

TRANSIT OF CULTURAL HERITAGE IN SILESIA AS AN ELEMENT OF CITY PROMOTION. ON THE EXAMPLE OF BOLESŁAWIEC CERAMICS

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Purpose: Representatives of various nations and cultures have marked their influence on the multicultural heritage of Silesia. In the centuries-long intricate history of this region, which is special because of its location, various cultural options clashed, which left their mark on its diversity, creating a specific cultural mosaic.

The present area of Lower Silesia was subjected to a particular influence of German culture, until a new balance of power and division of political influence in Europe took place after World War II, which involved the shift of Poland's borders westward and the incorporation of lands referred to from then on as "recovered".

Both the period of resettlement and the settlement of the incorporated western lands led to a great deal of socio-cultural turmoil, which is described in recent publications by Zbigniew Rokita (Rokita, 2023) and Karolina Kuszyk (Kuszyk, 2019), among others.

One of the elements of the changes taking place in the area was the issue of the transit of the cultural heritage found there. The purpose of the article, therefore, is to show the process of acquisition and use, and therefore the transit of such heritage, which has now become the basis for the creation of a brand that is associated almost worldwide with Polish culture. The brand, which at the same time is a key element in the promotion of one of the historic Lower Silesian cities - Bolesławiec, and thus the promotion of the entire Lower Silesian region, and even the whole of Poland, is the Bolesławiec Ceramics.

The article will present examples of building a regional product brand and creating a contemporary image of the city based on this "adapted" cultural heritage.

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 observed phenomena and facts occurring in urban space, as well as the analysis of the literature on the subject and found factual data (desk research), the process of creating the image of the city based on a specific regional product will be shown.

Findings: Modern cities are increasingly using the following to build their image in an innovative way: cultural heritage, special qualities or symbols of the landscape, but also the creative industries that characterize them.

Originality/value: The innovation of the article is to analyze the ways in which the city carries out promotional activities, conducive to promotion and development, using the attributes that distinguish the city and thus make it original, attractive and interesting, with a particular focus

on creative industries. The results of the analysis and formulated conclusions may allow the use and implementation of similar solutions in other cities to stimulate their future development and build their own image.

Keywords: cultural heritage, cultural transit, image of the city, branding, creative industries.

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

1. Wstęp

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

The area of Silesia as a whole is a “multicultural” region, mainly due to its intricate history and belonging throughout history to three nations: Polish, Bohemian and German.

Silesia, due to various cultural influences, has shaped and preserved to this day not only a specific mentality of border people or a characteristic ethnic dialect, but also a specific culture, the genesis of which often does not have a uniform pedigree. This means that the image of cultural heritage, both tangible and intangible and intangible, present in the contemporary social space of the whole of Silesia, consists of the achievements of various nations and cultures.

This particular form of heritage, which consists of a mosaic of different cultural influences, creates a specific cultural wealth of the region, which at the same time constitutes a significant economic potential, as an important element of the region's creative industries and an engine for the development of cultural tourism.

The purpose of the article is to present an example of the use and promotion of cultural heritage, bearing clear signs of multiculturalism, also referred to as “heritage in transit” (this term is used in Kurpiel, Maniak, 2020)”.

The purpose of the article is also to show the process of acquisition and use, and therefore transit, of such heritage, which has now become the basis for creating a brand associated almost worldwide with Polish culture.

One of the Lower Silesian cities of historical origin - Boleslawiec - was used as the research area, while the subject of analysis is, one of the most recognizable both in the country and abroad, creative industries, which includes the Boleslawiec ceramic industry, known and operating in the market under the brand name - Ceramics Boleslawiec.

The uneasy post-war fate of the so-called “recovered lands,” also referred to by some as “obtained” (Rokita, 2023), necessitated facing the tangible and intangible heritage found there.

The basic research question posed is therefore: How does multicultural heritage create and enrich the contemporary image of the city?

The research method used for this study is a contribution to the study of multiculturalism and branding of the city selected for analysis, which is the Lower Silesian city of Boleslawiec.

This publication also refers to theoretical issues related to the sense of belonging, identity and forms of adaptation of found cultural elements associated with a specific social space of the city.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. The identity of a multicultural city

On the grounds of territorial marketing, the identity of a city is defined as “a set of characteristics that distinguish a city from others and are expressed by all the activities that are undertaken, creating its peculiar personality and character” (Łuczak, 2005, p. 46).

In cities with a monocultural character, i.e. those whose historical pedigree is mainly associated with a relatively culturally homogeneous community (nationality), identity in the form of a totality of cultural heritage, both tangible as well as intangible, is relatively easy to identify. Identification with a culture that maintains its coherence and continuity over long centuries becomes obvious. The characteristic features of such a culture, as well as its historically shaped symbols and “emblems” belong to a single space and community that identifies with them.

However, a significant part of the current territories of western and northern Poland, for long centuries belonged to culturally foreign powers, which obviously left their mark on these areas. Often this was a trace that became permanently inscribed in the social space and townscape, despite the fact that after World War II, with the change of statehood, they underwent a profound social transformation, associated with an almost complete replacement of the population.

This clearly raises the question of how and under whose influence the contemporary “cultural landscape” of western Poland's territories, today referred to as the “recovered lands”, was shaped. That is, those territories where multiculturalism refers not so much to the simultaneous overlapping of multiple cultural influences, which also took place in other Polish cities of the pre-war period, but rather the transit and preservation of the “cultural capital of the place” with the simultaneous replacement of its social tissue.

As Andrzej Sadowski writes: “Cultural capital consists of relevant meanings, symbols, values, ideas, ideologies, myths, rituals, behavioral patterns, prestige criteria, etc., that is, those normative values which, being on the equipment of individuals and collectivities, result from their participation in the socialization processes of the family, local communities, peer groups, schools, parishes, regional, national and civilization collectivities. They become capital when

they are brought, communicated in the collectivity, when they acquire a certain meaning in the conditions of the interpersonal relations taking place, when they can serve to assimilate other forms of capital or power” (Sadowski, 2009, p. 39).

The tradition of manufacturing Boleslawiec Ceramics (German: Bunzlauer Keramik) in the Boleslawiec (German: Bunzlau) region, dates back to the 14th century, while the decisive development of production, first by craftsmen, then by industry, is dated to the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries. Hence, the development and popularization of the brand is inextricably linked to German cultural heritage.

The specificity of the Boleslawiec ceramics industry also lies in the fact, that in contrast to other types of industry, such as although heavy industry, which developed mainly in Upper Silesia, and until the period of the division of Silesia in the 1920s, also remained in German hands, the ceramic industry in the Boleslawiec area, is counted among the so-called creative industries, and is one of the forms of applied art, especially in the form of ornamentation, created by skilled artists.

Despite the presence of traditional, classic designs of German origin, with which this ceramics is most often associated (cobalt and white dots or peacock eyes), today there is a multitude of different designs on the market, signed with the logos of the artists or manufacturers who create them.

Like any “work of art”, even one with applied art qualities, Boleslawiec pottery has a pedigree, and in this respect it is certainly part of Germany's cultural heritage.

Anna Kurpiel and Katarzyna Maniak, cite in their publication (Kurpiel, Maniak, 2020, p. 165) an excerpt from a video, in which they say: “Boleslawiec ceramics play an important role in the memories of many Silesians of German origin. For many of them, it is a piece of their “little homeland”. Very many of them have amassed a small collection over time. Among the souvenir items [...] there has always been Boleslawiec Ceramics”¹.

2.2. Social memory – continuity and change

“Social memory is socially created, transformed, relatively unified and accepted knowledge, relating to the past of a given collective. This knowledge encompasses various contents, performs various functions, persists through various cultural carriers, and comes into the consciousness of individuals from various sources. Its relative unification occurs precisely thanks to the mechanisms of social life. Thus, there is a relative unification in a given group of perceptions relating to the past” (Golka, 2009, p. 15).

The process of taking over and at the same time transforming the collective memory, concerning the place, undoubtedly took place in the so-called “recovered” territories.

¹ The film “Boleslawiec Ceramics from the Reinhold Factory” (<https://vimeo.com/5389849>, 29.10.2019).

As we read in an entry on the subject of the Recovered Territories, by Zbigniew Rokita (Rokita, 2023, p. 3): “It was here, in the Recovered Territories, that one of the most spectacular events in 20th-century European history took place after the war. [...] Poland faced one of the greatest civilizational challenges - the transformation of Germany into Poland. But you can still see the stitches with which they sewed together prewar and postwar Poland. [...] some people continue to weave a tale that someone interrupted some years ago to the now dead residents of their tenements.”

As the future has shown, places that are carriers of collective memory, forming the contemporary fabric of the city, meld with the present into a single urban organism.

These significant buildings, squares and places, but also material and spiritual heritage, form the core of the cultural identity of today's participants in the city's social space as well. Taking over the existing heritage, as well as continuing its history, by writing “our own continuation” of these histories, turns out to be one of the forms of building identity anew and seeking rootedness in the history of the place where one has come to live.

“Collectivities usually know the importance of maintaining social memory in various - mainly public, but also private - places, hence the sometimes visible struggle to influence both the content of that memory and the places associated with it” (Saryusz-Wolska, 2006, p. 216).

The post-war fate of Boleslawiec pottery is one example of the preservation of the continuity of the cultural heritage of a place, despite the process of “uprooting” elements of German culture, which had shaped the area for many centuries, that has begun.

“Boleslawiec pottery and the practice of making it - partially abandoned but not abandoned, attracting new circles of heirs, generating conflicts, but also providing a link between heirs - seems to be the heritage of many heirs rather than an orphaned heritage” (Kurpiel, Maniak, 2020, p. 167).

Since 1946, the production of ceramics in Boleslawiec was taken over by the Boleslawiec Pottery and Ceramics Works, thanks to Tadeusz Szafran, a Cracow-based artist, who made efforts to resume the plant's work. The previous plant, founded in 1889 by German merchant Herman Hoffman, operated under the name Reinhold & Co.

In 1980, Ceramic Works “BOLESŁAWIEC” Sp. z o.o. was spun off, and was allowed to use the city's name.

The distribution of Boleslawiec ceramics in the post-war period was carried out by Cepelia, actually: Headquarters of Folk and Artistic Industry (Centrala Przemysłu Ludowego i Artystycznego – CPLiA) - a former organization of cooperatives of folk and artistic handicrafts, which ran trading outlets that sold goods produced in the associated cooperatives, made or inspired by the work of **Polish** folk artists.

Henceforth, Boleslawiec pottery was already to be associated exclusively with Polish folk culture and serve to promote Poland abroad, as a significant brand presenting Polish cultural heritage. This is evidenced by the fact that in July 2017 the President of the Republic of Poland

Andrzej Duda and his wife presented Prince William and Duchess Kate with, among other things, a coffee service from Boleslawiec².

As Agata Zborowska writes: “In many analyses of the post-war reality of the so-called Recovered Territories, the concept of *taming* has been used as an accurate description of the practices of settling the annexed territories. It can be helpful, for example, in describing the individual practices and behaviors of people resettled from the Borderlands, still believing for a long time in the in returning to their local homelands. However, at the level of analysis of official discourse, it seems more accurate to use precise language indicating the processes of polonization, colonization, takeover or appropriation. In our view, this terminology captures the nature of the mechanisms of incorporating Lower Silesia into Poland's borders, as it includes an emphasis on forced and sometimes violent displacement, seizure of property, the practice of looting and erasure of the region's history (Zborowska, 2019, p. 124).

Marian Golka calls this process *false memory*, writing: “[...] False memory is a negation of the previous memory and constitutes a kind of implant in relation to that one. A long-held false memory, after several generations have passed, can be considered reliable and even fully true”. [...] A common manifestation of selective forgetting is memory filtering, which involves selecting certain fragments of memory and keeping silent or even deleting others that are inconvenient” (Golka, 2009, pp. 143-144).

The post-war history of the Lower Silesian city of Boleslawiec and its associated ceramics, illustrates the course of this process.

3. Results, discussion and conclusions

“Adapted” and ‘tamed’ the cultural legacy of the city and region, in the form of Boleslawiec pottery, proved to be a significant asset during the political and economic changes that occurred in the 1990s.

“The end of this top-down policy of polonization of the northwestern lands, came with the political transformation, which opened the field to new local narratives, based on the heterogeneous cultural heritage of the region. In the 1990s, Lower Silesia and its individual cities, eager to dissociate themselves from the communist propaganda, began to ‘reinvent’ themselves, looking for an identity dominant for themselves, including - a regional product” (Kurpiel, Maniak, 2020, p. 170).

Already Max Weber claimed that: “A city is a market, we can say: a city is diversity. Together with its architecture, the shape of the space, the features of the social environment and supra-local functions. The city, which is the personification of diversity, at the same time forms

² Durka, A. We know what the presidential couple gifted to Duchess Kate and Prince William, *wp.pl*, 2017.07.18, 2024.06.09.

a certain whole, which is the basis of the cultural identity of its inhabitants” (Majer, 2010, p. 122).

With the restoration of the market economy and the move away from a centralized economy, cities and local governments, as a special kind of enterprise, faced the need to define their character, their image, based on what constitutes their originality, what defines and distinguishes them from other cities. Depending on the profile of the city's dominant economy or existing character, they began to bet on a certain type of industry, tourism or culture in the broadest sense.

As the experience of Western economies has shown, the most effective in the era of the dominance of services, characterizing post-modern societies, turned out to be image building based on the development of the so-called creative industries, related to culture in the broadest sense, including art (including applied arts) or historical or tourist values of places. As part of the promotion of cities based on cultural potential, they have begun to also started to create cultural tourist routes, including those related to places that until now have not been associated with tourism at all, such as post-industrial areas³.

“Cultural and creative industries already make a significant contribution to the national product of many European countries, as does cultural tourism. These are elements interactively co-creating the next phase of humanity's development towards a knowledge-based economy based on the tertiary sector” (Janikowski, 2010, p. 52).

The modern city, in order to exist, needs to define itself and thus promote its potential. Hence, many cities have also begun to create their own “brands” (branding), exposing and “exporting” its greatest assets.

In the case of Bolesławiec, the choice of “brand” seemed obvious. The heritage that has characterized and distinguished the region for centuries, regardless of its national origins, has become its most appropriate symbol, and thus its greatest economic asset.

The development of the brand that Bolesławiec ceramics has become is today inextricably linked to the with the promotion of the city itself and the Lower Silesia region.

The name of today's most well-known ceramics in the country, but also abroad, also “commands” attention to the city itself, whose historical and architectural qualities are as interesting as the ceramics produced here (photo 1).

This is also mentioned by Charles 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).

³ For example: Szlak Zabytków Techniki Województwa Śląskiego (The Industrial Monuments Route of the Silesian Voivodeship) www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Szlak_Zabytk%C3%B3w_Techniki_Wojew%C3%B3dztwa_%C5%9A1%C4%85skiego



Figure 1. Market Square in Bolesławiec.

Source: www.flyrecord.pl/boleslawiec-z-lotu-ptaka-1624

The development of the brand's promotion has resulted, among other things, in the organization of one of the largest ceramic events in the country, this is the Bolesławiec Ceramics Festival (photo 2), which has been held annually in mid-August for 30 years. The festival gathers more and more exhibitors every year (in and around Bolesławiec, new, smaller factories engaged in ceramics production are established, also taking advantage of the brand's status) and a growing number of interested parties, from almost all over the world.



Figure 2. Bolesławiec Ceramics Festival.

Source: www.facebook.com/umboleslawiec

The ceramics festival is, of course, accompanied by other events, characteristic of the city's festivities, whose logo has become a white dot on a cobalt background (photo 3).



Figure 3. Classic design of Boleslawiec Ceramics

Source: own photo.

4. Summary

The cultural heritage of the city is formed by both elements of tangible culture, as well as intangible.

In the case of tangible heritage, we most often have in mind the layout and architectural fabric of the city consisting of interesting, usually historic buildings, squares, historical places or social spaces of special significance, imbued with symbols and meanings, which the Polish sociologist of space Aleksander Wallis (Wallis, 1980, p. 71) referred to as cultural areas.

Intangible heritage, on the other hand, most often takes the form of a kind of spiritual “superstructure” of the city, which consists of a totality of cultural achievements, such as literature, music, art, including applied art, but also customs, traditions or culinary heritage.

This heritage is developed and promoted in the form of so-called creative industries, which often form one of the important pillars of the urban economy, which is why in many cities and regions are creating local or regional brands (“branding” of regional products) to promote this cultural potential, but also to promote the city or region itself (Smołka-Franke, 2019, p. 542; Evans, 2015, pp. 135-158; Anholt, 2005; Smołka-Franke, 2022).

In 2023, the city of Boleslawiec also applied for the inclusion of Boleslawiec ceramics in the National List of Intangible Cultural Heritage (photo 4).

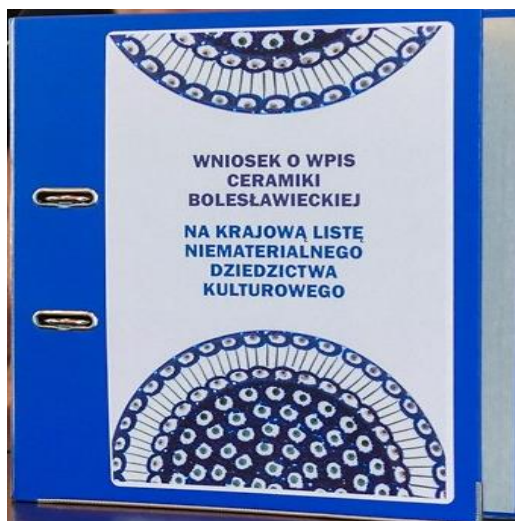


Figure 4. Application for the entry of Bolesławiec ceramics on the National list of intangible cultural heritage.

Source: www.muzeum.boleslawiec.pl/boleslawiecka-ceramika-ubiega-sie-o-wpis-na-krajowa-liste-niematerialnego-dziedzictwa-kulturowego

Creative industries, are a significant pillar of economic development of countries, hence their value is emphasized, for example, through the creation of a network of UNESCO creative cities, specializing in particular areas of the arts⁴.

The research undertaken for the purpose of the study, was explanatory and descriptive.

The city of Bolesławiec, described in the article, is an example of multicultural heritage, which, despite its difficult and intricate history, associated with the shift of Poland's post-war borders to the west, the resettlement of the native population and attempts to appropriate (in the process of Polonization) and falsify history, saved the region's cultural heritage, taking over and developing the creative industry that is the ceramics produced here for centuries.

And despite the fact that nowadays this heritage is understandably used to build the image of an already Polish city and promoted as Polish folk art, arousing widespread appreciation and admiration among users almost all over the world, thus constituting one of the main products of Poland's promotion, it should not be forgotten that it is nevertheless an example of multicultural heritage - heritage in transit. Hence, one should also bear in mind the genesis and importance that the people living in Lower Silesia in the pre-war period contributed to its development.

The use of various forms of multicultural heritage, in order to promote a city or region, should be done with a clear indication and respect for the participation of all authors and creators of this heritage.

⁴ <https://www.unesco.pl/kultura/690/>

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