouraging visits to the city.

Tourists and visitors are a big source of revenue and economic vitality for cities. Attracting them can be difficult if the city suffers (or has suffered) one or several of the crises previously described. From the point of view of city image, it is not just tourists and business visitors who are important, but also journalists

(Avraham, 2004). The objective when attracting journalists to the city is that they can report that the situation is normal, quiet and peaceful (Beirman, 2002).

2. Hosting spotlight events.

As we have seen before, hosting a worldwide event like the Olympic Games is a good opportunity to improve city image. Of course there are socio-economic costs that should be balanced, but in terms of media coverage, hosting a spotlight event is a good idea.

3. Solving the problem that led to the formation of the negative image.

This strategy is especially relevant for cities with persistent problems like crime. If this problem starts to be associated with the city, the best option is trying to solve it before it is too late. Delayed responses can increase the magnitude of the problem and make it more difficult to solve in the short term.

4. Delivering counter-stereotypical messages.

Promoting messages that contradict stereotypes is another good option for cities with persistent problems. However, to ensure the success of such a strategy, the problem/stereotype should be gone or be in the process of being solved (point 3).

5. Acknowledging the negative image.

Awareness of the problem is probably the first step to solving it. Internally at least, the city's administration should exercise self-analysis and identify its weaknesses in order to remedy the problem. Identifying the source of a negative image is not just a matter of transparency; it is also an important factor in clearly identifying points for improvement and more effectively directing the necessary actions.

FINAL COMMENT

In order to undertake any (or all) of the above strategies, it is crucial for urban managers to focus on *Smart Governance* – a holistic approach that integrates strategies, policies, processes and frameworks to help local administrators work with a more strategic vision toward improving the quality of life of their citizens. Only through Smart Governance will the city be able to boost business confidence and positive city image since it pursues flexibility and multilevel relationships to make cities more resilient and adaptable to change. Smart Governance is more than a valid tool for sparking positive image, since it allows for minimizing the occurrence of negative events resulting from human action and provides swift responses to uncontrollable natural factors. In this sense, Smart Governance can be seen as the catalyst for a successful event and a necessary condition for reaping long-term benefits.

REFERENCES

Beirman, D. (2002) "Marketing of Tourism Destinations During a Prolonged Crisis: Israel and Middle East." *Journal of Vacation Marketing* 8, 167-176.

Budd, Leslie. (1998) "Territorial Competition and Globalisation: Scylla and Charybdis of European Cities." *Urban Studies*, April 35: 663-685.

Turok, I. (2004) "Cities, Regions and Competitiveness." *Regional Studies* 38, 1061-1075.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The first author is indebted to the Schneider-Electric Sustainability and Business Strategy Chair for providing financial support.
Photo credits: CitySkylines.org.

APPENDIX A – JANIS-FADNER COEFFICIENT

City image measure

$$\begin{aligned} \text{City Image}_{it} &= \frac{(p_{it}^2 - p_{it} n_{it})}{T_{it}^2} \text{ if } p_{it} > n_{it} \\ &= \frac{(p_{it} n_{it} - n_{it}^2)}{T_{it}^2} \text{ if } p_{it} < n_{it} \\ &= 0 \quad \text{if } p_{it} = n_{it} \end{aligned}$$

where p_{it} is the number of positive and neutral news items for city i in year t , n_{it} is the number of negative news items for city i in year t , and T_{it} is the total number of news items for city i in year t ($T_{it} = p_{it} + n_{it}$).

