

# Arts and creativity: a business and branding strategy for Lodz as a neoliberal city

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**Abstract:** This article builds on the current critique of urban neoliberal strategies for global competition that make instrumental use of arts and creativity. This paper moves the debate forward by providing a more holistic overview of why cities exploit arts and creativity as a business development strategy. It translates the arguments often used in the literature on corporate investment in arts to consider how investment in arts and creativity at an urban level aim to affect not only promotion and marketing, but also influence public relations and corporate social responsibility, prompt new production and research and innovation and boost local human resources for the local economy. Cities invest in cultural development, arts, creative industries, festivals and other events to develop a range of opportunities and as an overall strategy to engage in global urban competition, behaving like companies who try to differentiate themselves in the market by investing in creativity and sponsoring arts events. To illustrate the similarity between urban policies and business strategies we use the case study of Łódź, a Polish post-industrial city, where creative industries have recently become leading urban development drivers.

**Keywords:** Łódź; City branding; Promotion; Creative city; Creative industries; Neoliberalism

## 1. Introduction

This paper assesses the effects of a branding strategy of Łódź – third largest Polish city. The strategy is based on arts and creativity and is a result of a modern top down business-driven approach to city management. This approach is based on neo-liberalism, that has recently dominated the urban development (Jessop, 2002, Peck et al., 2009). As part of this neoliberal agenda, particular attention has been given to ideas such as city promotion and branding (Eshuis & Edwards, 2013; Swyngedouw, Moulaert, & Rodriguez, 2002), derived from modern marketing techniques developed in corporations. Without hesitation these concepts are now applied to, regions and cities and are referred to as place or city branding (Kavaratzis 2004; Hanna & Rowley, 2011). However, following Comunain (2009) we argue that the use of arts and creativity has moved from being a simply branding strategy to a more in-depth and long-term business strategy.

The article aims to expand our current knowledge in the field in two ways. Firstly, while much has been written on global cities, especially in the anglo-saxon context, there is currently less research available on the Central Europe region (Colomb, 2013; Lähdesmäki, 2014; Smith & Puczkó, 2012; Szondi, 2011). In 2004 the countries of this region (e.g. Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary) entered European Union and became a part of the Western World. However, the adoption and adaption of city branding strategies in this region should be of interest as it connects new neoliberal ideas with historical socialist urban hierarchies. The article presents the case study of Łódź to reflect on the complexity of bringing together neo-liberal branding strategy (see: Anholt 2010, Hanna and Rowley 2011; Lucarelli 2018; Cudny 2019) within cities that transitioned from socialist to market economies. Secondly, we consider how this transition might be influenced by a long-term understanding of the value that arts and creativity have for companies and organisations, as presented by Comunian (2009) and how this might help understand further the motivations behind Lodz investment in branding and development strategies based on arts and creativity.

In the paper we use the term ‘arts and creativity’ to encompass two connected aspects of how culture is used in the urban environment. In particular, we use the term ‘arts’ to include more public-led forms of intervention such as the development of an art museum or the support of a new art festival – broadly the arts and cultural activities that are associated with publicly-supported cultural interventions. We use the term ‘creativity’ to include more recent kinds of opportunities, connected with creative industries (CIs) and other sectors of the knowledge economy. Here we include activities such as the establishment or funding of a new creative /

IT hub in the city, or the redevelopment of buildings to rent to creative workers.

Finally, the article calls for more research into the use of arts and creativity as urban strategy to take into account for the long-term historical development and urban heritage in different national context, to acknowledge urban development strategies beyond the trajectory of traditional liberal economies.

## **2. Arts & Creativity and new urban agendas**

In the last three decades there has been a growing body of literature and research that has put arts and creativity at the forefront of urban development from many perspectives. Here we summarise some of this work, highlighting the historical evolution of this thinking and some of the key contributions. However, rather than a simple review of the literature, we articulate this in relation to changing urban agendas from the 1980s until now. In this discussion we need to consider that there is a degree of overlap between theories across their chronological development. Furthermore, this existing literature looks mainly at the development of literature based on Anglo-Saxon context, mainly UK and USA contexts. For other countries (Europe and beyond) the same theories or issues may have emerged within a different time frame, as in our case study of Łódź.

### ***Old agendas: regeneration, place and people***

The emphasis on culture for urban regeneration has been historically important from the 1970s and 1980s in response to urban decline (Bianchini & Parkinson, 1994). Here the focus of research has been on how arts and culture could re-engage people with once derelict places and bring revitalisation to a specified context. However, from initial studies the role that independent cultural producers play in this physical and social renewal became apparent (O'Connor & Wynne, 1997).

### ***Past agendas: creative industries, events and tourism***

The role of culture in the regeneration of cities, their promotion and branding started to be appreciated in the 1990s, when the idea of creative industries (CIs) appeared (DCMS, 1998). This approach evolved into the creative city, CIs and economy concepts (Evans, 2009).

Comunian (2011, p. 1158-59) described creative cities as those where focus is ‘on the production of cultural/creative products, creative workers and infrastructure’. However, from the beginning the strong connection of arts and creativity with events and tourism was noted (García, 2004; Pratt, 2000). An important element which should be considered in the CIs is festivals and events. Many publications emphasize their importance of in the development of creative places (Cudny, 2016).

### ***Contemporary agendas: human capital, creativity and innovation***

The most recent development – triggered by debate around the success in policy circles of the creative class theory of (Florida, 2004) – seems to place much more emphasis on human capital creation as well as attraction. With human capital we see a turn to focusing on people especially on the highly educated, who have greater capacity to contribute to creativity and innovation (Stolarick & Florida, 2006) but also to economic development through their salary and spending. Building an ‘atmosphere’ able to attract the creative class requires the presence and availability of interesting urban experiences, such as vibrant city leisure and night life and cultural events, including urban festivals (Zherdev 2014). Here the previous research on CIs seems to expand to embrace the broader concept of the creative economy, defined as ‘the interface between creativity, culture, economics and technology as expressed in the ability to create and circulate intellectual capital, with the potential to generate income, jobs and export earnings while at the same time promoting social inclusion, cultural diversity and human development’ (UNCTAD 2008, p. 11). Here there are new consolidated themes, specifically around the connection between the creative economy and innovation (Potts, 2007).

Although very popular the ideas of creative class gained much criticism. Moretti (2012) criticized the assumption that the reach cultural life and the bohemian atmosphere is the main factor for creativity development. Many criticized the theory’s methodology including the measurement and application of the 3T’s (Talent, Technology, and Tolerance) (Rausch and Negrey 2006; Pratt 2008; Krätke 2010). The theory’s incompatibility to European cities was often emphasized as well (Andersen et al. 2010; Krätke 2010; Martin-Brelot et al. 2010; Yáñez 2013). Although criticised the Florida’s theory of creative class remains one of the key approaches to urban development.

### **3. Urban branding: a new image for post-socialist cities?**

#### ***Place branding in urban context***

As we have seen from the historical development of the use of arts and creativity for urban agendas, city branding became a priority from the late 80s and 1990s for many post-industrial cities in the Anglo-Saxon context. Competition between cities in relation to branding has exponentially grown since and it is important to understand what is meant by branding in relation to cities and places. Branding is usually understood as a process of adding value and meaning to products, firms or places undergoing the process. Van Ham (2008) presented place branding as a management and marketing tool allowing to express places' core values, beliefs, organizational culture (Andersson 2014). According to Eshuis and Edwards (2013, 1066) "Place branding is used as an urban governance strategy for managing perceptions about place. It includes perceptions of opportunities within a place and its identity, and it may involve ideas about economic and spatial development".

These issues were felt even more strongly by cities in the socialist block of Europe following the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989. In fact, these cities found themselves not only dealing with sudden economic restructuring but with being in competition with cities across Europe which were much more used to neoliberal urban strategies to compete in the European and global market. (Smith and Puczkó, 2012). However, another main issue for these cities - and often for countries as a whole (Dzenovska, 2005; Hall, 2002; Light, 2001) - was to address a negative (backward looking, old fashioned) image and to develop a new identity to present themselves to the outside (Szondi 2011; Smith and Puczkó 2012; Colomb 2013; Lähdesmäki 2014).

The literature highlights how creation of place images should be based on the identity of a place and led to the conversion of attention evoked by branding into awareness positively impacting the place image (Boisen, Terlouw, Groote, & Couwenberg, 2018). According to Insch (2011) a city's richness resulting from its identity, is an inspiration for branding strategy.

#### ***Branding advantages in post-socialist cities***

It is interesting to consider how post-socialist cities – like Lodz – think about connecting with their own heritage, culture and identity while at the same time trying to distantiate themselves from the past.

Branding encompasses building the positive image but also its dissemination among diversified audiences (residents, entrepreneurs, tourists) (Eshuis and Edwards 2013) with the use of media, narratives, and events (Vanolo 2008).

It must be stressed that however commonly accepted branding practise and research gain much criticism. Andersson (2014) distinguished three main areas of this critics: development of copy-paste models leading to the unification of branding strategies; simplified approach to place brand creation which is in contradiction to the mulidimensional place identity and the complexity of place management; insufficient theoretical framework based on empirical research. In this paper, we specifically highlight how post-socialist cities, that in many ways come to the urban branding race later than post-industrial anglo-saxon cities often used as case studies, had specific challenges in reconciling their heritage and history with the creation of a new brand.

Branding strategies are often introduced in stagnating, post-industrial and shrinking cities in order to reinvent them and foster their structure and image, redevelopment and revitalisation (Evans 2003; Garcia 2004; Vanolo 2008, 2015; Eshuis and Edwards 2013). However, we argue very little attending has been placed on the use of new urban branding strategies in the context of post-socialist cities while some attention has been place on national branding ((Dzenovska, 2005).

Finally Boisen et al. 2018 (p. 1) explains that place branding is introduced in cities because of 4 factors: change from a managerial to an entrepreneurial approach by urban governments, the domination of neoliberalism and its focus on competitiveness between cities, local governments' growing responsibility for urban development, increasing competition between global cities. We argue that for post-socialist cities like Lodz many of these elements apply but need to be further explored and articulated to avoid looking at place branding from a single point of view and incorporate a diverse range of urban dynamics.

#### **4. From Branding to entrepreneurial cities**

##### ***Branding as part of entrepreneurial strategies***

Entrepreneurial approach to cities encompasses the treatment them business alike. The urban governance has lately transformed from the provision of welfare into foster of local economic development. What is often referred to as the entrepreneurial city idea (Harvey, 1989). Local governments gain more responsibility for urban development (Yigitcanlar et al. 2008), therefore, they put pressure on fostering it also with the use of branding (Boisen et al. 2018).

According to Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2005, 508) „place branding is merely the application of product branding to places”. Because companies had successfully introduced branding as an instrument of creating the positive image it started to be adapted to cities (Kavaratzis 2004; Kavaratzis and Ashworth 2005).

Many authors understand branding as a complex development strategy (Kavaratzis and Ashworth 2005; Zhang and Zhao 2009; Anholt 2010; Lucarelli 2018; Cudny 2019) therefore it is important for our article to understand what is a strategy. We may refer to Porter's (1991, p.96) definition who concluded that it is “a way of integrating the activities of the diverse functional departments within a firm, including marketing, production, research and development, procurement, finance, and the like”. Griffin (2016, p. 71) presented strategies as complex plans leading to achievement of the main goals of an organization. Strategies were adopted from management perspective. When management is applied to cities we are talking about city management. When management encompasses introduction of long term plans leading to achievement of development goals it is referred to as strategic management. In cities strategic management is used with regard to spatial planning (see: Healey 2007) and urban socio-economic development (Davey 1996). In the case of cities an urban development strategy is a management tool in which the development priorities are established and long-term activities are set and consequently introduced in order to ensure goal achievement. Such strategies are often devoted to the promotion of a city and its brand creation (Cudny 2019).

Applying product branding approach to place branding is not easy. The product offered by places including cities is much more complex and unlike business products, it is created by various stakeholders (Cudny 2019). Therefore successful place branding strategies cannot be simply based on marketing communications only. They must be a complex process of creating urban policy being a part of entrepreneurial city concept and urban multidimensional management (Kavaratzis and Ashworth 2005;; Anholt 2008, 2010; Ashworth and Kavaratzis 2009; Zenker and Beckmann 2013).

This process encompasses three groups of instruments (Ashworth, 2009):

- Creating personal associations between brand recipients and a city. It could be based on a cultural, entertainment and tourism experiences developed in a city.

- Constructing flagship buildings including cultural centers and placing them in the center of an urban brand is a second way to reach the preferred city brand.
- Organizing planned events in order to create a wider recognition and brand associations

### ***Culture and creativity as branding pillars in entrepreneurial cities***

Modern branding strategies often encompasses the use of arts and creativity as their core (Papadopoulos, 2004). Such strategies were often used internationally as a branding strategy for entrepreneurial cities. Copenhagen centered its brand around creative clusters flagship buildings (Bayliss 2007). The branding strategy of Singapore used culture arts and creativity. The authorities of the city pursued development of CIs and city's creative product and high-profile events mixed with campaigns promoting the city as creative centre (Ooi 2008).

One of the most known examples of city development and branding strategy is the so called Barcelona Model. Through the 1980's and 1990's city authorities of Barcelona introduced several development and branding strategies based on culture creation, infrastructural development and mega events. These action successfully redeveloped and rebranded the former industrial city in an unique city with brand based on heritage and culture (Degen and García 2012; Rius Ulldemolins 2014).

Many authors have investigated how culture and creativity have received special attention from policy makers as strategies for creative place making (Evans, 2003) and image redevelopment (Vanolo, 2008). Some have looked at investment in public cultural infrastructure and international cultural event (Garcia, 2004; Richards & Wilson, 2004) such as the European Capital of Culture (ECC). Others have looked more at the development of cultural and creative production via creative clusters and cultural quarters as opportunities for re-branding and re-development (Evans, 2009; Mccarthy, 2005; Mould & Comunian, 2015). Finally, an emphasis of human capital attraction and retention was promoted by the idea of the creative class (Florida, 2003; Martin-Brelot, Grossetti, Eckert, Gritsai, & Kovacs, 2010; Zenker, 2009).

While many have highlighted the connection between these investments in arts and creativity and new neoliberal approaches to policy making and urban planning (Christophers, 2008; McGuigan, 2009; Peck, 2005), we argue in this paper for a more holistic approach. This approach allows for a better understanding of how this new business strategy interacts with a range of overlapping urban agendas like promotion and marketing, public relations and



corporate social responsibility, prompt new production and research and innovation and boost local human resources. In order to unpack the dynamics of this type of urban business strategy, the paper adopts a research framework developed in the context of business sponsorship and business investment in the arts (Comunian, 2009; Moir & Taffler, 2004). In this field, authors like Comunian (2009) and Artico & Tamma (2018) highlight how investing in arts and creativity has recently become a business strategy which needs to demonstrate impact and value creation.

## **5. Arts & Creativity as business investment: from corporate to urban strategies**

In this section we argue that there are parallels that can be drawn between arts and creativity as a business investment at the corporate level and their use as an urban development strategy. The parallel, building on Comunian (2009), starts with the move from investing in arts and creativity as a philanthropic, good-will and civic objective by both cities (Alexander, Alexander, & Decker, 2017; Bennett, 2005) and businesses (Burlingame & Young, 1996; Gautier & Pache, 2015) to recognising this as an investment with specific returns (Mescon & Tilson, 1987). In the post-fordist economy, when the value of aesthetic and cultural dimensions is becoming increasingly important in the market for products and places, these forms of investment need serious consideration and analysis. In this paper we adapt the framework developed by Comunian (2009: fig.1, p. 205) to consider whether a similar articulation of the business strategy of cities investing in arts and creativity can be made. In this framework we consider some important areas of operation, including: marketing and branding, public relations (PR), corporate social responsibility (CSR), human resources (HR), research and innovation (R&I) and production.

We argue that the first three areas have seen a more traditional and stronger use of arts and creativity to boost cities development strategies, but that more recently a focus on the last three areas has complemented the use of arts and creativity strategies. In this case, branding as the first of aforementioned pillars of global competitions between cities, is based on long term complex socio-economic development programmes supplemented with public relations (PR), corporate social responsibility (CSR) marketing campaigns. The last three areas (HR, R&I and production) also have a major focus on the economic development strategy of the city.

While a large part of the literature has focused on the impact of arts and creativity in developing the external image of a city, this framework is useful because it also connects with

how they can be used to develop new internal opportunities. Already Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2005) underlined that city branding is not only aimed at external stakeholders (prospective investors or tourists) but it also focuses on city inhabitants hence is directed inwards. Here we consider how these different dimensions have been connected (although not holistically) by a range of authors when analysing the investment of cities in arts and culture, before moving in the second half of the paper to a case study used to consider this kind of investments from a holistic perspective.

Table 1, taking from Comunian (2009) highlights how the existing research on arts and creativity already explores different dimension of the use of arts and creativity in relation to investing in cities image, infrastructure and human development. However, these contributions have not been connected fully to understand how a city can use arts and creativity as an overarching competitive strategy – just like businesses use business investment in the arts (Comunian, 2009) – rather than individual interventions or objectives.

Table 1: research on arts and creativity and urban agendas

<b>Phase</b>	<b>Period</b>	<b>Urban Issues / Agendas</b>	<b>Key contributors</b>
Regeneration, place and people	1970s – 1980s	Urban Decline and Physical regeneration of urban areas	(Bianchini and Parkinson, 1994; Wynne, 1992)
	1980s	Community disengagement and unemployment	(Landry and Bianchini, 1995)
	1980s – 1990s	New jobs creation and new emerging new economic sectors (Cultural industries)	(O’Connor, 1998)
CIs, events and tourism	1990s	Supporting CIs and clusters	(Evans, 2009; Pratt, 2004)
	1990s – 2000s	City re-branding and tourism development	(Evans, 2003; García, 2005)
Human capital, creativity and innovation	2000s-2010s	Attraction of human capital and investments	(Florida, 2004)
	2010s – 2018	Creative economy and innovation	(Bakhshi, et al., 2008; Potts, 2007)

## 6. Research methods and the case study of Łódź

### *Łódź – location and history*

In this section we introduce the case study of Łódź and reflect on the research methods used in the article. Łódź is an interesting case because it is a city which has vastly invested in creative sectors as a driver of socio-economic development and an image-changing factor. It is a post-industrial city in central Poland with ca. 700,000 inhabitants. The city developed on the back on the textile and clothing industry in the 19th century and maintained this specialisation until the fall of communism in 1989. In the 1990's, exiting the socialist period, the city entered a period of a deep socio-economic crisis and unemployment, which practically did not exist during the communist era, rapidly increased (Marcinićzak, 2012).

According to Young and Kaczmarek (2008, p.59) 'industrial employment collapsed from 210,000 to 93,000 between 1980 and 1995 and unemployment exceeded 20 percent'. Employment in construction and industry dropped from 43.2% in 1990 to 29.4 % in 2009. Meanwhile, the employment rate in services reached 70%. The restructuring of Łódź's economy encapsulated its adoption of neoliberal urban policies. This included the replacement of traditional industries by modern branches, the development of services, privatisation and globalisation. New investments came from the USA, Germany, and Italy and the ownership structure in the city changed. Before 1989, only a small proportion of firms were private, whereas in 2009 the private sector represented 97.8% of all firms in the city. The companies located in Łódź produced goods mostly for the European Union market. However, the long crisis perpetuated a disadvantageous image of Łódź as a neglected, post-industrial city (Young & Kaczmarek, 2008).

### ***Study methods***

In order to investigate the case study of Łódź we conducted a two-year research project in the city, using a mixed-method approach. This approach encompassed qualitative (interviews, document analysis, mapping) and quantitative methods (analysis of data obtained from the city council of Łódź and regarding the promotional outcomes of creative endeavours (e.g. Advertising Value Equivalency).

The research design was aimed at considering whether Lodz adoption of arts and creativity as a urban strategy 1) connected with the need to re-image and re-brand the city following the post-socialist era 2) used an urban branding strategy based on arts and creativity 3) adopted a holistic perspective encompassing other objectives beyond a urban branding strategy. In order to investigate the aforementioned issues, we turn to the representatives of city authorities with an initial query regarding documents and key-people connected with the issues.

On the basis of the query we picked up key strategic documents which were commissioned or published by Łódź City Council between 2010 and 2017. In total we collected 7 strategic key documents (in paper and digital versions): evaluating reports regarding the city bids for ECOC 2016, International EXO 2022 and UNESCO city of culture bid; The strategy of Łódź brand management for 2010-2016; media report regarding the event sector in the city of Łódź has been elaborated for the Łódź City Hall by the PRESS-SERVICE Media Monitoring; Pożycka, P. Report on creative sector in Łódź (Sektor kreatywny w Łodzi); "The Strategy of Integrated Development of Łódź 2020+"(City of Łódź, 2012).

These documents underwent an extensive analysis and review of in terms of the cultural policy and strategic urban development assumptions they encompassed. This review provided us not only with key information on the objectives and strategies being pursued by the city managers and planners, but also with an opportunity to reflect on the neoliberal language used throughout the documentations and how terms like city marketing or human capital were interpreted by the local policy makers.

The policy documents also introduced us to some key players and partners in the arts and creativity investments of the city. From the documents we drew a list of key players, specifically in the public authority and the arts and creative sector. These are individuals or organisations which were particularly active in Łódź's creative and cultural scene. Snowballing from the main policy documents, we were able to identify 12 key players and decided to conduct mapping, participant observation and qualitative interviews with these key players to gather a range of opinions on the use of arts and creativity for the city development of Łódź.

We conducted 12 in-depth face to face interviews. Participants included: three managers from the city council (two from the promotional office and one planning officer), five key cultural producers and festival directors and four creative practitioners working in the city. The main topics discussed during the interviews were: the value of arts & creativity for Łódź city development; the objectives that Łódź policy makers were trying to achieve and urban issues that were being addressed through arts and creativity; finally, the perceived impact of the investments in arts and creativity from policy makers and key stakeholder in the arts and creative economy of Łódź.

The results of the aforementioned methods were supplemented by own observation conducted in the most important creative and arts related facilities in Łódź (Łódź Art Center, EC1 Łódź, Art\_Inkubator) as well as during the biggest cultural festivals connected with CIs organized in the city between 2017-2018 (Łódź Design Festival; Fotofestival, International Festival of Comics and Games, SOUNDEDIT Festival, Young Fashion Week).

To better define the objectives and aims of this paper, we need to confirm that we do not aim to assess whether Łódź has been successful or not in achieving these objectives or impact. The focus of the paper is on the urban strategies adopted and their motivations, rhetoric and aims, not on their outcomes – this would require a broader range of methodologies as well as a more longitudinal approach to the work undertaken. Finally, within our objectives, we reflect on the differences between Lodz – as representative of a city with a rich historical past entering the global economy from a previous socialist political landscape – present differences and new issues our current understanding mainly based on Anglo-Saxon post-industrial cities.

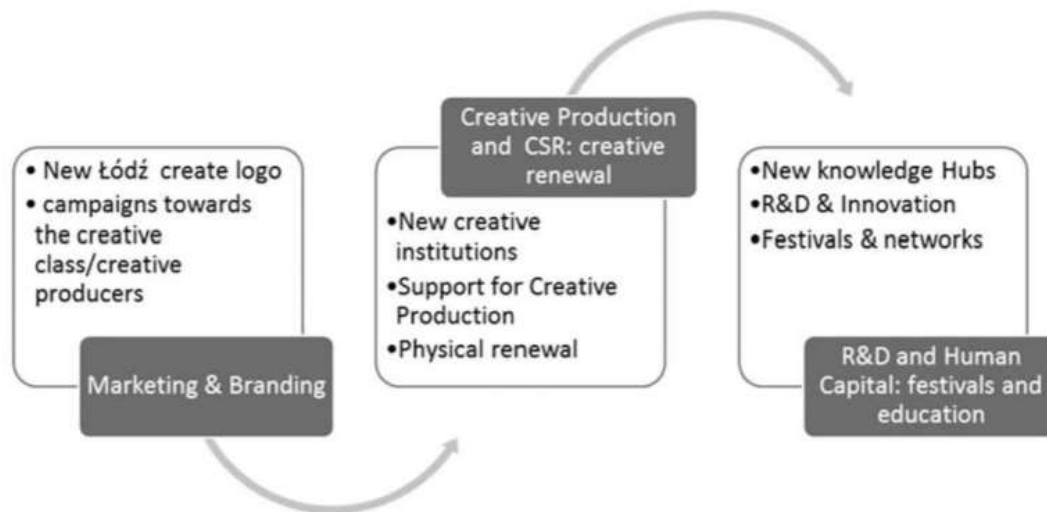
## **7. Arts & Creativity in Łódź: an urban business strategy for the city?**

### ***Marketing and Branding: Arts & Creativity as new image of the City***

In our analysis of the case study of Łódź we consider how arts and creativity have been used to create marketing and branding – as well as general positive association with the city name – but also how the city placed increased relevance over the years on creative production, R&I and the attraction of creative human capital. The authorities of Łódź implemented a wide range of policies leading to the expansion of arts and creativity and a variety of activities were planned in the "Integrated Development Strategy for Łódź 2020+", approved by the City Council in 2012 (City of Łódź, 2012). The words and rethorite used in the document can resonate with vision and strategies of other European and global cities. The strategy is to form a “friendly, creative and dynamic city with competitive living, working and investing conditions, using its historical, infrastructural and creative potential for the development” (City of Łódź, 2012, p.5) . The vision underlines the development of Łódź on the basis of its creative potential. The main aims encompassed among others are (City of Łódź, 2012, p.12-17) “the development of the economy based on knowledge, innovations and CIs with the use of the high potential of Łódź's science and entrepreneurship [...] increasing the participation of inhabitants in culture thanks to the effective use of cultural and creative potential of Łódź”. Furthermore, these objectives would be realised through diverse actions using elements of the city’s cultural heritage including movie production, the fashion and textile industry and the organisation of events. These actions also link culture with revitalisation processes in the city, attracting creative class members to Łódź. The strategy also implies the development of knowledge-based branches, clusters and the development of links between universities and industry.

Reading these strategic points, it is easy to see how the city has been influenced in the past decades from the global rhetoric about arts and creativity from urban development. However, we argue this strategy rather than being a simply copy-cat model from other city represent the result of a temporal evolution of focus and objectives (see fig.1 ) from image creation to creative production and human capital. In the analysis to follow, we argue that overlapping with this internal evolution of Lodz strategy is the need to respond to the specific condition of the city as it emerged from its post-socialist past and used its arts and creativity to re-define elements of its production and human capital development.

Fig.1 highlights the three pillars of the urban business strategy of Łódź in relation to how it engaged with arts and creativity at the urban level which reflects similar strategy to aforementioned plans introduced in Copenhagen, Singapore, Turin and Barcelona.



**Fig. 1.** Main pillars of the urban business strategy of Łódź.  
Source: Authors' elaboration.

The rise of arts and creativity was at the heart of the branding and promotion strategy prepared in 2010 for the city of Łódź, entitled "The strategy of Łódź brand management for 2010-2016". The strategy implies for the first time after 1989 that Łódź moved from the stage

of manufacturing production into the stage of creation, based on the managerial and creative approach to culture, business education and tourism. The main objectives of the strategy included (City of Łódź, 2012, p.62):

- “1. changing the city into a CIs centre on the perception map of Poland, Europe and the world.
- 2. creating the image of Łódź as a creative, energetic, entrepreneurial, tolerant, independent city.”

One of the problems was that the strategy had been prepared prior to the strategy for the socio-economic development of the city. The latter was prepared in 2012 as "The Strategy of Integrated Development of Łódź 2020+". As part of the branding strategy the slogan chosen for Łódź was "Łódź Creates" and it was supplemented with a new logo, introduced in 2011 (Fig. 2). To improve the perception of the "Łódź Creates" brand, several large promotional campaigns were run, summarised in table 2, financed by European Union subsidies and City funds .



**Fig. 2.** Graphic logo for “Łódź Creates” slogan.  
Source: Materials of Łódź City Hall.

Table 2. Selected promotional campaigns in Łódź, presenting it as a creative city

Name and year of promotional campaign	Characteristics
Do you know that in Łódź ...?	Presentation of the idea of the CIs and their representatives from Łódź. The promotional messages always started with the question: "Do you know that

(2011)	in Łódź ...?" (i.e. something was invented, discovered). 10 examples of creative products invented in Łódź were presented during the campaign.
Promotion of the brand: Łódź – the Centre of CIs (2012)	Łódź was presented as a centre for CIs. Different advertisements were prepared, including short videos promoting Łódź as a CIs centre. A website dedicated to Łódź's CIs was constructed ( <a href="http://www.kreatywna.lodz.pl">www.kreatywna.lodz.pl</a> ). Promotional gadgets with the "Łódź Creates" logo were produced (i.e. pendrives), DVDs with promotional movies were released and press conferences were held. A nationwide outdoor, television and internet campaign was launched with the use of video commercials. A newsletter devoted to CIs was published.
It will be noisy in Łódź (2013)	The main aim was to promote Łódź as a centre for cultural events and festivals. 250 billboards were placed in the largest Polish cities (e.g. Gdańsk, Kraków, Poznań, Warszawa). During this campaign, several large events took place in the city, including the concerts of Leonard Cohen, TOTO, Iron Maiden, Depeche Mode, Eric Clapton. As part of the campaign, 250 outdoor billboards were placed in the biggest Polish cities (e.g. in Gdańsk, Kraków, Poznań, Warsaw) and 50 citylight showcases were placed in different locations in Łódź.
Łódź Welcomes (2014)	This campaign concerned CIs in the city. It included 1,200 billboards in Polish cities, 2,055 broadcasts of TV commercials and 2,445 broadcasts of radio commercials nationwide. Several presentations of Łódź as a creative city were made during breakfast television shows on different TV channels. Advertisements were shown in cinemas before film screenings and posted on Internet websites and YouTube. It was the biggest nationwide promotional campaign that had been launched in the history of the city.
Economic promotion of Łódź creative sector (2016/2017)	This campaign was funded from European Union resources. It included several actions leading to the promotion of Łódź's creative enterprises. Łódź representatives took part in international fairs related to CIs e.g. London Design Festival, Dutch Design Week in Eindhoven, Formex Trade Fair (Stockholm), during which the Polish Design - Łódź Creates exhibition was presented. It was a project promoting the best of over 100 young artists and designers working in Łódź. Meetings of representatives of Łódź's CIs and their potential overseas contractors were also organised. Several media campaigns were launched promoting Łódź as a creative city. As part of this project, a catalogue promoting firms from Łódź's creative sector was released and handed out during international fairs (3000 copies). The project also included meetings and workshops for the creative sector representatives from Łódź, as well as an additional exhibition, "Retrospection of Polish design at the beginning of the 21st century". The latter was presented during the Łódź Design Festival and Łódź Forum of Partner Cities in 2016 and 2017.

Source: Authors' own based on materials from the Łódź's City Hall and press releases.

Actions undertaken by the Łódź Film Commission can also be considered as smaller promotional undertakings leading to the development of the local creative film cluster. In 2017 the "Producers' Guide" was released, presenting local sites suitable for film shooting and firms



involved in the film sector. It was handed out during film festivals in Berlin, Cannes, Annecy and major Polish film events (Filmmakers guide, 2014). To celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Łódź Film Fund, several meetings with well-known filmmakers were held during large film festivals in the city, and six documentary films were prepared, where filmmakers presented their impressions from film shootings in Łódź<sup>i</sup>.

### ***Creative Production and CSR: from creative renewal to international recognition***

The investment of Łódź into arts and creativity, specifically creative production, had two main drives: firstly, the need for urban renewal – with specific elements of CSR in the need for the city to preserve its industrial heritage buildings and the history and communities connected to them; secondly, the need to support key sectors of creative production which again had historical associations with the city. These two elements are intertwined but can be described in relation to the specific sectors being supported: visual arts and design and film. As part of the policies a wide variety of actions were undertaken that were supported by the City Council and NGOs.

They included both revitalisation projects and supporting creative entrepreneurs as well as applications for international cultural projects and supporting festivals (summary in Table 3). An important institution connected with the growth of the creative sector is the Łódź Art Center foundation which, among others, organises important city festivals connected with creative sectors such as photography (Fotofestiwal) and design (Łódź Design Festival). The foundation is located in the revitalized buildings of a 19th century factory located in the northern part of Łódź's city centre. This was the first post-industrial site in Łódź to be revitalized and transformed into a cultural and creative institution. A municipal institution, Art Factory, is also located on the factory premises. It was created as a joint initiative between: the Łódź Art Center, CHOREA Theatre Association and Łódź City Council. One of the most important aspects of Art Factory's activity, supported by city council funding, is running the Art\_Inkubator which offers offices, in the aforementioned factory, and organisational support for cultural foundations, young creative entrepreneurs and other institutions working with culture.

Another important investment for Łódź's culture is in a further postindustrial site located in the core of the city centre called the EC-1 complex. The building is operated by a

cultural institution, "EC-1 City of Culture", which was co-founded by the Polish Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and the City of Łódź. The EC-1 project is part of one of Europe's biggest urban revitalization concepts, the New Centre of Łódź. Work on the revitalisation of Łódź Old Town, created in the 19th century, has been ongoing since 2007.

An important film institution located in the EC-1 is the National Centre for Film Culture (NCFC). This was a new project financed by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and planned for 2016-2019. By 2017, the project had been supported with the sum of 6.2 million EURO from national and European Union funds. When the project is finished, the NCFC will be the leading film culture institution in Poland. The EC-1 hosts several additional institutions connected with CIs (e.g. The Science and Technology Centre EC-1, The Centre of Comic Books and Interactive Narration). Łódź has been a centre for the Polish film industry for decades and nowadays film production is used for city development and promotion as well. An important institution linked with film and television production is the Łódź Film Fund (ŁFF). It is financed by the City of Łódź, and operated by another cultural institution, Łódź Film Commission (ŁFC), both of which are now located in the revitalised EC-1 building.

In addition to broad investment in renewal and engagement with the longstanding artistic strengths of the city, the organisation of events, including international mega-events, was also part of the strategy. According to Agnieszka Pietrzak, Senior Specialist in the Department of Architecture and Development, Projects and Development Section at the Łódź City Hall: 'City Council has been aware through time that development of creative production requires international recognition, and this was done among others through the participation to the selection of international titles, specifically: the European Capital of Culture (ECOC) 2016, International Expo 2022, and the UNESCO Creative Cities Network'.

Łódź did not qualify into the final part of the ECOC 2016 bid and their application for the International EXPO 2022 was also unsuccessful. However, the bids brought a lot of visibility for the city. The third, this time successful, application concerned the UNESCO Creative Cities Network which Łódź entered as a city of film in 2016.

Table 3. Initiatives supporting the Łódź creative renewal and recognition: CSR & creative production

Initiatives	Date	Characteristic
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<b>Łódź Art Center – an International Art Centre in Łódź</b>	Established in 2005	Creation of the NGO which supports and organizes cultural projects and festivals related to CIs
<b>Łódź Art_Inkubator-Incubator of CIs</b>	established in 2008	Creation of the NGO which supports young entrepreneurs (startups) representing CIs
<b>Łódź Film Fund</b>	established in 2007	Establishment of the film fund which co-funds film and television productions which are set in Łódź (Sikorska, 2017).
<b>Łódź Film Commission</b>	established in 2009	Creation of an institution which supports film, television and game productions set in Łódź
<b>National Centre of Film Culture</b>	established in 2016	Organization of the governmental centre which popularises film culture in Poland and Łódź region
<b>EC1 Łódź – the City of Culture</b>	revitalisation started in 2007	Largest revitalisation project in Łódź. It includes renovation of Łódź's first steam and power plant where different cultural institutions related to CIs are based
<b>European Capital of Culture 2016</b>	rejected in 2010	City application for the ECOC programme. " Łódź. Revolution of imagination" was the main theme for this application based on art and culture (unsuccessful)
<b>International Expo 2022</b>	rejected in 2017	City application for the International Expo programme. "City Re:Invented" was the main theme for this application based on urban revitalisation, culture and creativity development (unsuccessful)
<b>The UNESCO Creative Cities Network</b>	accepted in 2016	City application for the UNESCO Creative Cities Network programme. Łódź City of Film was the main theme for this application (successful)

### ***Human Capital and R&I: investments in education and festivals***

After 1945, several universities appeared in Łódź, some of them running majors devoted to fashion, design such as e.g. the Strzemiński Academy of Art, Łódź University of Technology, The University of Łódź and also The Film School. Between the 20th and 21st century, new academies and modern university majors appeared in the city, some teaching students in areas connected with software engineering and audio-visual production. Examples include majors such as Information Technology and Mechanical Engineering and Applied Computer Science

at the Łódź University of Technology. There were also several specialisations connected with graphic design, painting and multimedia design at the Strzemiński Academy of Art, and animation and special effects, film and television production and organisation at the Film School. The Film School played an important role in the development of Łódź's CIs; it was home to many famous actors, directors (e.g. Roman Polański) and cinematographers (e.g. Sławomir Idziak). and recognised by high-profile industry publications e.g. Hollywood Reporter, as one of the best in the world. Additionally, in 2003 the Center for Technology Transfer was created by the University of Łódź, and in 2012 the ICT Central Poland Cluster was created with the involvement of the Łódź University of Technology. Both organizations aim to develop new creative technologies (especially information and communications technologies). They also support students' live projects and create links between academia and business.

These formal education activities are supplemented with additional activities, organized or co-organized by the city authorities. An example here is the "The Young in Łódź"<sup>ii</sup> programme, prepared in collaboration with Łódź entrepreneurs and universities. It was created to persuade young professionals e.g. students and graduates, to plan their future careers in the city. It was also meant to support the career development of young people staying in Łódź and to supply the local entrepreneurs with a qualified workforce (Comunian, Faggian, & Jewell, 2016). The programme offers scholarships, work placements and training courses for young specialists, and provides general support for business ideas conceived by students and young entrepreneurs representing creative sectors. Over 250 firms and the largest universities in the city are involved into this programme. Between 2011 and 2017, 127 city scholarships were founded for about 400,000 EURO within the framework of the programme. Entrepreneurs from Łódź granted 1,400 paid apprenticeships and 400 training courses were held for 5,700 people. 1,230 business ideas and 320 professional business plans had been financed by 2017. Additional support programmes for creative entrepreneurs in Łódź included the "Premises for the creative" competition (Table 4) and the project "Studios for artists" (both started in 2012). As part of these programmes, representatives of CIs, including artists, can rent premises in different parts of the city for their professional activity. The premises are rented for a lower rate and co-financed by the City Council.

**Table 4**  
The number and structure of premises for the creative in 2015.

The creative industry sector	Number of the premises for the creative	%
The art and antiques market	11	18,6
Designer fashion	11	18,6
Crafts	8	13,6
Design	7	11,9
Other	7	11,9
The performing arts	5	8,5
Architecture	4	6,8
Publishing	3	5,1
Advertising	2	3,4
Interactive leisure software	1	1,6
Together	59	100

Source: Authors' own based on materials from the Łódź's City Hall.

The number of firms representing CIs residing in Łódź rose on 1605 (47%) between 2010 and 2017. According to the materials from Łódź's City Hall the number of premises for the creative rose from 59 in 2015 to 76 in 2017. In 2015 the highest share of premises represented the following sectors of CIs the art and antiques market, designer fashion, crafts and design (Table 4). The number and structure of initiatives and institutions (see Table 2) and events (8 large festivals are currently based on CIs) supporting the Łódź creative renewal and recognition also rose. So Łódź is introducing the real policies in order to develop CIs, and these endeavours are supplemented by promotional campaigns strengthening the city image as a creative one (see Table 2).

The City Council's efforts to develop CIs – with particular emphasis on research and innovation – includes the ‘festivalisation of Łódź’. The relationships between festivals and CIs have been already discussed in the literature (Comunian 2017). Between 2009 and 2011, Łódź organized around 48 large festivals yearly, generating branding and media value for the city<sup>iii</sup>. They were mostly devoted to theatre, film, music, fashion, design, photography and graphics. The events were substantially supported by the city, organisationally and financially (Cudny 2016, pp. 133-135). High-profile events related to CIs include the International Festival of Comics and Games, Fotofestiwal-International Festival of Photography in Łódź, and Łódź Design Festival. Other important festivals organized in the city include Transatlantyk Festival and Cinergia, Łódź Light Move Festival and SOUNDEDIT Festival of sound production for

TV and film. Another festivals on fashion were FashionPhilosophy Fashion Week Poland (Łódź in 2009-2016) and Łódź Young Fashion, organized by the Strzemiński Academy of Art and the city for young fashion creators. While festivals are often looked in the literature simply in relation to audience engagement and participation, they play an important role in the creative economy (Comunian, 2017) as they provide a testing ground for ideas and new products and they also provide a networking and learning opportunities for participants.

Łódź's large investment in festivals is motivated by a range of factors, but the main drive is their ability to bring together creatives, provide work and commissions for local companies as well as attract international companies to Łódź, even if only for a brief period. In particular, as highlighted by festival producers, festivals in Łódź are informal and allow impromptu creativity and innovation to emerge as well local creatives to learn and be involved<sup>iv</sup>.

## **8. Conclusions**

Our analysis shows how the investment in arts and creativity started in Łódź with an emphasis on re-inventing the city image from its post-industrial and socialist past but quickly moved towards being a strategy for skills development, R&I and for growing creative jobs and business opportunities in the city. In this respect, we can see that the focus on branding was important for the city but that going back to its arts and creativity roots in creating a new image was also a way to disconnect with the image of the socialist era. However, arts and creativity have proved to be a positive strategy for city like Lodz which want to reinvent their image but still ground it in its cultural heritage, presenting its arts and creativity as a strength across the political and historical developments that affected the city. In this respect arts and creativity have been used to create an element of continuity through the political disruption as sectors like film – with a strong support and presence in the socialist era – could be invested in to create new job and capital investment now in relation to the new creative economy.

Central to our argument is the analogy between the business strategy of cities and the one of corporations but instrumentally using arts and creativity to enhance they everyday work (Comunian, 2009). The importance of arts and creativity – beyond the rhetoric of branding and image creation – operates at a deeper level for neoliberal cities trying to re-think their innovation strategy and link them with education and human capital creation (Scott, 2000).

Furthermore, the activities currently implemented in Łódź have the nature of multidimensional socio-economic development strategy based on arts and creativity. The

original element on Lodz strategy – compared with other cities use of arts and creativity – was the opportunity to quickly move from a simple branding exercise, which might have caused criticisms to a more in-depth understanding of how arts and creativity are developing from the city previous historical cultural strengths – such as film and fashion can benefit also the city R&I and future human capital development. In this respect, rather than blandly copying other western cities brand strategies, trying to distance itself from the socialist era and its political heritage, Lodz focused specifically on its arts and creativity strengths which had been developed during its past, creating also opportunities for place attachment (Brokalaki and Comunian, 2019).

It is a long-term urban development plan based on the use of arts and creativity. Undoubtedly, the self-government reform introduced after Poland's accession to the European Union granted city authorities large powers and means to develop the city. In addition, there are broad possibilities to finance branding activities from the European Union. It led to the growth of interest in urban development by local authorities. The main goal repeated in the strategic documents creating the future of Łódź is the intensification of social and economic development through the creative entrepreneurial activities of the city and cooperation with other stakeholders (entrepreneurs, NGOs, residents). The goal was also to improve the city's competitiveness and increase its position in the hierarchy of cities in Poland and Europe. This is clearly the result of a neoliberal approach where the city is treated more less as a specific product which should be properly shaped and promoted (see: Jessop, 2002, Swyngedou et al 2002, Eshuis and Edwards, 2013). This also reflects the reasons for the rise of place branding presented by Boisen et al. (2018). Moreover, the strategy implements the assumptions of branding as a multidimensional policy involving different stakeholders (Lucarelli 2018).

Concentration on development projects, however, did not exclude activities in the field of marketing communication. It should be remembered that place branding includes creating an image that gives an advantage over other cities. The most important element of this process is the implementation of specific socio-economic activities, but marketing communication is also an indispensable part of the branding (Kavaratzis 2004, 2008, Vanolo 2008, Eshuis and Edwards 2013, Cudny 2019). In the case of branding strategies implemented in Łódź, it seems that we were dealing with a good balance of both elements, i.e. art and CI development programs and marketing communication campaigns (including PR and CSR actions). A number of promotional projects have been created that strengthen the image of Łódź as a creative and attractive city for the creative class.

The paper presents an analytical framework to investigate the way arts and creativity are used by neoliberal cities. The case study of Łódź has been functional to unpack our understanding of the way arts and creativity investments are used beyond branding, however, more research is needed to explore other cities and how their arts and creativity investment are used to address different developmental strategies. In particular, it would be interesting to compare the reach of arts and creativity across the six axes identified: marketing & branding, PR, HR, production, R&I and CSR. It would also be important to do comparative work on the different time frames of these development and whether marketing & branding – that were primary strategies before – might now be seen as less important than production or CSR.

Finally, questions remain regarding how this could provide long-term development (Vanolo, 2015). A long-term perspective has been shown here by interventions that are not only aimed at improving image and reputation. Here the view is for arts and creativity to enhance production, R&I and new human resources, relating strongly to the concept of ‘stickiness’ (Allen & Hollingworth, 2013; Comunian and England, 2018). However, whether this investment in arts and creativity will become more than just another neoliberal development strategy for Łódź remains to be investigated.

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i <http://www.e-kalejdoskop.pl/film-a213/kreci-sie-w-lodzi-r6085>

ii <https://mlodziwlodzi.pl/o-programie/opis-programu>

iii Lately, a media report regarding the event sector in the city of Łódź has been collated for the Łódź City Hall by the PRESS-SERVICE Media Monitoring firm. According to this report, 13363 publications devoted to different cultural-entertainment and sports events in Łódź appeared in different media (Internet, press, radio, TV) in 2016. The whole Advertising Value Equivalency (AVE) of those publications was ca. 2.4 million EURO. According to the report, among the events presented above and related to creative sectors, the greatest media impact was made by the FashionPhilosophy Fashion Week Poland (1905 mentions, AVE ca. 231 000 EUR), Transatlantyk Festival (442 mentions, AVE ca. 180 000 EURO), Fotofestival (203 mentions, AVE ca. 51000 EURO), Łódź Design Festival (310 mentions, AVE 48000 EURO), Fotofestiwal (203 mentions, AVE 51000 EURO), and SOUNDEDIT (406 mentions, AVE 6200 EURO)iii.

iv The role of festivals as creative temporary clusters and involving creative class and creative firms form and outside the region was confirmed in several interviews that were realized by the authors with organizers of largest creative related festivals in Łódź. The interviewees were among others with Adam Radoń Director of The International Festival of Comic Books and Games in Łódź, Michał Piernikowski Director of the Łódź Design Festival, Maciej Werk direktor of Soundedit Festival. The interview were realized from August to September 2018.