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BRANDING EUROPEAN CITIES IN THE CONTEXT OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT: CURRENT TRENDS AND CHALLENGES
(using the example of London, Paris and Amsterdam)

This study explores the interconnected concepts of branding and identity, emphasizing their substantial influence on the tourist image of cities. To examine the practical application of branding strategies, the research focuses on European cities, a region that has solidified its position in the global tourism market, recording 747 million international arrivals in 2024. Accordingly, the objective of this study is to identify current trends in tourism branding within European cities through the application of GIS technologies, while also critically assessing the challenges and limitations faced by key urban destinations, specifically London, Paris, and Amsterdam.

The findings indicate that London (ranked 1st), Paris (3rd), and Amsterdam (10th) hold prominent positions in the Brand Finance Global City Index 2024, which evaluates cities based on their ability to attract investment, talent, and visitors. These rankings underscore the strategic role of branding in shaping global perceptions, fostering economic growth, and enhancing urban competitiveness on an international scale. By offering distinct branding approaches, these cities continue to reinforce their unique identities within the tourism sector.

This study examines the distinctive branding characteristics of three major European cities: London, Paris, and Amsterdam, each of which has cultivated a unique urban identity that contributes to its global reputation. London is recognized for its royal heritage, juxtaposing historical landmarks with modern architectural developments. The city is also a global fashion hub, hosting the prestigious London Fashion Week and offering renowned shopping districts. Paris, widely regarded as the capital of love, fashion, and culture, is intrinsically linked to romantic literary figures and celebrated poets. Like London, Paris is home to Fashion Week, along with a vast array of luxury boutiques that reinforce its status as an epicenter of elegance. Amsterdam, characterized by its bicycle-friendly infrastructure, iconic tulip fields, and picturesque canals, represents a notable example of urban rebranding, adapting its identity to modern tourism trends.

The study employs GIS-based analysis in *QGIS*, alongside statistical and informational resources, to explore the branding dimensions and tourism dynamics of these cities. A key challenge identified across all three locations is overtourism, which generates a range of socio-economic and infrastructural concerns. In London, overtourism exacerbates the housing crisis, prompting local authorities to develop new residential complexes within the Grey Belt. In Paris, the prevalence of pickpocketing, particularly around tourist landmarks such as the Eiffel Tower, has raised security concerns, necessitating enhanced police patrols and surveillance infrastructure. Amsterdam, meanwhile, faces challenges linked to its tolerant drug policies, which have fueled drug tourism. While local regulations exist to manage recreational drug use, stricter policies may be required to mitigate the negative effects associated with this phenomenon.

This paper underscores the complexities of urban branding and tourism management, demonstrating how cities must continuously adapt to evolving visitor expectations, economic shifts, and policy challenges to maintain their global appeal.

The relevance of this study stems from the increasing significance of city branding as a strategic tool in the global competition for tourist flows and international visibility. As cities seek to enhance their appeal and differentiate themselves in the highly competitive tourism sector, understanding the branding characteristics and challenges faced by leading European urban destinations becomes essential. Our research provides valuable insights into the evolving dynamics of tourism branding, offering an in-depth analysis of the branding strategies employed by London, Paris, and Amsterdam, as well as the socio-economic issues that accompany their global prominence.

Keywords: *touristic brand, European cities, London, Paris, Amsterdam, brand-identity, overtourism, GIS-analysis.*

Research problem. In modern urban environments, competitiveness extends beyond traditional economic factors such as labor resources and investment inflows. Cities must also cultivate tourist appeal, as attracting a substantial number of visitors plays a critical role in shaping a positive urban image. Modern tourists seek immersive experiences that go beyond merely visiting renowned landmarks – they are increasingly drawn to the atmosphere, culture, and identity of each city. Consequently, cities must develop holistic and distinctive branding strategies to position themselves effectively in the global tourism market.

The relevance of this study is underscored by the dual impact of city branding. On one hand, branding enhances urban development and reinforces the economic significance of tourism. On the other hand, it presents challenges that directly affect local residents, necessitating a balanced approach that considers both visitor engagement and community well-being. European cities provide an ideal framework for examining these dynamics, as they demonstrate diverse branding strategies and face various socio-economic complexities associated with tourism.

Research objective, methods, and techniques. The primary objective of this study is to explore current trends in the tourism branding of European cities, utilizing GIS technologies to assess branding strategies and urban identity. Additionally, the research seeks to analyze contemporary challenges faced by key cities – specifically London, Paris, and Amsterdam – as they navigate the complexities of global tourism dynamics.

To achieve these objectives, a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods was employed:

- Descriptive analysis to examine branding strategies and urban identity;
- Cartographic methods for spatial representation and visualization;
- GIS-based techniques for mapping and assessing branding impact;
- Statistical analysis to quantify tourism trends and visitor influx;
- Comparative analysis to evaluate branding effectiveness across cities.

This methodological approach provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the intersection of urban branding, tourism development, and socio-economic challenges, contributing to a deeper analysis of the evolving role of branding in European cities.

Analysis of recent research and publications. *Branding* serves as a fundamental tool for market differentiation, product promotion, and consumer engagement, allowing businesses and cities alike to establish a recognizable identity. According to E.O. Kudryashov, the term "brand" refers to a name, sign, or symbol that identifies the offerings of a seller. Branding, as a process, involves the creation and development of a brand, positioning it strategically within the market and fostering connections with consumers based on embedded values [1].

The application of branding principles to geographic locations – referred to as place branding – was introduced by S. Anholt in 2002. This concept extends branding strategies beyond businesses and products to cities, regions, countries, and tourist destinations, allowing them to compete for tourists, investors, and residents on a global scale [1].

Further research by M.V. Kohut and I.I. Gavrilyuk highlights the impact of effective branding on a city's long-term development. They argue that well-executed branding strengthens a city's global position, preserves cultural heritage, enhances modern infrastructure, and advances sustainable development goals. Through these mechanisms, branding contributes to territorial competitiveness while ensuring harmonious urban growth. Additionally, they emphasize the importance of understanding target audiences, as effective brand formation relies on adapting strategies and communication efforts to meet visitors' and residents' expectations [2].

This research underscores the evolving role of urban branding in shaping cities' economic and social landscapes, demonstrating how strategic branding approaches can enhance international appeal while addressing local challenges.

Figure 1 shows the main stages of forming a regional brand (according to research by A.V. Sydoruk, E.G. Bortnikov and D.A. Lyuta).

In addition to branding, the concept of *identity* plays a crucial role. According to A.V. Sydoruk, E.G. Bortnikov, and D.A. Lyuta, while the notions of identity and brand are closely related, identity refers specifically to a set of visual elements designed to enhance distinctiveness and uniqueness, thereby constructing a particular image of a region, company, or product in the eyes of consumers. In developing a tourism brand identity, practitioners incorporate elements such as the historical heritage of the territory, geographical identifiers, the name, a prominent personality (or brand hero), and strategies like positioning, differentiation, storytelling, and the creation of narratives enriched with visual associations. Conversely, a *brand* accomplishes not only the associated goods and services but also the emotions and feelings elicited in consumers with respect to a product, service, or destination [3].

Figure 2 demonstrates the components of brand identity.

Presenting the main research material. Europe currently stands as a preeminent region in the global tourism industry, attracting millions of visitors with its rich tourist heritage. As the world's largest destination region, Europe recorded 747 million international arrivals in 2024 – an increase of 1% compared to 2019 levels and 5% over 2023 – driven by robust intraregional demand [4]. The Brand Finance Global City Index 2024, which ranks 100 cities based on their ability to attract investment, talent, and visitors, offers valuable insights into the forces shaping global urban perceptions. Notably, this ranking reveals that London retained the position of the leading global city brand for the second consecutive year in 2024. In addition, Europe demonstrates its continued dominance in the sector, with

the top cities in the ranking being: London (1st place), Paris (3rd), Amsterdam (10th), Rome (12th), Berlin (13th), and Madrid (17th) [5,6].

Building upon these findings, Table 1 provides a detailed analysis of the prevailing tourism trends in Europe. This examination underlines how these trends are instrumental in shaping the identity and competitive positioning of European urban centers, thereby contributing to the broader discourse on tourism development and urban branding.
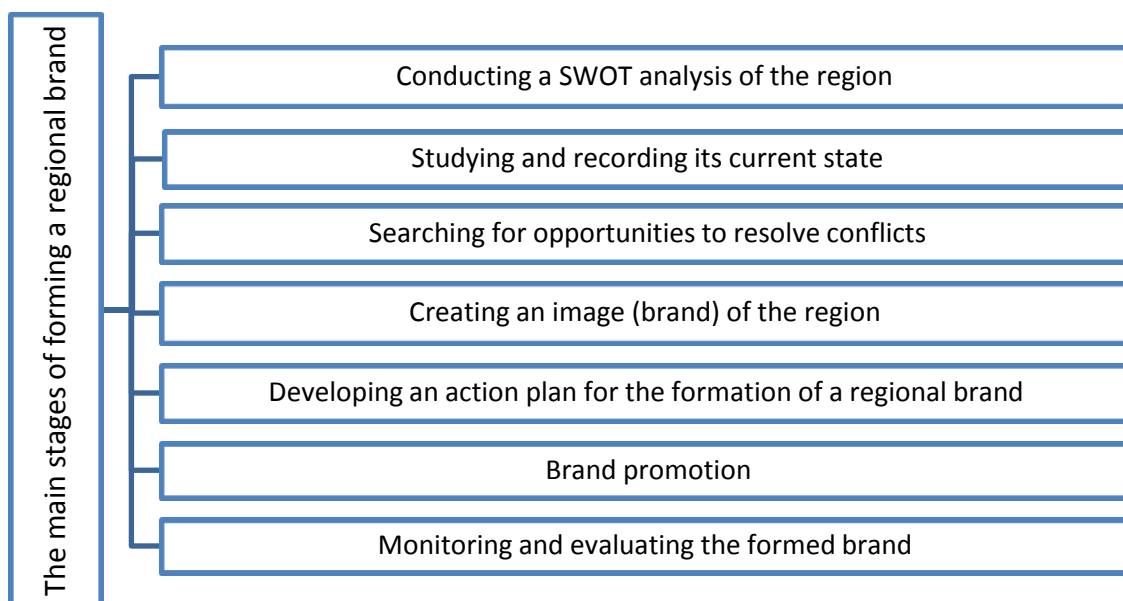
Fig. 1. Main stages of regional brand formation
(Source: compiled by the authors based on [3])
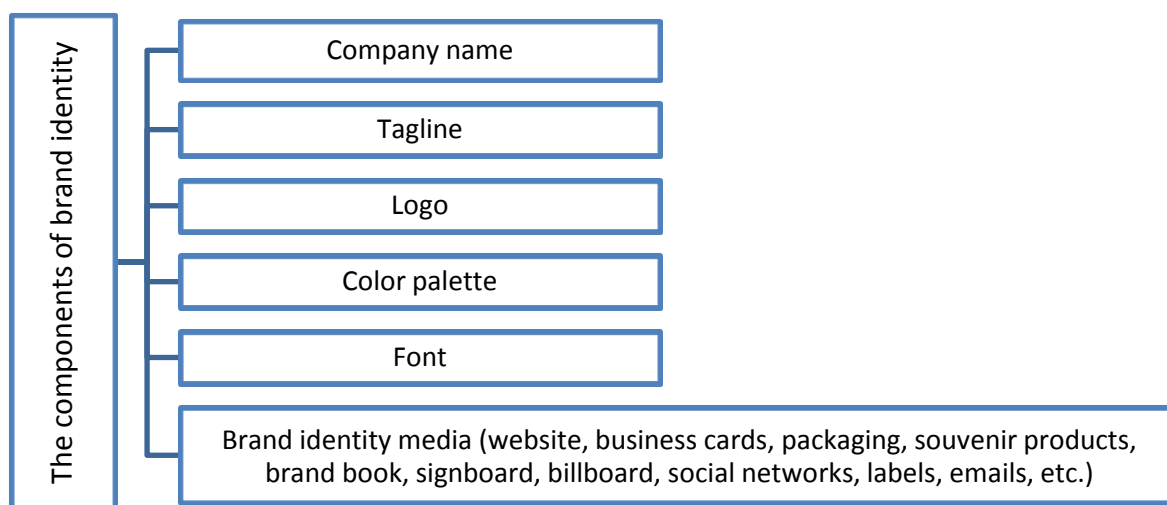
Fig. 2. Components of brand identity
(Source: compiled by the authors based on [3])

In our research, we examine in detail the branding of the top three European cities identified in the ranking: London, Paris, and Amsterdam.

London positions itself as a city of royal grandeur. A central element of this identity is *Buckingham Palace* – the official residence of the British monarch, which also serves as the center for national and royal celebrations, including the renowned Changing of the Guard ceremony [7]. As a symbolic representation of the British monarchy, Buckingham Palace remains one of London's most prominent and visited tourist attractions.

In addition to Buckingham Palace, London's branding is further reinforced through its association with the *Royal Estate*. This estate encompasses a collection of British royal residences, including palaces, castles, and houses that are either owned or occupied by the monarchy. Although only a subset of these estates is accessible to the public, they play an integral role in the city's cultural identity by granting visitors access to the *Royal Collection* – a prestigious assemblage of artworks held by the Crown in trust for future generations and for the nation [8]. Table 2 details the statistics of visits to

these royal establishments by tourists over the period from 2019 to 2024, offering empirical support for the efficacy of London's branding strategy in attracting tourism.

Table 2 illustrates that *Windsor Castle* and *Frogmore House* were the most frequented sites within the Royal Estate throughout 2023/24. Specifically, these sites collectively recorded over 1.4 million paid visitors between April 2023 and March 2024. Although this figure represents a significant increase compared to the previous fiscal year, it remains lower than the visitor numbers documented during the 2019/20 period, prior to the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic [8].

Table 1

Leading travel brands in Europe
(Source: complied by the authors based on [5,6])

City	Country	Tagline	Brand features	Visual identity
London	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Visit London	The city of the kingdom, the city where history meets modernity, the city of fashion, culture	
Paris	France	Paris je t'aime	The city of love, the world capital of fashion, sophistication and culture	
Amsterdam	Netherlands	I amsterdam	The city of bicycles, tulips, canals. Example of rebranding	
Rome	Italy	Rome – The Eternal City	The Eternal City, a symbol of the Empire, a city of historical architecture	
Berlin	Germany	Visit Berlin	The city of freedom, historical memory, creative capital of Europe, cultural diversity	
Madrid	Spain	Only in Madrid	A warm, open and welcoming city that embraces the world, the city of cultural richness	

Table 2

Number of admissions (in 1,000s) to the Royal Estate in the United Kingdom, by establishment, 2019/20–2023/24 [8]

Characteristic	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Windsor Castle and Frogmore House, Windsor	1,592	104	426	1,092	1,402
Buckingham Palace, London	578	-	121	304	530
Palace of Holyroodhouse, Edinburgh	496	31	129	329	443
The Royal Mews, London	237	5	-	90	182
The Queen's Gallery, London	266	9	49	97	-
The Queen's Gallery, Edinburgh	116	6	12	34	-

Buckingham Palace ranks second on the list, attracting approximately 530,000 visitors in 2023/24. As observed with Windsor Castle and Frogmore House, visitor numbers at Buckingham Palace also experienced an increase from the previous year; however, they similarly did not reach the higher admission levels recorded in 2019/20.

Furthermore, London reinforces its brand identity as a city where *history meets modernity.* This dynamic is visibly manifested in the urban landscape, where contemporary skyscrapers are strategically situated alongside historic buildings, creating a pronounced juxtaposition of the modern and the traditional. This duality not only enhances the city's appeal but also reinforces the distinctive character that underpins London's reputation on the global stage.

London's architectural heritage encompasses a diverse array of styles that span multiple historical periods. Iconic historic structures such as *Tower Bridge, the Houses of Parliament/Big Ben, St. Paul's Cathedral, Westminster Abbey*, and *Buckingham Palace* exemplify the city's rich past. However, London's architectural landscape is far from homogeneous; it is characterized by evolving trends, the intersection of historical and modern elements, experimental approaches, and the distinct contributions of various architects. In the twenty-first century, London has experienced a significant boom in skyscraper development. Notable structures – including The Shard, The Gherkin (30 St. Mary Axe), the Leadenhall Building (commonly referred to as the "Cheese Grater"), and the Walkie-Talkie (Fenchurch Street) – have elicited both acclaim and criticism from global experts, yet they have all come to dominate the skyline. Of these, The Shard is particularly prominent, with an impressive 87 floors, underscoring the city's commitment to modernity and innovation in urban design [9].

In addition to its architectural achievements, London's brand is strongly defined by its position in the global fashion industry. Recognized as one of the world's premier fashion capitals, London boasts several renowned shopping districts. For example, Oxford Street is home to major retailers such as Selfridges, LUSH, John Lewis & Partners, the Disney Store, and Zara; Regent Street features Hamleys, Liberty London, the Apple Store, & Other Stories, Anthropologie, and Longchamp London; and the areas of St. James's, Piccadilly, Bond Street, and Mayfair offer a range of high-end boutiques including Burlington Arcade, Waterstones Piccadilly, Dover Street Market, Harvie & Hudson, Charles Tyrwhitt, Tiffany & Co, Burberry, Louis Vuitton, Claudie Pierlot, Annoushka, and Christian Louboutin. Additionally, Carnaby is known for outlets like IKKS Paris, The Great Frog, and Billionaire Boys Club [10]. Complementing its retail prowess, London hosts major fashion events, most notably London Fashion Week (LFW), a biannual showcase that presents designers' collections through runway shows, designer showrooms, and static presentations to an international audience [11].

Using QGIS, we developed a GIS project to visualize the spatial distribution of retail shopping points across London (see Fig. 3). The analysis indicates that the highest density of shopping venues is concentrated in the city center, while the surrounding peripheral areas exhibit a lower density of such establishments.
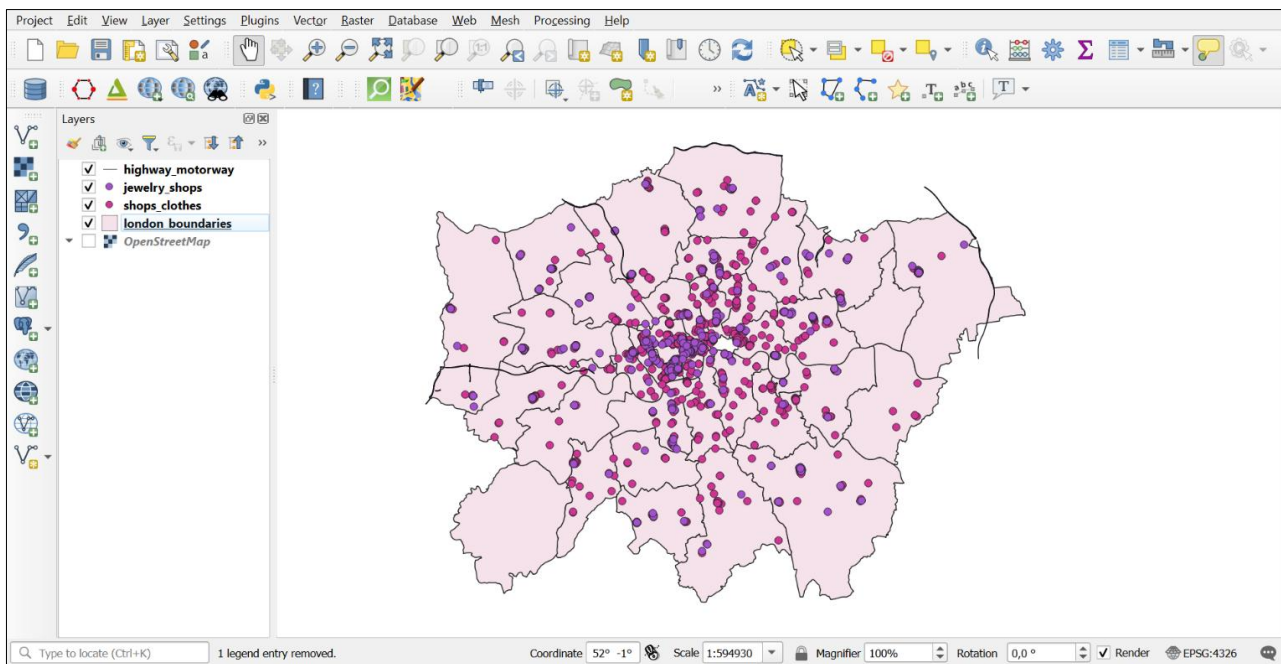
Fig. 3. Spatial distribution of retail locations in London (created using QGIS)

The second city in our ranking is ***Paris***. Foremost among its defining attributes is its branding as the "City of Love." In the 19th century, the Romantic movement profoundly influenced Paris – the *La Nouvelle Athènes* district in the 9th arrondissement emerged as a cultural cradle where poets and writers such as Victor Hugo and

Madame de Stael congregated, leaving an indelible mark on the city's aesthetic and intellectual heritage. Today, this legacy is preserved at the *Museum of Romantic Life*, located in the former home of artist Ari Schaeffer on rue Chaptal. This romantic ambience is further enhanced by scenic landmarks and public spaces, including the *Tuileries Garde*ns, the *Grands Boulevards*, and the *banks of the Seine*. The city's association with romance is underscored by the storied histories of legendary couples – such as Heloise and Abelard, Lucille and Camille Desmoulins, Claudel and Rodin, the Curies, Sartre and de Beauvoir, and Jean Cocteau and Jean Marais – and by its literary portrayals, for instance, the tragic love of Quasimodo and Esmeralda in Victor Hugo's work [12].

Paris is also celebrated as the *capital of fashion*, a status in which it is deemed superior to other major cities like London. Paris is not merely a center for fashion and design; it epitomizes luxury and sophistication. The city serves as the headquarters for several major couture and jewelry brands. Its urban landscape is interwoven with upscale hotels, high-end beauty salons, and restaurants showcasing the creations of acclaimed chefs [13]. The most renowned retail districts include the *Golden Triangle* (featuring brands such as Dior, Louis Vuitton, and Guerlain), *Saint-Germain-des-Prés* (with outlets like Bon Marché, Grande Épicerie, and La Tarte Tropézienne), *Haussmann-Opéra-Saint-Lazare* (encompassing Passage du Havre and Drouot), and the areas of *Le Marais* and *Martyrs-Pigalle*, which house boutiques such as Bensimon, Maje, Guerlain, Zac & Sam, Chiffon & Basile, and Causses [14]. Furthermore, Paris Fashion Week, which regularly showcases new collections against the backdrop of the city's most iconic venues, reinforces its standing as a global fashion powerhouse [15].

Undoubtedly, Paris is renowned for its significant historical and cultural heritage. One of its most celebrated landmarks is the Louvre, the world's most visited museum, which attracted nearly nine million visitors in 2023. In the same year, the iconic Eiffel Tower welcomed over six million visitors, making it the second most frequented site among Paris's leading monuments after the Louvre. Other notable monuments include the Musée d'Orsay, Notre Dame Cathedral, and the Arc de Triomphe, all of which contribute to the city's rich cultural tapestry [16].

Furthermore, an analysis of our GIS project for the Île-de-France region reveals that a dense concentration of historical and cultural heritage sites is located within Paris (see Fig. 4). This spatial distribution further underscores the central role of Paris as the nucleus of historical and cultural attractions in the region.
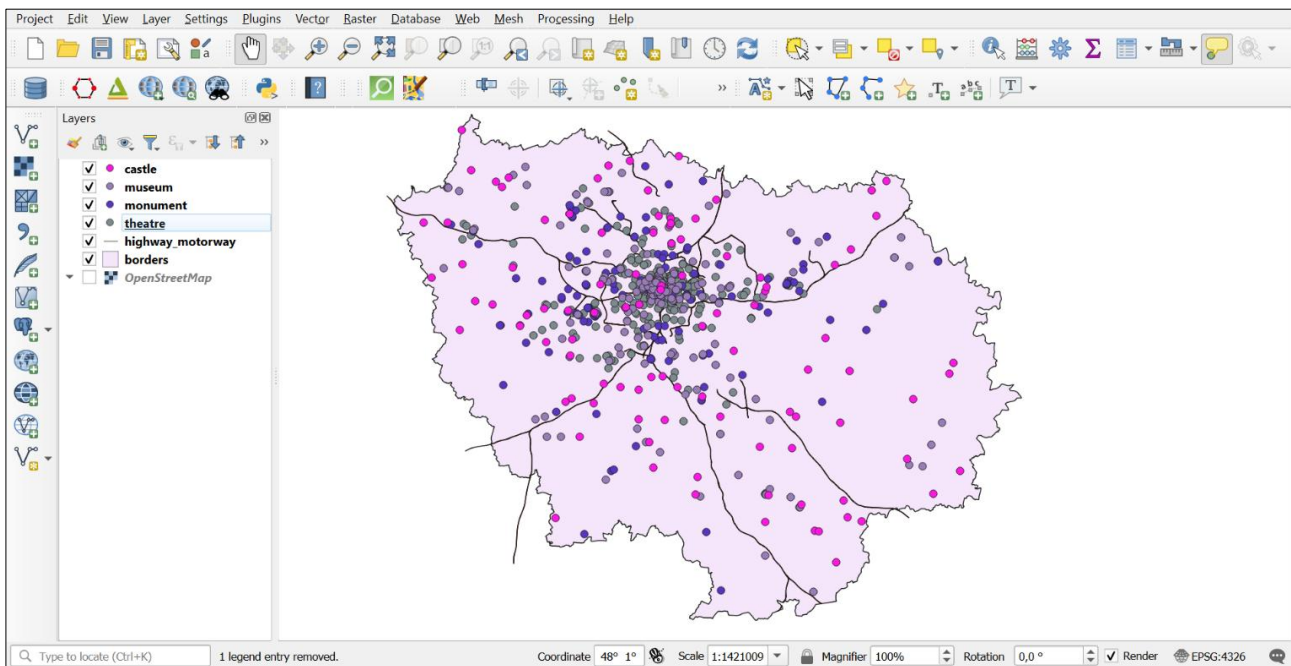
Fig. 4. Spatial distribution of historical and cultural heritage sites in Île-de-France (created using QGIS)

Speaking of the brand of Paris, it is noteworthy that the city's global image in 2024 was significantly bolstered by its hosting of the Olympic Games. The iconic Eiffel Tower was adorned with the five Olympic rings, symbolically linking the monument with international sporting excellence. During the Olympic Games, which took place from July 23 to August 11, Paris welcomed 11.2 million visitors – a 4% increase compared to the previous year – with French nationals comprising 85% of the total attendance [17].

In contrast, the branding of *Amsterdam*, the capital of the Netherlands, is intrinsically connected to its renowned cycling culture. Forecasts for the Dutch bike rental market indicate a promising revenue trajectory, with expected growth from US$ 25.04 million in 2025 to US$ 28.82 million by 2029, reflecting a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 3.57%. Projections also suggest that the user base will expand to approximately 1.14 million by 2029 [18]. Amsterdam has long been recognized as the cycling capital of the world, a reputation underpinned by a strategic urban vision that prioritizes bicycles over cars. Since the late 1970s and

1980s, the city has implemented numerous measures – including the construction of extensive bicycle paths, the establishment of car-free zones, and the introduction of traffic calming initiatives – to foster a cycling-friendly environment. Today, Amsterdam's cycling infrastructure features over 767 kilometers (477 miles) of dedicated bike lanes, bike-friendly traffic signals, and innovative solutions such as multi-story bike parking garages. Notably, the city boasts more bicycles than residents, underscoring the central role that cycling plays in its urban identity [19].

To illustrate Amsterdam's cycling infrastructure, we developed a heat map that delineates the distribution of bicycle parking facilities as well as bike rental stations across the city. The analysis reveals that the highest concentration of such amenities is located in the heart of Amsterdam, underscoring the centrality of cycling to the city's urban fabric. Additionally, the project highlights the extensive network of cycling paths specifically designed to cater to bicycle traffic. This comprehensive spatial assessment reaffirms Amsterdam's reputation as a "city of bicycles" and illustrates the city's commitment to promoting sustainable and active modes of transportation (see Fig. 5).
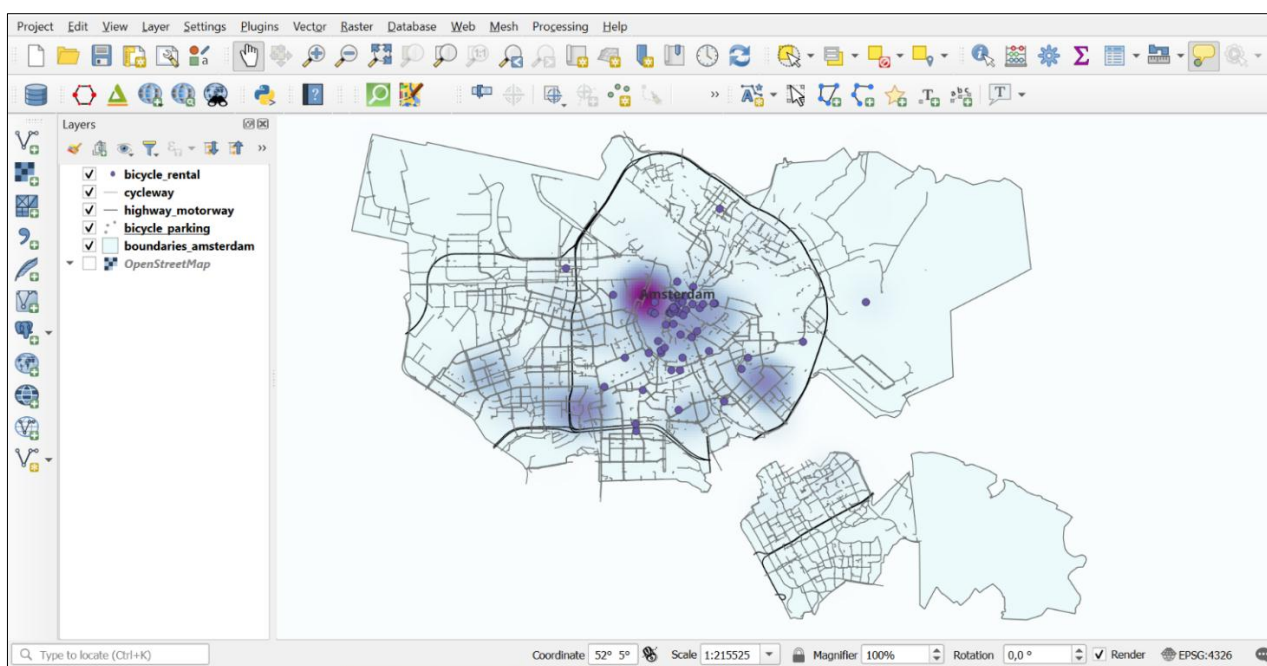

Fig. 5. Heatmap of cycling activity in Amsterdam (created using QGIS)

Amsterdam is internationally renowned not only for its *cycling culture,* but also for its vibrant tulip season, which has become an integral part of the city's identity. The introduction of tulips to the Netherlands dates back to 1563, when the renowned botanist Carolus Clusius planted the first tulip bulbs in the Hortus Botanicus of Leiden. Tulips quickly gained immense popularity, leading to incidents where individuals broke into gardens to steal bulbs, marking the unofficial and somewhat illicit beginning of tulip cultivation in the country. By the early 1600s, tulips had become a symbol of status and wealth in Dutch society [20].

Amsterdam's tulip season officially begins in January with National Tulip Day, during which Dutch growers showcase 200,000 tulips in a temporary garden on Dam Square. Visitors are invited not only to admire the floral display but also to pick a tulip for free and take it home. As spring reaches its peak, Amsterdam hosts the annual Tulip Festival, during which several canal-side houses and museums open their doors to the public, allowing visitors to explore exquisitely curated flower gardens [21]. This seasonal event reinforces Amsterdam's global reputation as a city of natural beauty, intertwining historical significance with modern tourism appeal.

Amsterdam is often referred to as the *city of canals,* owing to its Seventeenth-Century Canal Ring Area, which is situated within the Singelgracht and was designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2010. This historic urban ensemble was conceived as part of an ambitious port city project undertaken between the late 16th and early 17th centuries. The development included a network of canals west and south of the medieval old town, encircling the city and leading to the repositioning of its fortified boundaries inland.

The canal expansion was a long-term urban planning initiative, involving the drainage of swamplands and the creation of a systematic layout featuring concentric arcs of canals with infilled spaces. These areas facilitated the emergence of a homogeneous architectural landscape, characterized by gabled houses and numerous monuments. At the time, this urban extension represented the largest and most cohesive project of its kind, setting a precedent for large-scale town planning that influenced global urban development until the 19th century [22].

Today, the Amsterdam canal system remains a defining feature of the city's touristic appeal, with numerous canal cruises offering visitors the opportunity to experience the city's historic waterways firsthand.

Summarizing the above, Amsterdam exemplifies a successful case of urban rebranding. While the city has long been recognized as an appealing tourist destination, its standing in various international rankings declined between the 1980s and early 2000s due to heightened competition from other European locales. This downturn prompted a collaborative reassessment among both public and private stakeholders, ultimately leading to a strategic decision to rebrand Amsterdam. A key outcome of this effort was the launch of the *"I amsterdam"* brand.

Historically, the global image of Amsterdam was dominated by notions of openness, tolerance, and liberality – a reputation that, while attracting a certain visitor demographic, also associated the city with lifestyles involving smoking and drug use. However, the rebranding initiative successfully reoriented public perception by emphasizing Amsterdam's cultural heritage, its iconic canal system, and its role as a vibrant hub for arts and social interactions. As a result, the city has redefined itself as a center of cultivated identity and creativity, which has translated into an improved international image and an increase in tourist arrivals. Nonetheless, challenges such as impolite behavior that disrupts public order persist to some degree [23].

Concluding the analysis. It is evident that these cities share several common features regarding their tourism brands. For instance, both London and Paris are globally renowned as fashion capitals, each hosting world-famous events such as Fashion Week. Additionally, all three cities – London, Paris, and Amsterdam – are distinguished by their rich historical and cultural heritages, which consistently attract tourists. However, these urban centers also encounter significant challenges that adversely affect their tourism sectors.

A predominant issue is *overtourism,* which imposes various environmental burdens and strains urban infrastructures. This phenomenon contributes to an increased cost of living through heightened service demands and rising prices, while also causing congestion in transportation systems.

A notable example of these challenges is the housing crisis in London. The escalating cost of living has rendered housing affordability a primary concern for Londoners. Surveys indicate that approximately 80% of tenants – whether renting from private or social landlords – believe that affordable housing is insufficient, with only 24% of renters perceiving that there is an adequate supply of suitable rental properties. This critical shortage influences lifestyle decisions, as 24% of these individuals anticipate needing to leave the capital within the next 12 months to secure more affordable accommodation.

In an effort to address this crisis, local authorities have initiated the redevelopment of London's Grey Belt. The Grey Belt is defined here as portions of formerly developed Green Belt land (such as disused car parks and old petrol stations) that are now earmarked for residential use. An annual survey conducted by the cross-party group London Councils revealed that 56% of Londoners support housing development in the Grey Belt, compared to 18% who oppose it. Furthermore, nearly three-quarters (74%) of Londoners are in favor of new local housing developments, provided that the residences remain affordable for local residents [24].

Using the ArcGIS Online services, we visualized the London Green Belt layer and identified areas within this zone that could be repurposed into residential Grey Belt developments (see Fig. 6). This spatial analysis not only elucidates the current urban challenges but also supports the strategic planning efforts aimed at mitigating the adverse effects of overtourism on London's housing market.
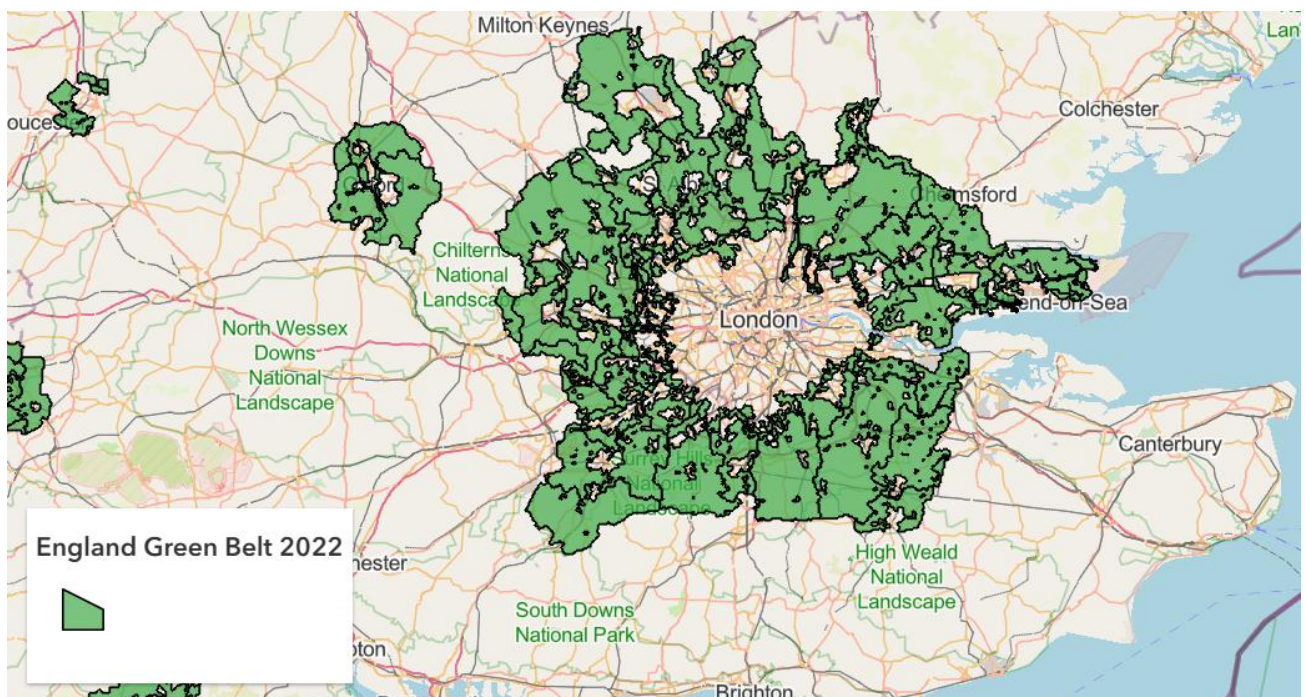

Fig. 6. London Green Belt (mapped using ArcGIS Online)

The synthesis provided above underscores the duality of these cities: while their strong, unique tourism brands – rooted in fashion, history, and culture – enhance their international appeal, they also face significant challenges such as overtourism and its related socioeconomic impacts.

Turning to a more specific issue affecting London, it is important to note that the United Kingdom's exit from the European Union in 2020 – popularly known as Brexit – has introduced significant challenges and transformations in the national tourism industry. Although VisitBritain projects a record 43.4 million visits in 2025 with an estimated spend of £33.7 billion, this forecast represents a 9% decline in real terms after adjusting for inflation. This disparity suggests that, despite the increase in visitor numbers, the actual economic benefits of tourism are not keeping pace with the rising costs incurred by the industry.

A key challenge post-Brexit is that border crossing has become considerably more complicated for visitors from the EU. Compounding this issue, the UK government recently introduced an Electronic Travel Authorization (ETA) system, which mandates that all foreign visitors – except Irish citizens – obtain prior permission before traveling to the UK. While intended to enhance border security, the added costs and administrative procedures associated with the ETA have raised concerns that potential tourists, particularly from European markets where travel was formerly more seamless, might be deterred [25].

To address these issues, local authorities should focus on initiatives that help restore London's image in the post-Brexit era. For instance, introducing programs that enable tourists to make short trips without requiring an ETA, or offering group ETAs that simplify the process compared to individual applications, could substantially ease travel barriers. Moreover, efforts to bolster the country's attractiveness to EU students through educational tourism - either by simplifying or sponsoring the ETA application process - could contribute to maintaining London's competitive edge as an international tourist destination.

Overtourism in Paris has given rise to a persistent pickpocketing crisis, particularly around major tourist attractions such as the Eiffel Tower. This issue escalated to such a degree that, in 2015, Eiffel Tower employees protested in the streets, drawing public attention to the rampant criminal activity in the area. According to reports from the U.S. Embassy and Consulates in France, pickpocket groups commonly target distracted tourists near popular landmarks. These organized groups often deploy a coordinated strategy: one member approaches the victim with a seemingly innocuous request (e.g., asking for directions or even engaging in an act that results in a minor spill), while an accomplice takes advantage of the distraction to steal valuables such as money, credit cards, and identification documents [26].

To mitigate this risk, it is advised that visitors exercise heightened vigilance when navigating crowded tourist sites, choosing less congested times for visits when possible. Personal precautions, including leaving valuables securely at home or in hotel safes, can substantially reduce the likelihood of theft. For essential items like mobile phones or cameras, the use of specialized lanyards – designed to keep these devices securely fastened – may offer additional protection. While these measures primarily place the responsibility on tourists to safeguard their belongings, local governmental authorities also have a crucial role to play. Enhanced police patrols in high-traffic areas and the strategic installation of surveillance cameras can help better monitor these zones and deter criminal activity, thereby contributing to a safer environment for both residents and visitors.

Amsterdam is widely celebrated for its picturesque canals, vibrant tulip season, and renowned cycling culture. However, despite these attractive features and a successful rebranding campaign that has enhanced the city's global image, a significant challenge remains: drug tourism. In many central tourist areas, visitors – particularly young foreign tourists – may encounter numerous street vendors who operate in these so-called "tourist spots." These vendors often sell counterfeit and potentially dangerous drugs while engaging in intimidating or even violent behavior, posing serious risks to those unfamiliar with the area.

The situation is further complicated by the Netherlands' liberal drug policy, which is frequently misinterpreted by visitors. Although the country is known for its permissive approach to cannabis, consumption remains strictly regulated: smoking cannabis is legally permitted only under controlled conditions within designated "coffee shops." These establishments mandate that visitors be at least 18 years old and conduct rigorous ID checks. In some regions, non-residents are prohibited from purchasing cannabis altogether, while most establishments outside coffee shops explicitly prohibit the use of soft drugs. Dutch legislation also distinguishes between substances classified as life-threatening and hemp products, with severe legal penalties imposed for illegal drug activities [27].

In our assessment, while these regulatory measures aim to balance liberal policies with public health concerns, they have proven insufficient to fully mitigate the risks associated with drug tourism. To address this, authorities in Amsterdam and across the Netherlands should consider adopting stricter enforcement mechanisms – such as enhanced surveillance or residency-based purchasing restrictions – to curb problematic drug use. Such steps could enhance public safety and safeguard the city's reputation as a responsible and sustainable tourism destination.

General conclusions. Our study yields several key insights into the dynamics of regional branding and tourism in Europe, with a focus on London, Paris, and Amsterdam.

First, the research establishes a foundational understanding of brand theory, particularly the concept of regional branding and its critical components, such as identity formation. Europe's prominence as a global tourism leader is underscored by its record of 747 million international arrivals in 2024, with London, Paris, and Amsterdam emerging as its flagship

destinations. Each city cultivates a distinct brand identity: London as a nexus of royal heritage, historical grandeur, and contemporary culture; Paris as an emblem of romance, haute couture, and artistic sophistication; and Amsterdam as a city defined by its iconic canals, cycling culture, and tulip landscapes, bolstered by its proactive rebranding efforts.

GIS-based spatial analysis revealed that tourist resources – such as landmarks, cultural sites, and retail hubs – are predominantly concentrated in urban cores, a pattern consistent across all three cities. While London and Paris share synergies in shopping tourism, all three destinations leverage their rich historical and cultural legacies to attract visitors. However, their success has also precipitated overtourism, manifesting in unique challenges: a housing affordability crisis in London, rampant pickpocketing in Paris, and drug-related tourism in Amsterdam. To address these issues, tailored strategies are proposed: expanding housing development in London's Grey Belt, enhancing police patrols and surveillance infrastructure in Paris, and implementing stricter drug policies, including potential bans, in Amsterdam.

Ultimately, this study highlights the delicate balance cities must strike between capitalizing on their brand appeal and mitigating the socio-economic strains of mass tourism. By adopting targeted, context-sensitive interventions, these iconic destinations can preserve their cultural integrity while fostering sustainable tourism practices.

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БРЕНДИНГ ЄВРОПЕЙСЬКИХ МІСТ У КОНТЕКСТІ РОЗВИТКУ ТУРИЗМУ: СУЧАСНІ ТЕНДЕНЦІЇ ТА ВИКЛИКИ
(на прикладі Лондона, Парижа та Амстердама)

У статті досліджено поняття брендингу та ідентичності міст і їхній вплив на формування туристичного іміджу. На прикладі Європи, яка у 2024 році закріпила лідерство у світовому туризмі із 747 мільйонами міжнародних прибуттів, проаналізовано сучасні підходи до міського брендингу за допомогою ГІС-технологій, а також виявлено ключові проблеми, з якими стикаються Лондон, Париж та Амстердам.

Дослідження підкреслює, що за рейтингом *The Brand Finance Global City Index 2024* (оцінка міст за здатність залучати інвестиції, таланти та туристів через унікальність і глобальне сприйняття) Лондон посідає 1-у позицію, Париж – третю, а Амстердам – десяту. Кожне з цих міст має виразний бренд:
- *Лондон* – симбіоз королівської спадщини, історичної архітектури та сучасних хмарочосів, центр моди завдяки престижним шопінг-локаціям і Всесвітньому тижню моди;
- *Париж* – «столиця кохання», витонченості та культури, пов'язаний з іменами літературних класиків та модними подіями;
- *Амстердам* – місто каналів, тюльпанів і велосипедів, яке успішно пройшло ребрендинг, підкреслюючи екологічність та культурну відкритість.

Для аналізу просторового розподілу туристичних ресурсів автори використали ГІС-проєкти (платформа *QGIS*), що підтвердило концентрацію об'єктів у центральних районах міст. Окрім спільних рис (наприклад, історико-культурна спадщина та розвиток шопінгу), дослідження виявило проблему надмірного туризму (*overtourism*), яка має різні наслідки:
- *Лондон* – житлова криза через високу вартість нерухомості (місцева влада планує розширювати забудову в «Сірому поясі» міста);
- *Париж* – зростання карманних крадіжок біля туристичних пам'яток (пропонується посилити патрулювання та встановити додаткові камери спостереження);
- *Амстердам* – наркотичний туризм (*drug tourism*), спричинений ліберальною політикою (необхідні суворіші заборони на вживання наркотиків).

Актуальність дослідження зумовлена ключовою роллю міського брендингу у глобальній конкуренції за туристів та інвестиції. Висновки статті можуть стати основою для розробки стратегій, спрямованих на баланс між популяризацією туризму та запобіганням його негативним наслідкам.

Ключові слова: *туристичний бренд, європейські міста, Лондон, Париж, Амстердам, бренд-айдентика, надмірний туризм, ГІС-аналіз.*

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