

CITY IDEA. ON THE STRATEGY OF BUILDING THE IMAGE OF THE CITY

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Purpose: Cities from ancient times to the present day have been centres of civilisation, centres of science, culture, economy and power. Some, thanks to their functions and location, have grown into huge metropolitan centres, others have retained a more intimate or peripheral character. The city as a special social space, as opposed to as a special social space, in contrast to non-urban areas, has always attracted diversity, development and education, but has also been associated with a sense of freedom, liberty and the development of a democratic and civil society.

The city in its social dimension is also identified with place as an expression of cultural identity, of a small homeland, of belonging to a particular cultural community.

This specific form of organisation of space, both the physical or material one expressed in the form of architecture and landscape, as well as the spiritual and social one, creates a specific and unique atmosphere described as a specific genius loci.

The city as an economic formation, like a company, must also define its profile and mission. In order to build a city's image and thus promote its 'brand', an idea - an 'idea for the city' - is therefore necessary.

This article aims to present examples of how a city's image can be built on the basis of based on its cultural heritage and a specific original atmosphere. However, the author's attention has been drawn not so much to large and significant urban centres with an established position on the cultural map of the country, but to cities that are today rather peripheral in character, which, however, as it turns out, can be an asset in creating their positive and original image.

Project/methodology/approach: The article is explanatory and descriptive in nature.

The research methods adopted in this paper indicate a qualitative type of research. These include, both the technique of observation and content and document analysis, i.e. on the basis of the observed phenomena and facts occurring in urban space, as well as the analysis of the subject literature and found factual data (desk research), the process of creating the image of the city will be presented.

Findings: A contemporary creative city is a city that makes innovative use of its assets, including its cultural heritage, the special qualities or symbols of its landscape, or the cultural industries present in its space, to build its image and brand.

Originality/value: The innovativeness of the article consists in the analysis of the ways in which the city carries out creative activities that are conducive to promotion and development, taking into account its particular character and specificity, i.e. what makes the city attractive and interesting, as well as the development of the cultural and tourist offer and activities related

to the process of developing creative industries. The results of the analysis and the conclusions formulated may allow similar solutions to be used and implemented in other cities in order to stimulate their future development and build their own image.

Keywords: image of the city, branding, creative city, creative industries, urban space, cultural areas.

Category of the paper: empirical research (observation) and desk research.

1. Introduction

Cities, as centres of civilisation, gathered scientific, religious and cultural administrative centres on their territory, around which city life naturally revolved. Institutions with their architectural superstructure built and created their prestige, became an element of urban identity and a broadly understood culture of memory.

City life usually revolved around not only prestigious institutions, but also in central squares (especially the market square), places of trade, exchange, i.e. peculiar agoras, meeting places, bringing people together and thus creating peculiar social forums.

A significant number of cities with medieval origins, are able to use the historical space of the city, both in the material and immaterial sense, to create and write a contemporary city narrative that, in addition to what is specific to the modern city, also maintains continuity with what is historical and which defines the current character of the urban space, making it interesting and attractive to the participant in the space.

A contemporary city, in order to be able to develop and exist in the social consciousness, must "define" itself, or more precisely, it must determine the direction of development in accordance with its own potential, with what is original and characteristic for the city, with what distinguishes it, makes it attractive and constitutes its specific "genius loci" (Smółka-Franke, 2022, p. 349).

The article aims to show the process and manner of creating the image of the city on the example of a city with a historical origin, which is Cieszyn.

The choice of the city is not accidental. It is a city of unquestionable historical and urban values, however, today it does not belong to the top of the most famous, recognisable and "besieged" by tourists Polish historical cities like such as the royal Cracow city or the multicultural Wrocław city.

The basic research question posed is therefore: How do provincial cities, with a historical pedigree, build their contemporary image?

The research method used for the purposes of this paper is a case study of the city selected for analysis, which is Cieszyn (the capital of Cieszyn Silesia).

The aim of the research undertaken for the purposes of this article is to discuss, on the basis of a selected example, the process of creating the image of the city and branding, i.e. creating the brand of the city with the use of its potential and historical-cultural heritage or, in other words, searching for an idea for the city!

The majority of publications on branding issues revolve around city marketing strategies and the creation of a brand as a symbol. This publication, however, refers to a deeper, sociological understanding of urban space and the creation of the city as a unique place, which, apart from the 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 the analysis of literature and source documents.

The analysis of the development and creation of the image of the city was also based on professional literature, such as that by the creator of the concept of the 'creative city', Charles Landry, or Richard Florida, the author of the concept of the 'creative class'.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. The city as a place

"Places are spaces defined on a map, having a name and distinguished from others by their materiality and identity", specifies Lucile Grésillon (Grésillon, 2010, p. 21).

So what is the uniqueness of places? Among the important characteristics that determine of a place include its location and the beauty of its landscape, its rich history recorded in unique works of architecture, the legend of the famous people who lived and worked in a particular place, the specific creativity developed there or the important and sometimes unusual events that have become embedded in the collective memory (Jałowicki, 2010, p. 10).

For these reasons, special places, most often of historical significance, form a specific spectrum of memorials in urban areas, and some memorials of places of significant social value. They all make up the social space defined by Alexander Wallis (Wallis, 1980, p. 71) as the *cultural area of the city*. It is these areas that usually create the special atmosphere and give character to a city, making it unique from other cities.

A place is always a fragment of space distinguished, because of some special feature, by a perceiving subject. A distinguishing feature of a place may be historical or contemporary objects, unique buildings, monuments, outdoor sculptures, as well as features given to some banal fragment of space (Jałowicki, 2010, p. 12).

Places, which are carriers of collective memory, simultaneously form the contemporary fabric of the city, melding with the present into a single urban organism. These significant objects, squares and places are therefore the core, the core of the cultural identity of the participants in the social space of the city.

"[...] The identity of a city is the sum of the elements that identify it. It is a set of qualities, characteristic of a city, that distinguish it from others and are expressed by all the activities that are undertaken in the city, creating its personality and character" (Stanowicka-Traczyk, 2008, p. 14).

An unquestionable advantage of these towns, such as Cieszyn discussed here, is their provinciality in relation to large and very popular urban centres, where, despite the enormity of attractions, it is difficult to find peace and rest from the urban bustle.

In smaller urban centres, such as the Cieszyn referred to here, the "user of space" - the tourist, does not feel tired of the crowd, and participation in space takes the "slow" form so desirable today.

2.2. Shaping the city's historic image - the importance of creativity in city development

[...] Identity is also a set of characteristics, 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 surroundings. [...] It is only the perception of identity by the environment that leads to the creation of a specific image of the city" (Stanowicka-Traczyk, 2008, p. 14).

Looking from the point of view of a contemporary city as a 'market product', it is the historical and cultural assets that create an attractive image of a city and constitute an increasingly appreciated branch of the economy today, referred to as the creative economy (Landry, 2013, p. 36), according to the principle that attractive space attracts creative people (Florida, 2010, p. 271) and thus generates interesting, creative events.

Referring in this article to the Cieszyn city, it is possible to see the way of creating its contemporary image, or to use marketing nomenclature, creating a brand, based on this historical and cultural heritage. Despite the fact that Cieszyn is not one of the most well-known and crowded urban centres today, on its example one can observe the process of creating the city's image on the basis of this heritage.

As Dobrosława Wiktor-Mach emphasises: Creativity is not only about finding 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 to change, people find inspiration in buildings, artefacts, values and social rituals (Wiktor-Mach, 2022).

The city discussed here has a medieval pedigree, which gives it a special character, primarily because of the traces in its space of a very distant history. The development of the city and its historical cultural and economic significance, determined the shaped the attractive space that is today its core value.

Cieszyn is also a border town, and in the past also a multicultural town. (during the partitions of Poland it belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire, and the development of the town was also influenced by the large number of Jews living here before World War II, as evidenced by the presence of two historic Jewish cemeteries within the town limits). Hence, the city also owes its development to the influence of other nations, which undoubtedly not only shaped its unique character, but also enriched its tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

The historic tissue of the city is therefore an undoubted asset, enabling the city to promote itself and to "draw in" the tourist with its offer. Infrastructure alone, however, will not be sufficient if the city does not take proper care of the aesthetics and functionality of this space and an appropriately prepared tourist and cultural offer.

The concept of city development and promotion based on the so-called creative economy was developed by Charls Landry in the 1980s. Charls Landry, introducing the concept of the creative city into urban policy, he exposed the importance and impact of creativity on urban development (Zgłobiś, 2015, p. 7).

Ch. 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 urban development and problem-solving to be understood in an integrated way.

Balance, according to Landry, is not only about environmental and ecological issues, but also about the broader psychological, economic and cultural balance so that the city space inspires new thinking and allows for sustainable forms of creativity (Landry, 2013, p. 36).

In contrast, Elizabeth Currid writes: "The fundamental shift in economic development focuses on attracting people through the development of arts and culture" (Currid, 2009, pp. 368-382). In the referenced article, the author considers the importance of the arts in economic development through several discrete but related lenses: 1) As a place of recreation 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.

3. Results, discussion and conclusions

Cieszyn is a city with centuries-old traditions, dating back to the 13th century, ruled by the Piasts and Habsburgs, and therefore the capital of Cieszyn Silesia, has significant historical sites, including those of medieval origin, which are used today as a symbol - a landmark of the city. Undoubtedly, one of them is the Romanesque Rotunda of St. Nicholas located on the Castle Hill, the image of which was also placed on the Polish 20 zloty banknote

(photo below) (www.Cieszyn - one of the oldest towns and its famous rotunda - PolskaZachwyca.pl, 2023).



Figure 1. The medieval Rotunda of St. Nicholas in Cieszyn.

Source: Own study.

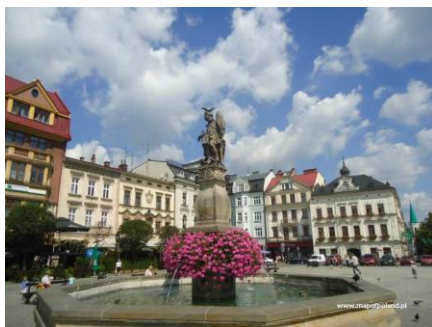


Figure 2. Banknote of 20 Polish zloty (reverse side).

Source: Appearance of Polish Zloty banknotes (currs.info).

The town of Cieszyn, which, like the whole of Silesia, has been under the influence of different states over the centuries, has retained its specific borderland atmosphere. In 1920 the city was officially divided into Cieszyn (the part belonging to Poland) and Český Těšín (Czech Cieszyn), and the natural border of the cities became the Olza River, and although today it does not belong to one of the largest or most thriving urban centres today, it is the rich history of the cultural and religious borderland (Cieszyn is considered the main Lutheran centre in the country, more than half of the Polish in the country, more than half of Polish Evangelicals of Augsburg tradition live here) and the interesting urban tissue are today its greatest asset.

A picture of Cieszyn's market square and the atmospheric, historical Głęboka Street, leading from the market square to the Castle Hill are presented below.



3.



4.

Figure 3, 4. Market square in Cieszyn.

Source: Own study.



Figure 5. The historic Głęboka Street in Cieszyn.

Source: [www.Cieszyn - ulica Głęboka - dyskusje na Garnek.pl](http://www.Cieszyn-ulica-Gleboka-dyskusje-na-Garnek.pl).

In addition to medieval buildings such as the aforementioned Rotunda of St. Nicholas or the Castle Tower, located on Castle Hill, and historic residential buildings, symbolic architectural elements certainly include the Well of the Three Brothers, commemorating the meeting place of the brothers Bolko, Leszek and Cieszko, who founded a settlement here.

Historic places, all the more shrouded in legend and special symbolism, always constitute the most interesting cultural areas of the city, forming the core of the cultural identity of the inhabitants on the one hand, and creating a space naturally inspiring interesting cultural events on the other.

As a historic and border town, Cieszyn is keen to refer to its legacy, creating its cultural offer as a historic town, a town of culture and an academic town (the Faculty of Arts and Sciences of the University of Silesia is located in its area).

Examples of these activities can be found, for example, in the offer of the *Festival Kino na granicy/Hranici* (Cinema at the Border), organised cyclically by the Association Culture on the Border.

The festival aims to promote Polish and Czech cinematography and literature, emphasising the border character of the city, which means that some of the film screenings take place on a stage located on the actual border between Polish and Czech Cieszyn.

The film festival is accompanied by numerous accompanying events, such as exhibitions or meetings with filmmakers, which make up a cultural festival of the city.

It is worth noting that the rank and character of the event is also given by the setting related to its promotion, i.e. gadgets issued with the Festival logo referring to the Olza river border (photo 6), or information leaflets distributed in public places, especially cultural institutions and catering establishments. As a result, the event also became part of the city's image.



Figure 6. Logo of the Cinema at the Border/Kino na granicy/hranici.

Source: www.25.kino.na.granicy/ / 25. Kino na hranici.

The important aspect of referring to history in shaping a city's image was also mentioned by the creator of the concept of the creative city, Charls Landry, quoted earlier. He encourages city managers and citizens 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 the outcomes, as its purpose 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).

Cieszyn is an example of a city that identifies and uses its assets for its own promotion, while creating a unique climate for the development of arts and cultural activities.

An interesting example of promoting the town's cultural heritage is the opening of the "Kornel and Friends" bookshop-café in its central historic space, which is also a tribute to a writer connected with the town - Kornel Filipowicz, who belonged to a group of young writers from Cieszyn working under Julian Przyboś, and privately was a partner of the Polish Nobel Prize winner Wisława Szymborska.

Due to the volume limitation of this article, it is impossible to present all promotional activities, but it is worth mentioning one more spectacular form of city promotion called *the Route of the Blooming Magnolia in Cieszyn*.

On the website promoting the Route, we read: "The most beautiful magnolias bloom in Cieszyn! We invite you to take a walk along the Magnolia Blossom Route, which shows the most impressive and spectacular shrubs in the centre of Cieszyn. The trail has 11 stops and is over 1 km long; it takes about 1 hour to walk it. The best time to visit it is at the beginning of April (in case of frosts a bit later), when the magnolias bud and blossom in a short time" (Route of the Blooming Magnolia Cieszyn - Silesia. Information Tu... slaskie.travel, 2023).



Figure 7. Route of the Blooming Magnolia in Cieszyn.

Source: Walking... Magnolia Blossom Route in Cieszyn (frankiwedrowniczki.pl).

The creation and promotion of a local "product", which is the discussed Route, is not only to show the beauty of nature, in this case blooming magnolias, but also to encourage a walk through the city along the trail of interesting places and objects, thus creating something like another significant symbol of the city - the magnolia (an example of a souvenir from Cieszyn - magnet - photo 8).



Figure 8. Magnet promoting the Magnolia Blossom Route in Cieszyn.

Source: Own study.

It should be added that in the city, during the period of the magnolia blossom, tours along the Route are organised by the Tourist Information Office and precise maps with the location of buildings on the Route are made available.

This is another example of the ability to brand the city's assets and make them into an interesting form of local product, while encouraging interest in the city's architecture and history.

This is also mentioned by Ch. Landry, writing: "City leaders simultaneously need to understand how changes of a material nature alter the emotional and symbolic perception of space and the subtle systems of a city's social ecology" (Landry, 2013, p. 38; Kinal, 2015, p. 19).

Another interesting example of creating an interesting atmosphere in a city and making it an attractive and inspiring space is taking advantage of its border location and drawing on the so-called cultural crossroads.

Cieszyn uses and implants on its territory elements of Czech culture, not only high culture, but also culinary culture. For example, the famous Czech flatbreads (chlebíčky), or exquisite sandwiches, have become a hit in Cieszyn's gastronomy in recent years.

Diversity and creativity drive each other and thus help to stimulate innovation and economic growth. A city must be authentic, original and unique, providing the opportunity to actively build its own identity.

The key to a city's success, according to Richard Florida, lies not in reducing the costs of its operation, but in enhancing the quality of life of its inhabitants by creating a diverse urban space, rich in attractions and full of charm (Florida, 2010, pp. 271, 277-278).

4. Summary

In an age of market economy, a city is treated as a special kind of enterprise, hence the importance of clearly defining and highlighting its character, what it will stand out from other cities, i.e. creating a kind of "brand".

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

The historic capital of Cieszyn Silesia attracts visitors with its rich history, cultural events and slow food offer.

The city can even be considered to be escaping from metropolitanity, offering its own unique and inspiring atmosphere of a provincial town at the crossroads of cultures.

Cultural and creative industries already make a significant contribution to 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).

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 undertaken for the purpose of this study was explanatory and descriptive in nature, and concerned the characteristics of image-building and city branding on the selected example of a historic border city such as Cieszyn.

The basic research question was: How do provincial towns of historical origin build their contemporary image?

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

This approach was sanctioned by urban development strategies that commonly envisaged the use of historic 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).

To conclude, it is also worth mentioning that in recent years the city has taken the initiative to revitalise the historic central space as part of another major project that is part of the city's image-building and promotion strategy: "On the Route of the Cieszyn Tramway - development of cross-border tourism", which, in addition to extensive revitalisation and archaeological works, will see a tram rail, symbolically showing which way the tram travelled, embedded in the surface of the market square, along the former route of the Cieszyn tram, leading through the entire Route of the Cieszyn Tramway, and a plaque commemorating the tram stop (Scope of work (www.cieszyn.pl), 2023).

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