

## THE CITY AS A BRAND. ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF CREATIVITY IN CITY DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION

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**Purpose:** A city can be seen as a territorial unit with its associated area, number and structure of inhabitants, infrastructure and economic resources. From a social point of view, however, a city is more than that. Associated with the city is the concept of place and the placement of human beings in a social space, which is expressed not only in the material sphere, but also in the spiritual sphere. A city has its own specificity, resulting from its function, history and traditions. All this makes a city a special socio-economic entity. City planners are increasingly recognising the potential of cities contained in its non-material sphere as well, which is what makes cities special, specific and original. Today, on the basis of both tangible and intangible heritage, strategies are being built to develop and promote the city as a specific market "product".

The aim of the article is to show the process of creating a city "brand" on the example of selected cities of the Upper Silesian area, thus showing possible ways of promoting this specific market product, which a city is.

**Project/methodology/approach:** The research method used in the article focuses primarily on the socio-economic analysis of the development of cities using the process of "branding" in promotion and development.

The article has an explanatory and descriptive character. The research methods adopted in this study indicate a qualitative type of research. They include both the technique of observation and the analysis of content and documents, i.e. on the basis of observed phenomena and facts occurring in urban space and the analysis of literature on the subject, the process of "branding" will be presented.

**Findings:** Established in 2004, the UNESCO Creative Cities Network aimed to emphasise the importance of promoting the specific cultural and historical potential of cities in their development. However, for a city to be creative, tradition and monuments are not enough. Without innovative thinking, including the need to invest in the development of "creative industries" that are particular to a city, and building a "brand" of a city on its cultural potential, it is difficult to expect a spectacular success in its development.

**Originality/value:** The innovativeness of the article consists in the analysis of ways to foster the promotion and development of cities, with particular emphasis on creating a "brand" as a local product and the related process of developing creative industries. The obtained results of the analysis and the formulated conclusions may allow to use and implement similar solutions in other cities in order to stimulate their future development.

**Keywords:** branding, creative city, creative industries, urban space, sustainable urban development.

**Category of the paper:** empirical research.

## 1. Introduction

The city as a special spatial area and urbanity as a specific way of life, have, since their beginnings, been surrounded by particular emotions and social reactions. The city as a social space offered a sense of freedom and created new opportunities. After all, it is with the city and the urban lifestyle that the development of civilisation and high culture is identified. The city has always inspired and attracted creative people in various fields, where an open and tolerant space became an arena for contacts between intellectuals and artists.

The modern city, although different in shape and functionality from the historic cities of antiquity or the Middle Ages, is still identified with and perceived through the prism of 'culture' in the broadest sense.

As Ryszard Janikowski writes: "A canonical element of late modernity has become the necessity to implement the principles of alternative development referred to as sustenance (sustainable) development. At the same time, the discovery of recent decades is that the carrier and generator of prosperity, of a high quality of life can be and is culture and knowledge as an object and means of development. The cultural and creative industries already make a significant contribution in the national product of many European countries, as does cultural tourism. They are interactively co-creating the next phase of human development towards a knowledge-based economy based on the tertiary sector" (Janikowski, 2010, p. 52).

Managing a city in the post-industrial era also requires a new perspective on the urban economy. Industry, which has hitherto been the primary driver of the economy, is being consigned to oblivion; European and global standards are 'imposing' a new view of the city.

In order to be able to develop and exist in the public consciousness, a modern city must "define" itself, or more precisely, it must determine the direction of development in line with its own potential, with what is original and characteristic for the city, with what makes it stand out, attractive and constitutes its specific "genius loci".

Cities with centuries-old traditions use their historical or cultural heritage assets to build up their image, but smaller urban centres are also increasingly resorting to these forms of promotion, promoting everything that may seem worthwhile in any way, with particular emphasis on tangible and intangible forms of cultural heritage of a city or region.

To put it differently, the attractiveness and development of the contemporary postmodern city, just as at the dawn of the development of this specific spatial formation, which was the engine of human civilisational development, is still determined by its cultural and scientific potential and scientific potential, today referred to as creative potential.

Culture can be both an aim of development of a given society and a means of that development, as well as a regulator of development. Culture must be understood in at least two dimensions. In the first, the most important one, as the subjectivity of cultural development, i.e. the development of culture as such. In the second, as a catalytic agent of development, when it is the object of development within a given socio-economic system (Janikowski, 2010, p. 52).

As Andrzej Klasik writes: In studying the level of importance of the cultural sector in a city and agglomeration, it seems useful to distinguish between 'city culture' and 'city of culture'.

In research on the development of cities and urban agglomerations, i.e. in their transition from the industrial to the post-industrial stage, the category of "city culture" is used.

In turn, exposing the "city of culture" emphasises, on the one hand, the importance of the cultural function in the development of the city and the lives of its inhabitants, while on the other hand, a much broader and promising perspective of the creative city is launched and promising perspective of a creative city and a creative agglomeration (Klasik, 2009, p. 12).

Today, the creative industries are an important core of a significant economic sector in cities, above all in large, metropolitan urban centres (Wiktor-Mach, 2022; Bagwell, 2008, pp. 31-46).

It is a sector of the creative economy as opposed to the manufacturing and service sectors - deriving fundamentally from the cultural and scientific sectors with a creative contribution from education and training (Klasik, 2009, p. 13).

Many cities and regions are also creating local or regional "brands" ("branding" of regional products) to promote their own cultural and creative potential as a significant pillar of social and economic development (Smolka-Franke, 2019, p. 542; Evans, 2015, pp.135-158; Anholt, 2005).

The research method used for the purposes of this study is a comparative case study of the cities of the Silesian-Zagłębie Metropolis selected for analysis. The aim of the research undertaken for the purposes of this article is to discuss, on the example of the selected cities, the process of branding, i.e. creating a brand of the cities using their potential and cultural heritage and cultural heritage.

Most publications on branding oscillate around city marketing strategies and the creation of a brand as a symbol. This publication also refers to a deeper, sociological understanding of urban space and the creation of the city as a unique place, which, in addition to physical space, also consists of its specific *genius loci*.

The research methods adopted in this study indicate the qualitative nature of the research. These include both the observation technique used in qualitative research and content analysis, which in this case involves accessing a number of sources documenting and describing the course of processes taking place in the urban areas selected for analysis.

The analysis of the development of the phenomenon of city branding was also based on professional literature, both in the fields of urban sociology and economics, e.g. by the creator of the notion of the "creative city", Charles Landry, Richard Florida - creator of the concept of the "creative class", sociology classics such as Max Weber, as well as native scholars focused on urban issues, such as Bohdan Jałowicki, Marek S. Szczepański or Andrzej Majer, as well as a scientist who has been involved in research into the creative industries in the Silesian-Zagłębie Metropolis for many years - Andrzej Klasik.

## **2. Materials and Methods**

### **2.1. The importance of creativity in urban development**

The concept of the creative city was proposed in the 1980s by Charles Landry, a British urban planner and expert on sustainable urban development and the use of imagination and creativity in urban policy.

Ch. Landry was the first to expose the importance and impact of creativity on urban development. In the 1980s, he introduced the term creative city as a response to the dramatic economic and social changes taking place in many cities at the time. In addition, in 1978 he founded Comedia, a think tank consultancy organisation that drew attention to the relationship between culture, creativity and urban transformation and development (Zgłobiś, 2015, p. 7).

Charles Landry defines the creative city as a process that requires a change in the way people and institutions think and function to one that enables them to conceive of city development and problem-solving in an integrated way. He emphasises that the essence of the creative city is its sustainability, a concept that is currently one of the main ones in urban development science. Sustainability, according to Landry, is not only about environmental and ecological issues, but also about psychological, economic and cultural sustainability in the broadest sense so that the city space inspires new thinking and allows for sustainable forms of creativity (Landry, 2013, p. 36).

The author of this thesis encourages city managers and residents to look at their own history and future in order to best identify and 'brand' (create a brand) their advantages. In this approach, the process of arriving at creativity is as important as its outcomes, because its aim is to reflect on how to create meaning in a place, how to maintain and re-create it so that the place is constantly alive (Landry, 2013, p. 36).

According to Ch. Landry, institutions, organisations and individuals capable of seeing the complex urban context holistically are necessary to induce creativity in urban spaces. At the same time, leaders should understand how changes of a material nature alter the emotional and symbolic perception of space and the subtle systems of the city's social ecology. Acquiring these skills requires an attitude of innovation and is not a matter of course, as it involves moving beyond the existing spatial, social and economic context (Landry, 2013, p. 38; Kinal, 2015, p. 19).

As Dobrosława Wiktor-Mach emphasises: 'Creativity is not only the search for the new, it is also the ability to deal with the old.' In her view, cultural heritage and tradition also have a special power, because cultural heritage is the sum of past creations, and in the rush for change people find inspiration in buildings, artefacts, values and social rituals (Wiktor-Mach, 2022).

The creator of the notion of the creative class, Richard Florida, believes that it is human creativity that is the foundation of economic growth, and cities, in order to create a competitive advantage over others, must become attractive to people in order to prevent the loss of creative power, attract it from outside and retain it. Knowledge and creativity are displacing natural resources and manual labour as new sources of wealth creation and economic growth (Florida, 2010, p. 271).

Diversity and creativity drive each other and thus help to stimulate innovation and economic growth. R. Florida points out that lifestyle issues are extremely important for the creative class. The city should offer the opportunity for diverse and rich social interactions, it must be authentic, original and unique, and offer the possibility to actively build one's own identity. The key to a successful city, according to R. Florida lies not in reducing the costs of its functioning, but in increasing the quality of life of its inhabitants by creating a diverse urban space, rich in attractions and full of charm (Florida, 2010, pp. 277-278).

## **2.2. The city as a market product - the brand**

"If we are looking for a purely economic definition", wrote Max Weber, "then a city is a settlement in which the majority of inhabitants are engaged in industry or commerce, and not in agriculture. To speak of a city, a regular trade exchange must take place in its area, so a city is characterised by the presence of a market" (Jałowicki, Szczepański, 2006, p. 49; Majer, 2010, p. 122).

In the era of market economy, a city is treated as a special kind of enterprise, hence it becomes so important to clearly define and mark its character, what will distinguish it from other cities, i.e. its specific "brand" (branding).

In economic literature devoted to shaping the image of a city we read:

"[...] The identity of a city is the sum of the elements that identify it. It is a set of features, characteristic for the city, which distinguish it from others and are expressed in all activities undertaken in the city, creating its specific personality and character. [...] Identity is also a set of features, attributes through the prism of which the city wants to be perceived by its

surroundings and which create a specific background or context for the process of communication with the surrounding environment. [...] Only the reception of identity by the environment leads to only the reception of identity by the surroundings leads to the creation of a specific image of the city" (Stanowicka-Traczyk, 2008, p. 14).

What most often defines and characterises a city is its cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible. The tangible heritage of cities most often includes their historic architecture (also post-industrial), whereas the intangible heritage defines the entirety of cultural achievements, such as: literature, music, art, customs, tradition or culinary heritage. These are often developed in the form of creative industries.

An example of typifying the development of creative industries on the basis of the cultural potential of cities was a study on the potential of cities belonging to the area of Upper Silesia, prepared by Andrzej Klasik from the Economic University of Economics in Katowice.

On the basis of research carried out on the potential of the creative industries of the cities of the Upper Silesian conurbation, he concluded that it is possible to: "build and promote the development of:

- Katowice as a city of high culture, music and music industry.
- Bytom as a city of stage arts and cultural events in a post-industrial scenery.
- Zabrze as a city of technical monuments and post-industrial tourism.
- Chorzów as a city of entertainment and recreation" (Klasik, 2014).

The consistently implemented policy of development and promotion of the typical cultural potential of Katowice resulted in the city being awarded the title of UNESCO Creative City in 2015 precisely in the field of music.

Since then, the city has been building its brand based on the image of a city of music that characterises it. This has also consolidated the city's position as a significant and thriving urban organism, not only in the cultural sphere but also in the economic dimension. It has also given rise to efforts to create the first metropolitan area in the country - the Silesian-Zagłębiowska Metropolis, of which Katowice is the official capital.

It is also worth stressing how important the creation of the above-mentioned UNESCO Creative Cities Network Programme in 2004 was for the promotion and development of creative industries in cities.

By joining the Network, cities confirm their commitment to developing partnerships, promoting creativity, sharing best practices and strengthening citizens' participation in cultural life.

The main objective of the Creative Cities programme is to increase public awareness of the importance of culture and its pro-development potential in various segments of social life, including the economy. The title of a creative city guarantees the growth of the city's prestige in the international arena, and the globally recognisable brand of a creative city is a mark of quality that attracts tourists to the city, becoming an additional impulse for the development of the local economy ([www.unesco.pl/kultura/690/](http://www.unesco.pl/kultura/690/), 2018).

Another spectacular example of an effective form of brand promotion under a common banner of a "regional product" in the area of Upper Silesian cities is the Industrial Monuments Route of the Silesian Voivodeship, established in 2005.

As we read on the Route website: "Route of Industrial Monuments is a thematic, automobile tourist and cultural route, connecting objects related to the industrial heritage culture of the Silesian Voivodeship" ([www.zabytkotechniki.pl/Pokaz/153062/o-szlaku](http://www.zabytkotechniki.pl/Pokaz/153062/o-szlaku), 2022).

Currently it consists of 40 objects. The Route is a branded tourist product (network product of the area) presenting the most important and the most interesting industrial objects in the Silesian region in terms of tourist, historical and architectural values. Objects located on the Route are connected with mining tradition, metallurgy, power industry, railways, communications, water production and food industry. The Route of Industrial Monuments includes the existing museums and open-air museums, inhabited workers' colonies, working plants. The Route of Industrial Monuments is the most interesting route of industrial tourism in Poland. As one of the main brand tourist products of the Silesian Voivodeship it characterises the region on the tourist map of the country

An example of the effectiveness and efficiency of this type of joint action proves that joint action has a much greater chance of success and that the promotion of a similar type of product under a common banner is much more effective than individual actions, often requiring constant resistance to strong competition. It also proves that it is possible to effectively create a "cultural product", not only in the area of one commune or town not only in the area of one commune or town, but the whole region.

### **3. Results, discussion and conclusions**

The question arises, why do we refer to the socio-cultural dimension of a city when talking about a local/regional product? The reason is that the economic success of a city is very often determined by the ability to exploit and highlight this very aspect, which constitutes the special value of the space which, in addition to its heritage and material value, consists equally of the intangible, spiritual value of the region or city.

As the economic success of a city is very often determined by the ability to exploit and highlight this aspect, which constitutes the special value of space, which, apart from its heritage and material value, also includes the intangible, spiritual value of a region or city.

The research undertaken for the purpose of this study was exploratory and descriptive in nature and concerned the characteristics of branding in a selected area of post-industrial cities which, in addition to the traditional historical potential that defines many urban centres, have a particular type of potential that for many years defined their industrial character both in material and spiritual terms, and today make up the significant cultural heritage of the region.

The hypothesis set out in the paper was therefore: Cities with significant post-industrial potential, use their heritage to build their image and create their own 'brand'.

Creating an interesting and attractive urban space undoubtedly brings tangible benefits to a city or region. In addition to increased interest and revenue from tourism, which translates into economic gain, cities also gain 'value' by attracting, through their attractiveness, so-called 'discerning' and creative residents (representatives of the creative class) who contribute to the holistic development of the city and region (Florida, 2011, p. 9).

Elizabeth Currid writes that the active use of the arts as a major component of economic development is relatively new. "A fundamental shift in economic development focuses on attracting people through the development of arts and culture" (Currid, 2009, pp. 368-382). In the article cited above, the author considers the importance of the arts in economic development through several discrete but related lenses: 1) As a recreational destination or consumer product; 2) As a tool for redevelopment and development; 3) As a means of 'branding' a place and 4) As a generator of jobs and income.

The strand of research pursued by the author, allows for a better understanding of the function of the arts and cultural potential in economic development.

The urban regeneration programmes implemented in many cities are also undoubtedly contributing to the development of attractive urban space.

This approach was sanctioned by urban development strategies, which commonly envisaged the use of historical heritage to develop the local economy. Interventions in city centres usually involve the renewal of symbols of urban and regional culture, which makes it possible to realise the principle of spatial complementarity of the revitalisation process consisting in translating its effects into other areas (Jadach-Sepiolo, Kułaczowska, Mróz, 2018, p. 175).

By definition, therefore, the implementation of this type of project is not only aimed at restoring the aesthetics and spatial order of cities and the protection of heritage and material value, but increasingly the added value in the implementation of these projects is to give them functional value, among other things as prestigious cultural facilities, stimulating the development of creativity and innovative cultural events of the city.

An excellent example of combining the revitalisation of post-industrial sites and incorporating their aesthetic and functional qualities into the city's 'brand' building strategy is the city of Zabrze in Upper Silesia. According to Andrzej Klasik's previously cited typology of promotion of Upper Silesian cities, Zabrze's potential was to be based on the use of technical monuments and the development of post-industrial tourism (Klasik, 2014).

The Guido Historic Mine, located within the city, in addition to its tourist function over time, it also began to function as a thriving cultural institution, making use of the excellent acoustic qualities of the underground halls. Suffice it to mention that, in addition to staging award-winning theatre performances and organising jazz concerts, every year the mine is the venue for the Krzysztof Penderecki International Festival, as shown in figure 1.





**Figure 1.** The Historical Guido Mine – Zabrze.

Source: [www.kopalniaguido.pl/index.php](http://www.kopalniaguido.pl/index.php).

In a publication on the social memory of the city, Lukasz Skoczylas writes bluntly: "The (memory) carrier can also become a source of profit as a tourist attraction. [...] Intervention in the carrier or the creation of an implant here become a factor supporting economic growth and employment. Although the commercialisation of social memory and post-tourism has been talked about for years, the prevalence of this perception of memory carriers may come as a surprise.

It is the result of treating media in a pragmatic and utilitarian way, and therefore putting their function in relation to the present to the fore. [...] Indeed, the use of profit-related arguments is extremely helpful in gaining the acceptance of memory consumers, and even the support of other leaders, such as politicians or officials" (Skoczylas, 2014, pp. 278-279).

An example of this type of activity implemented in Zabrze, shows the process of preserving and reconstruction of the memory of the post-industrial city through activities combining the 'salvage' of in the landscape of objects of a bygone era while simultaneously promoting them and attracting an audience in a commercial way that nevertheless fits in with the specificity and character of the place.

#### **4. Summary**

The strategy for the sustainable development of cities and regions does not only involve taking care of ecology and economic development, but there is also a growing awareness of the need to care for cultural heritage (tangible and intangible) on the basis of which the so-called "local/regional product" is created and promoted.

The original or even unique value of this product builds a brand that makes a city or region attractive, attracts tourists and makes a place noticeable, which clearly translates into economic gain. The creation of attractive space in cities has yet another important function, namely to attract creative, imaginative people, whose presence, as Richard Florida argues, is essential for the effective development of a city and region.

The aim of the article, therefore, was to show ways of combining the two important factors of nurturing the city's development through the use of its potential and cultural heritage and, based on this potential, creating its image and promoting its original qualities.

Future research in the field of city branding will enable the field of analysis to be broadened to include other cities, including those outside the post-industrial area of Upper Silesia discussed here.

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