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Branding and place image on the example of the capital city of Warsaw

Abstract:. The image of a city is the ultimate product and is formed in the course of activities that are a process. A city wishing to achieve market success should strive to shape a positive image. In this aspect, it is necessary to regularly study the image of the perceived city. The identity and brand of the city play a fundamental role in this. The purpose of this article is to identify the image of Warsaw promoted by local authorities and the perceived image of the city among its residents. The thesis that has been verified is that there is no full correspondence between the image of Warsaw promoted by the local authorities and the image of the city in the consciousness of its residents. The article consists of three parts. The first discusses the concepts of identity, brand and image of the city. The second characterizes the brand of the capital city of Warsaw and its components. And in the third, the perceived image of the capital city of Warsaw is presented. Such research methods as literature studies, analysis of internal documentation of the Warsaw City Hall in the form of reports and reports in the area of image issues, analysis of source documents in the form of the city development strategy, analysis of reports and reports on promotional and image issues of cities in national and international dimensions, and deductive analysis were used. The considerations carried out showed allowed positive verification of the thesis. In addition, they showed that a positive image of a city is an important factor in its development.

Key words: place brand, perceived image, city identity, territorial/place marketing

Introduction

The modern market is competitive. This includes the market for cities. Achieving market success requires active competitive struggle The city, like a business, is forced to acquire and retain customers, i.e. residents, tourists, investors in the form of businesses and other groups that have a stake in the development of the city. In the course of progressive changes in the market space in the city's efforts for the best competitive position, marketing has become important. In the case of cities, we are talking about conducting activities within the framework of the so-called territory/place marketing. It provides an opportunity to shape the territory as a place based on the philosophy, process and instruments of marketing (Szromnik, 2016, p. 23). It also assumes a constant influence on the views of stakeholders and the creation of their attitudes with a properly selected set of marketing tools, as well as conducting between them the desired process of exchange in the area of a specific territory. These tools are designed to make a place, in this case a city, more attractive in order to increase its value in the eyes of stakeholders (Florek, 2013, p. 17). The basis for success in territorial marketing understood in this way is to take care of customer satisfaction using the development strategy of a place. In turn, the basic instrument of these activities is building a strong place brand (Raftowicz-Filipkiewicz, 2013, pp. 2–4).

The city today has become a kind of product that needs to be taken care of in order to find a loyal customer. In marketing terms, a product is not only a material good in various forms, but also a place, provided that it evokes the buyer's interest, desire to acquire and use it (Szromnik, 2008, p. 113). The city as a product is a complex concept. It consists of tangible and intangible resources managed to perform specific tasks leading to the satisfaction of stakeholders' needs, as well as the city's own. Its peculiarity is revealed in the combination of tangible, abstract and at the same time intangible components (Florek, Glinska, Kowalewska, 2009, p. 21), which as a whole evoke certain ideas, experiences and perceptions in the recipient. Their positive dimension will determine the desire to acquire and use it.

The delivery of a certain value to particular groups of the city's stakeholders, at this point, becomes the primary act. Delivered value by the city in this context means the sum of all the values that a stakeholder receives from the city, in connection with what the city can offer him, and the total sum of the costs incurred by the customer, in connection with the use of the product that is the city (Kotler, Keller, 2022, pp. 520–521). Relevant here is the difference between the value expected by the customer and the value obtained, i.e. what the stakeholders expect from the city and what it actually gets. In this dimension, value is for individual city stakeholders has a subjective and dynamic dimension at the same time (Govers, 2009, p. 53).

Nowadays, the goal of the city's activities is no longer just administration, but also management, especially in the marketing dimension. This is related to the achievement of perfectionism in the area of partnership management, internal resources and in the sphere of building relationships with customers (Jain, Maesincee, Kotler, 2002, p. 41). The need to stand out from other cities and be competitive on the way to the top has caused individual cities to increasingly include elements such as identity, brand and image in their development strategies. Drawing on the experience of companies in the business sphere, cities have seen these components as an effective tool in market competition to "be the best" (Boisen, Terlouwb, Grootea, Couwenberga, 2018, p. 7). This is evidenced by the fact that today one of the strategic objectives of the marketing activities of cities is to properly shape and build an image based on identity and created brand.

The subject of the considerations carried out in the article is the capital city of Warsaw. The purpose of the article is to identify the image of the capital city Warsaw promoted by local authorities and perceived. In connection with such a defined objective, the following thesis was put forward, which was verified: there is no full correspondence between the image of Warsaw promoted by the local authorities and the image of the city in the consciousness of its residents. In order to achieve the goal, the following research methods were used: literature studies, analysis of the documentation of the Warsaw City Hall in the form of reports and reports in the area of image topics, analysis of source documents in the form of the city development strategy, and analysis of reports and reports on promotional and image topics nationally and internationally, and deductive analysis. The article consists of three parts. The first discusses in theoretical terms the concepts of identity, brand and image of the city and their importance. In the second, the image promoted by the brands of the capital city of Warsaw is characterized. And in the third, the perceived image of the capital city of Warsaw is presented.

Identity, brand and image of the city

Effective city management should be based on the search for attributes that can be used in a long-term strategy for shaping the city's image. In doing so, one should not forget about the city's current activities, which are also important (Temporal, 2015, p. 15). An intangible resource of particular importance in this case is the place brand. The city's brand in this regard must be consistent with its identity. Only such an approach makes it possible to build an image in the minds of stakeholders that is as close as possible to that desired by the city.

The image of a city is increasingly becoming an indicator of its attractiveness It includes "the sum of beliefs, ideas and impressions that people have about a place." A city stakeholder does not have all the information about a city. The image of a city that forms in his consciousness is a kind of simplification of the vast amount of information, evaluations, views and expectations associated with a place (Kotler, Kettler, 2022, p. 141). What image of a city is formed in the minds of its stakeholders depends on their cognitive processes and emotional attitudes toward particular places. In the customer's mind, an image begins to form the moment they hear or see a message (Stanowicka-Traczyk, 2008, p. 15). In this context, the individual characteristics of the customer – the recipient of messages about a place – are important (Nawrocka, 2009, p. 439).

Perceptions of a city by its stakeholders are also influenced by mass media and informal sources of information. According to the current potential audience, the actions of the local authorities are also important (Temporal, 2015, p. 12). They should be included in a long-term strategy that includes means of communication with the public, means of visual communication, features of the city oaz a catalog of behaviors of those responsible for the image of the city and other actions taken in this regard (Hudson, Cardenas, Meng, Thal, 2016, p. 369). Thus, in general, the factors building the image of the city consist of factors related to the sender of the image – that is, the city and the recipients of the image, that is, residents, tourists, business partners, etc. They are presented in Figure 1.
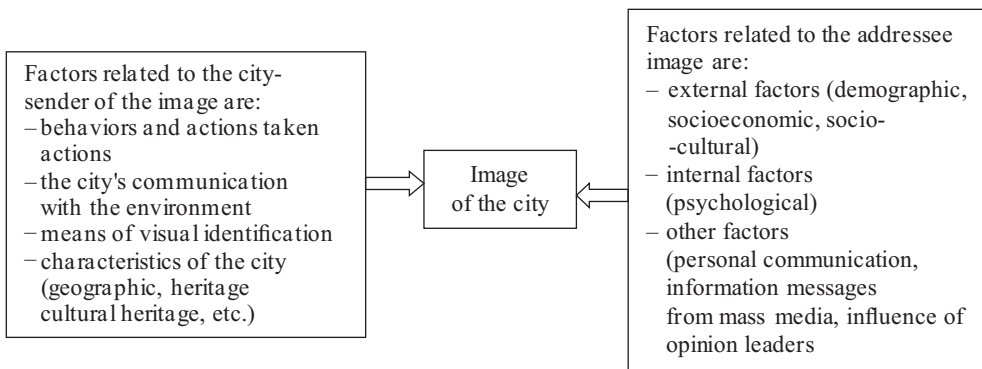
Factors related to the city-sender of the image are:
– behaviors and actions taken actions
– the city's communication with the environment
– means of visual identification
– characteristics of the city (geographic, heritage cultural heritage, etc.)

→ Image of the city ←

Factors related to the addressee image are:
– external factors (demographic, socioeconomic, socio-cultural)
– internal factors (psychological)
– other factors (personal communication, information messages from mass media, influence of opinion leaders)

Figure 1. Factors that create a city's image

Source: Brandys, 2009, p. 80.

Image in itself is an individualized category and is subject to change over time. On the one hand, it can increase a city's competitiveness and, on the other hand, it can

quickly decrease it, especially when there is a lack of marketing research in this area (Szromnik, 2008, p. 134). Identifying a city's current image is important because of the multiple functions it performs (Table 1). On the one hand, it simplifies the selection of a city as a product by providing a lot of information to the image recipient, which is subject to selection and used in making selection decisions. On the other hand, a positive image of the city guarantees a better quality of satisfaction of buyers' needs, shaping higher loyalty to the city.

Table 1

Functions of a company's image towards the buyer

Function	Characteristics
Identifying	Emphasizing the functional and emotional benefits of a company's offerings and the values sought by a specific segment of buyers.
Simplifying	Making product and brand choices is becoming increasingly important as more substitutes appear and quality attributes become increasingly hermetic.
Supportive	Perceived by the buyer information is selectively evaluated and used in decision-making.
Guarantee	Minimization of risk, providing the buyer with a certain quality of the offer.
Loyalty	Formation of loyalty to the company, support recruitment of regular customers.

Source: Altkorn, 2002, p. 19.

In marketing terms, image consists of three components (Szlis, 2020, p. 17):
– Cognitive – includes a person's knowledge of a place. Here it is important to provide the viewer with the right information about a place.
– Emotional – which includes the feelings that a place triggers. It is important to recognize the emotions of the recipient in contact with a given place. While positive emotions translate into the formation of an approving image of a city, negative emotions make the image unfavorable. Therefore, it is important to limit the audience's negative associations with a place.
– Behavioral – expresses a willingness to take certain actions related to a place. It will be expressed in taking various actions for the benefit of the city, willingness to live in it, visit it or invest in it.

Image is an important element of a brand, which is a source of competitive advantage for many cities. Many definitions of a brand note that it can be formed by a mark, name, utility model, symbol or a combination of all these elements together. Branding as a category makes it possible to identify to which company certain products belong and how they differ from other products available on the market. In the case of a city that has many characteristics typical of other cities, its brand, in order to fulfill its functions, should be built on the basis of exposing the qualities characteristic only of that city (Marushchak, 2020, p. 153). In creating a brand, therefore, it is important to draw attention to the features of the product that show its uniqueness, distinctive usefulness, facilitate recognition and ease of remembering, and are characterized by certain symbolism and suggestiveness. For the brand's recipient, the functional and emotional benefits of the brand, the values that are best in line with the customer's value hierarchy, and its culture and personality are also important (Krall, 2002, p. 6).

The observation in recent years of the great interest of cities in building their brand, raises the question of the reasons for this. One can distinguish 3 spheres where the ben-

efits of having a strong brand are evident. These are: the sphere of city management, identity and image, and the city's offer (Table 2). Thus, the brand as a value not only brings many benefits to the city, but also to its stakeholders. First, for buyers, it minimizes the risk of negative choices related to their place of residence or destination of travel, giving a feeling of prestige for the choice made. For the recipients of a city brand, it is not only a tool for shaping the reputation of a place, but also a factor in improving the quality of life in a given city and a generator of various emotions that determine loyalty to a city. Secondly, for local authorities, a strong city brand means first and foremost an increase in competitive advantage and the acquisition of new loyal users who engage in the brand-building process. The brand also strengthens the effectiveness of marketing activities undertaken through persuasive influence. And thirdly, the brand also acts as a buffer in the event of unfavorable events and information affecting the city's image, suppressing their impact and ensuring easier elimination (Zdon-Korzeniowska, 2012 p. 134).

Table 2

Benefits of a strong brand

Benefits the city's identity and image
– defines and builds a positive image of the city, its perception both internally and externally;
– systematizes the city's distinctive features, identifies the most important areas that constitute its competitive advantage;
– eliminates stereotypes operating around the city;
– builds local identity, which makes residents identify with the brand and become its ambassadors;
– gives a unique "tone" to the city;
– constitutes a kind of "packaging" of the city, encourages people to look "inside." This "packaging" cannot be empty, and this means that the brand promise must be covered by the real territorial product offered by the city.
Benefits related to the city's offerings
– increases interest in the city's product offerings;
– facilitates reaching outward (to an external customer) with activities;
– allows identification of the target audience of the city's territorial offer;
– enables consistent communication of the benefits that different market segments can derive from the local territorial offer, and encourages them to take advantage of it.
Benefits related to city management
– increases trust in the city government as a management entity, and thus increases the favorability and acceptance of residents for the activities of the city government;
– improves communication between residents and city government and with external audiences;
– provides guidance for promotion and development: gives direction to the city's development and promotion activities;
– the brand vision, as it were, determines decision-making, determines priorities and how the city is positioned among competing entities;
– allows for a certain consistency in marketing communications activities.

Source: Own compilation based on Herezniak, 2020, pp. 64–66.

A city brand just like any other brand is characterized by a certain life cycle. Therefore, in the process of building a city brand, attention should be paid to several desirable activities, i.e. creation, positioning, promotion and protection, creation of brand communication channels, implementation of the brand's mission and vision, and withdrawal of the brand if necessary (Korzyńska, 2013, p. 104). Since many public and even non-pub-

lic entities are involved in this process, city branding is, so to speak, included in the scope of public policy pursued by local authorities (Glińska, 2016, p. 23).

The brand value of a city is built primarily on the basis of its identity, which is the basis for brand creation. Identity is the characteristics of a city that are difficult to change. Important elements of a city's identity include its geographic location and the resulting climate, flora and fauna, terrain, etc., urban planning solutions, history and monuments, demographics, educational and scientific situation, transportation and road solutions, the state of the environment, including the purity of air, water, soil, etc. Identity is also the desired perception of a city shaped using symbols, behavioral attitudes, visual elements, etc. In this context, a clear connection is revealed with the image, which is the stakeholders' actual perception of the city's identity, and the brand is a tool for building this desired image (Szwajca, 2009, p. 21–23).

A city doesn't just get an identity as an inheritance. With marketing objectives in mind, it can influence it, albeit limited. This is done by a deliberately selected set of information about a place, communicated to stakeholders. In this set, each audience should find information with which they can identify. Therefore, it is important to refer in them to the past, present and future. Such information can relate to, for example: history, culture and leisure, health and social care, education, administration, business development, transportation infrastructure, future investment projects, etc. (Szromnik, 2008, p. 136). The most desirable effect in this situation is to build an image among the public that is consistent with that planned by the city. This image, however, is never exactly in line with the identity, as it is also influenced by many other factors.

The above considerations show that identity, brand and image of a city are not identical concepts and should not be used interchangeably. At the same time, there are also certain interdependencies between them. These are presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Interdependence of city identity, image and brand

Criterion	City identity	City image	City brand
Susceptible to creation	The city brand is poorly susceptible to creation is more susceptible	is more susceptible to creation than identity, but more susceptible than brand	brand can and should be created
Variability	is not very susceptible to change	should be relatively resistant to change	can be variable
Links to the effect of the final activities	should be the basis of any action	is a consequence of being perceived	is a tool to improve the perception of a place
Resistance to manipulation	is an objective value	objective depends on identity	is a tool for manipulation marketing
Interaction	affects image, should be the basis of the construction of the city brand	depends on identity	should be based on identity of the city, emphasize its positive or mitigate its negative image

Source: Grzyś, 2017, p. 9.

In conclusion, the base of all activities in building a city's image is identity, which is poorly susceptible to creation and to change. The tool, on the other hand, for creating the image of the city is the brand, which on the one hand can emphasize the positive image

of the city, and on the other mitigate the negative one, formed as a result of harmful events. The brand itself, on the other hand, should be consistent with the identity, which builds its credibility.

On this ground, the question may arise – to reflect or create reality? On the one hand, the city can reflect in its actions what it actually is in reality. This involves first incurring high costs to solve problems that may negatively affect the city's image, and only then publicizing this to the surrounding community. On the other hand, a city can create a reality that does not actually exist, hoping to quickly increase its attractiveness (Baker, 2011, p. 32). In this case, the investment in talking loudly about the city's imaginary qualities takes place first, and only later does the eventual solving of actual problems take place. This is a shorter and straightforward path compared to the first action, but at the same time more risky. This is because the recipient of the image may feel cheated if the authorities create a false image of the city. In this sphere, the first action variant is definitely safer, although it is longer and more costly.

The brand of the capital city of Warsaw and its components

The point of all activities of the capital city of Warsaw aimed at its development, including the building of the Warsaw brand, is the document "Strategia #Warszawa 2030". In this regard, the city's vision presented in the strategy, which at the same time serves as a reference for the vision of the Warsaw brand, is important. The vision is based on three pillars:
– Active residents who feel responsible for their city, which is manifested by active involvement in its life.
– A friendly place where everyone can feel safe and has conditions conducive to development, where modernity blends with tradition and localism with metropolitanity.
– An open metropolis that does not close itself off to otherness and takes up calls. Accepting diversity, it is oriented towards cooperation and the development of new ideas (*Strategia #Warsawa 2030*, 2018, pp. 13–15).

The realization of the indicated vision is possible thanks to the delineation of strategic goals and operational objectives, which are their particularization and indicate the directions of activities in which to go in order to efficiently realize the strategic goals. The development of the Warsaw brand occurs as a result of the implementation of the four strategic objectives, i.e. (*Strategia #Warsawa 2030*, 2018, pp. 18–55):
– A responsible community in which everyone cares about each other, has respect for each other and others, and jointly decides on the development of the city. Everyone is both a creator and user of the city, influencing the present and the future.
– Convenient locality, where urban and residential functions are combined. The goal is a city with a functional and spatial structure, with a network of district and sub-district centers concentrating service offerings and providing residents with basic services, jobs and leisure activities, close to home. Therefore, development differences between neighborhoods are reduced and revitalization of degraded areas is carried out.
– Functional space in which everyone benefits from a friendly transportation system, attractive properly organized public space and a clean environment. Therefore, the

target spatial structure of Warsaw will consist of the city center and a network of district and sub-district centers. In order to facilitate these activities, a multidimensional interconnection of all elements and consideration of relations with the metropolitan and further surroundings will be ensured.

– A creative environment that ensures the creative development of each individual, generates innovations and provides conditions for their development and implementation, attracts talent and leaders and inspires other cities to develop and seize opportunities to strengthen their position internationally as a city of creative potential.

The starting point in creating the Warsaw brand is to highlight its most distinctive features and qualities. In turn, communication and image-building activities undertaken in subsequent steps are intended to consolidate the built image in the consciousness of all brand recipients. It is the aspiration of the authorities of the capital city of Warsaw to be perceived as "...a city of good living, which changes and adapts to the needs of its inhabitants (*Marka Warszawa*..., 2018, p. 2). Warsaw is promoted as a city:

– open, where everyone has a place for themselves, where they can pursue their dreams and passions, where there are already many who have done so;
– active, where a lot is happening, where there is potential and energy for action, where everyone can co-determine about Warsaw and take action;
– friendly – where everyone is friendly, where there is a friendly space for living and entertainment, where the city will adapt to the needs of the residents and not the other way around;
– diverse – where different styles, experiences and personalities meet, where diversity is discussed in terms of benefits and opportunities (*Marka Warszawa*..., 2018, p. 7).

As the perceived city is influenced by how it is spoken and written, in the promoted image of Warsaw, communication is focused on the audience. This is not only verbal communication in the form of numerous publications about Warsaw, such as the guidelines for communicating the Warsaw brand or the guide to the features of the Warsaw brand, but also non-verbal communication in the form of many images (Figure 2), where the city is presented in terms of all the accentuated features of the Warsaw brand.

An important document in the promoted image of Warsaw are the guidelines for communicating the Warsaw brand, addressed to people and entities involved in promoting the Warsaw brand. This is because how Warsaw is presented in words and images affects its perception by the public. The guidelines provide guidance on:

how to show Warsaw in images, which elements are important, what to highlight and what not to with given features of the city. Numerous examples are given of what each brand feature means and how to use them...;

– how to talk about the strategic and operational goals for the development of the Warsaw brand and how to understand the messages sent by the audience in this regard;
– what words to use when describing Warsaw, what style of speech to choose;
– how to build a narrative about Warsaw, which features to emphasize in particular;
– what to recognize the needs of the brand's audience;
– what channels of communication with the audience to use, including an indication of the purpose of use, the language of expression, the length of the message, the segment of the audience to which it can be applied once the benefits of using the various channels of communication;
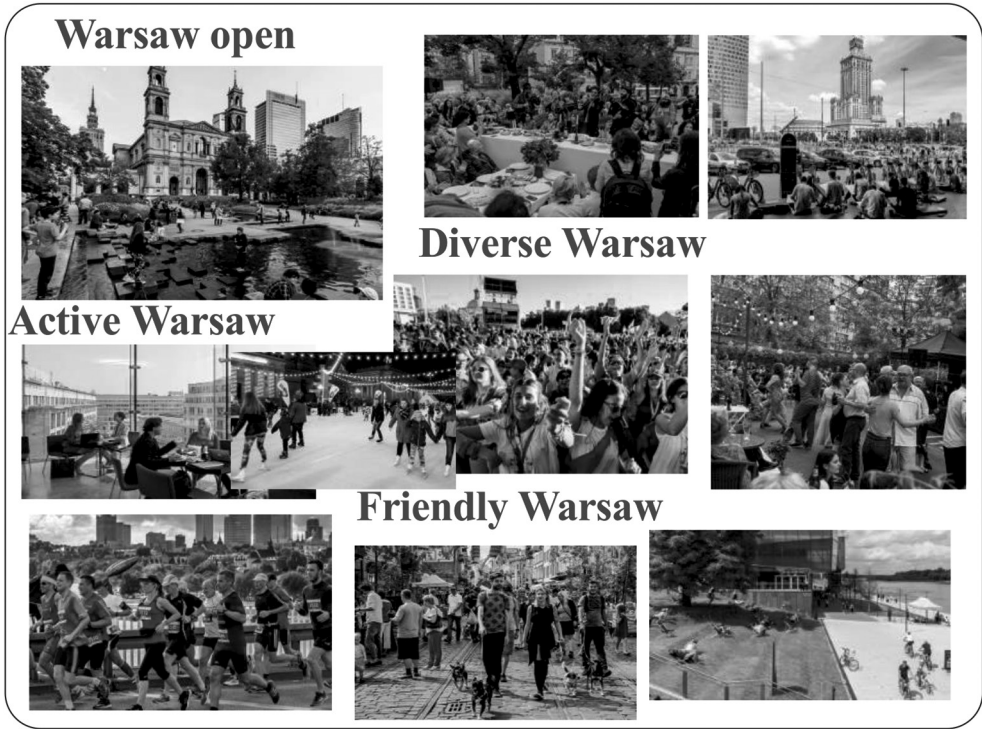
Figure 2. Warsaw brand features in images

– what structure the message should have and how to check the correctness of its formulation (*Wytyczne do komunikowania marki*..., 2018, pp. 3–11).

The analysis of promotional documents of the Warsaw brand indicates that for specific audiences the city is promoted taking into account other characteristics. Among investors, for example, it is presented as a modern city, open to diversity, to innovation, friendly and helpful, and dynamic. Among residents as a modern, friendly and safe city. In turn, among tourists as a historic, modern, dynamic and contrasting place. Other areas used in promoting Warsaw include presenting it also as a scientific center, a center of business and culture, or a city good to live in, where there are quality conditions for education, work, entertainment, sports, relaxation and leisure.

Perceived image of the capital city of Warsaw

Image and promotional activities have become an important part of many cities' development strategies. Along with the city's brand, image has become a tool for building competitive advantage. Therefore, every city strives to create the best possible image. The recipients of the image, who perceive the city in a certain way, have an important voice in this. Determining the image of the city in their minds is an essential part of plan-

ning and taking action in the area of marketing and promotion of the city at each stage of branding. This is made possible by ongoing analysis and research in the field of city image. Thanks to them it is possible to determine how a city is perceived compared to other cities, what factors shape its image or what strengths or weaknesses the city brand has. In this context, it should be noted that the Warsaw City Hall commissions regular image surveys of the city. They are conducted both quantitatively and qualitatively in different groups of image recipients. And all this is done in order to most effectively attract entrepreneurs, investors, new residents and tourists to Warsaw.

The latest image research on the city of Warsaw, conducted in February 2023 (*Co piszą o Warszawie media?*..., pp. 9–11), shows that the character of the city of Warsaw and its features are only marginally discussed in the media. Most media describe and talk about events that take place in Warsaw. Internationally, Warsaw is more associated with the Polish government than with its infrastructure and attractions, and appears as a city of protest and transformation. Much is said in a positive light about the pace of Warsaw's development after the political changes after 1989. At the same time, it is also a symbol of destruction, where Warsaw's turbulent history from the Second World War is intertwined with the period of political transformation and economic boom. Warsaw's history abroad is embedded in the city's identity. It is also a place where world-class events (e.g., NATO summits, scientific congresses and concerts of world music celebrities) with which it is associated, and a city with a soccer team that is successful in European competitions (*Co piszą o Warszawie media?*..., pp. 16–17).

Conducted in 2019 by the agency "ARC. Market and Opinion" quantitative research on the image of Warsaw among residents of selected European countries (Great Britain, Italy, Spain, France, Germany) showed that familiarity with Warsaw is lower than with other European capitals surveyed. Among the residents of the countries surveyed, neutral feelings toward Warsaw predominate. Only citizens of Italy were far more likely to declare a positive attitude toward the Polish capital. In the countries surveyed, Warsaw was most often associated with its architecture, the fact that it is the capital of Poland, as well as its culture, history and World War II events. It was perceived as an attractive, pretty and interesting city, as well as safe and hospitable to tourists, clean and well connected to other countries. In terms of image, there were no areas that were rated negatively (*Raport z badania ilościowego*..., 2019, pp. 4–8).

In Poland, Warsaw is perceived as a city to which one wants to return, and staying in the capital itself is associated with beautiful memories. In general, the city encourages development opportunities and meets the hopes and expectations of transient visitors. On the other hand, it is perceived as an arena of conflict, which builds an image of a troubled and chaotic city, but also a city that is significant due to the relevance of the events taking place in the city. It is also associated with recognized scientific centers and well-educated people involved in the development of science and culture. It is also set as a model against other large Polish cities in its efforts to promote sustainable transportation.

In the public consciousness, a lot is being done in Warsaw in the field of innovation. Innovative measures are being taken both by the city itself and by Warsaw companies and institutions. Unfortunately, it is also assessed as a city of contradictions in terms of climate and environmental protection. On the one hand, solutions for climate protection are emerging, while on the other, there is talk of poor air quality and pollution. In War-

saw, as a large mutifunctional center, there is a lot going on and one can "find and get everything," but this overwhelms at the same time, does not allow for peace, for breathing, and one experiences overstimulation from all sides.

An image survey conducted in September 2022 on behalf of the Warsaw City Hall among the residents of Warsaw shows its image as dynamic and developing, diverse and multidimensional, multicultural and contrasting, diverse and chaotic at the same time in the spatial arrangement of buildings, a sense of anonymity and security, a center of protests and demonstrations, a place with clean streets focused on culture. Its identity consists of both the spirit of history and contemporary Warsaw with a tendency to refer to the original character of places. Residents fear, however, that as cultural diversity increases, the local spirit of the city may fade in the future. Instead, the tolerance of Warsaw residents is expected to increase. According to the respondents, although Warsaw's residents are already open and tolerant compared to the rest of Poland, Warsaw is hardly open to minorities compared to European capitals.

The perception of Warsaw is strongly linked to its history, its landmarks such as the Palace of Culture and Science, the Mermaid, the Vistula River, the Old Town or the subway, as well as its extensive labor market and rich job opportunities. There is a perception among Warsaw residents that it is a place conducive to personal and professional development and success. Despite this, due to the fast pace of life, they feel torn between the family and professional spheres. However, residents value wide access to services and cultural venues, as well as the use of attractive public spaces and cheap and punctual public transportation. At the same time, they point out that the city should continue to develop in the direction of creating new green areas (for some there are enough of them, for others not enough). They also mention the city's disadvantages, i.e. air pollution, haste, high cost of living, lack of a sense of community among people, lack of kindness, homelessness (*Wizerunek Warszawy wśród jej mieszkańców...*, 2022, p. 29.).

Residents do not feel they are the city's creators. They claim that their voice is insignificant in Warsaw's development, and their needs are not fully listened to. In turn, the problems reported are not always solved. They would like to feel more responsible for the city and be more involved in various issues. In general, however, residents have a feeling of having their needs met, especially in terms of self-realization and leisure activities. However, they often feel lonely and overwhelmed.

According to residents, Warsaw is developing all the time and getting closer to Western living standards. It is becoming more European and even worldly. Warsaw as a city already stands out from other Polish cities, but it will stand out even more in the future, especially with its large population, growing area and denser buildings.

Speaking about the characteristics of the Warsaw brand, residents said that the feature that best reflects the image of the city is diversity (Graph 1). This is supported by the combination of tradition and modernity, social and cultural diversity, and the ability to express one's identity. Slightly fewer people rated Warsaw as active. This is supported by the multiplicity of initiatives and events undertaken, as well as the numerous opportunities for leisure activities. As for Warsaw's trait of openness, residents said it was supported by opportunities for development, listening to the needs of the young and supporting people, especially young people who want to start life in the city. Friendly Warsaw, on the other hand, is associated with a sense of anonymity, a lack of perceived division be-

tween native and transient populations, and comfortable living in a friendly space. There are also elements that contradict the promoted characteristics of Warsaw (Table 4)

Graph 1. Evaluation of statements (qualities) defining Warsaw
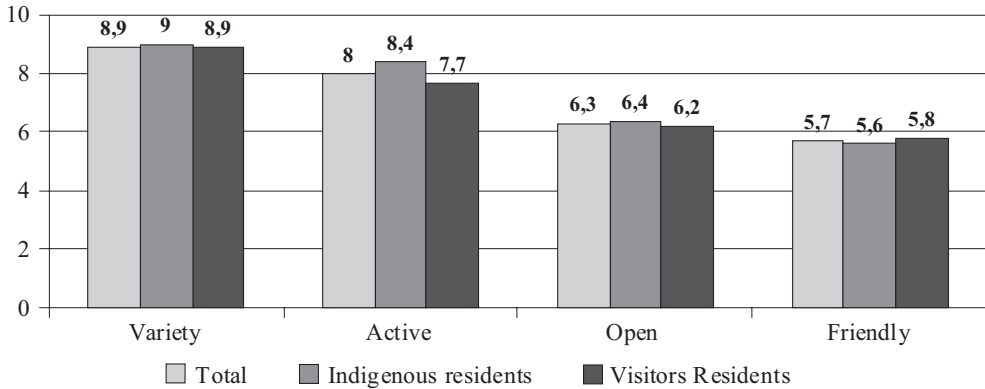
Source: *Wizerunek Warszawy wśród jej mieszkańców...*, 2022, p. 39.

On an emotional level, Warsaw is assessed by its residents as a place of many possibilities and opportunities, offering many amenities, where everyone can find something in line with their expectations. It is a dynamic city with visible progress, but the busyness and accompanying superficiality of interpersonal contacts, creates a sense of alienation and a desire to escape. Warsaw in this context is most often associated with the terms: lonely island, open gate, golden cage, cello and cogs of mechanism. The symbolism of these names is shown in Table 5.

Table 4

Elements that undermine the promoted characteristics of Warsaw

Feature	Components
Diverse	– lack of a sense of locality (only visible on the outskirts of the city); – threat to diversity from intolerant people; – attracting talented people to the city contributes to unhealthy competition and is not conducive to those who prefer a slower pace of life (living under pressure).
Active	– in Warsaw, eating establishments and bars (with the exception of a few clubs) are closing early; – respondents admit that they live in a constant rush, feel the pressure to reach higher and higher; – sometimes the potential of residents to get involved in solving problems of the neighborhood are suppressed by their authorities.
Open	– Warsaw is only open to people who are brave, resourceful and hardworking, with an idea for themselves. Respondents are convinced that people without ambition will not achieve success here; – Residents aged 26+ do not feel that they have a real influence on the direction of the development of the city; – Warsaw is less open compared to other cities European.
Friendly	– respondents feel a lack of friendliness from other residents, perceive acts of aggression towards foreigners in public space in the eyes of residents, Warsaw is not a tolerant city enough; – young Varsovians indicate a lack of openness on the part of older residents.

Source: *Wizerunek Warszawy wśród jej mieszkańców...*, 2022, pp. 40–43.

Table 5

Perception of Warsaw on an emotional level

Symbol	Znaczenie
Open gate	A symbol evoking the possibilities and perspectives that Warsaw opens up to its residents. Warsaw as a gateway to a new and better world.
Lonely island	Symbolizing the sense of alienation and loneliness in a big city. Residents as a collective are often perceived as unfriendly and inaccessible.
Golden Cage	The city seems attractive, but gives a sense of stifling. The image symbolizes the saturation of Warsaw and the need to escape outside the city – away from its hustle and bustle.
Cello	A symbol with a wide range of meanings. It represents the rich cultural offer of the city, but also diverse opportunities to spend time, develop one's interests and socialize.
Cogs of the mechanism	The image symbolizes Warsaw as a complex system, and its residents as cogs of this mechanism. It is also a symbol of the cult of work, money and modernity.

Source: Own study based on *Wizerunek Warszawy wśród jej mieszkańców...*, 2022, p. 16.

Differences in emotional perception of Warsaw are evident between those born in Warsaw and those born outside Warsaw. Warsaw natives perceive Warsaw more as orderly (33% vs. 27% born outside Warsaw), relaxing (34% vs. 30% born outside Warsaw) and peaceful (19% vs. 18% born outside Warsaw), while sad (5% vs. 4% born outside Warsaw). Those born outside Warsaw, on the other hand, see it as more vibrant (58%), interesting (58%), varied (37%), chaotic (13%), tiring (13%), annoying (6%) and annoying (7%). The percentage of respondents so declaring among those born in Warsaw was respectively: 53%, 53%, 33%, 13%, 95%, 5% and 5%. An equal percentage of two groups rated Warsaw as sleepy and quiet (3% each) and boring and monotonous (1% each) (*Badanie tożsamości Warszawy...*, pp. 85–88). To sum up, among Warsaw residents, the most common reactions are those of positive excitement, which are expressed in excitement and interest in the city and its assessment as vibrant and varied. This is followed by the perception of Warsaw as orderly, which in the consciousness of residents boils down to the terms: peaceful, relaxing, quiet. At the same time, residents, but to a much lesser extent, see Warsaw as chaotic, which in some cases arouses anxiety, irritation, fatigue and nervousness. The fewest respondents have an image of Warsaw as monotonous identified with boredom, sadness and sleepiness, The image of Warsaw in the consciousness of residents is therefore definitely positive, although they also point out some shortcomings of the city.

Conclusion

Brand and image have become important instruments for building a city's competitiveness. City authorities are increasingly aware of this. This is evidenced by numerous promotional and image activities based on the city development strategies created. The local authorities of the city of Warsaw have an active policy in this regard.

The basis for creating the city's brand and image is its identity. While the image of the city is very active and dynamic, the identity is subject to very limited changes. What is important in this is that the brand created should be consistent with the city's identity. Every city, including Warsaw, has its own characteristic features by which it is

recognized. In the case of Warsaw, these are elements related to history and the present. As a city, it is associated especially through the prism of World War II history and architecture.

The conducted considerations showed that Warsaw as a city is positively perceived both internationally and domestically, as well as by its residents themselves. Analysis of the image at all three levels (international, national and local) showed that there is a consensus that Warsaw is an attractive and nice city, clean and safe, and with opportunities for development. However, the image promoted by the city authorities based on Warsaw's brand characteristics is not fully reflected in reality. Residents of Warsaw, referring to the descriptions of the various characteristics of the Warsaw brand, showed both elements that confirm the promoted characteristics and those that undermine their veracity. In this area it is advisable to take action to eliminate or reduce the differences between the promoted and perceived characteristics of the Warsaw brand by its recipients.

The considerations carried out also show the need to increase the intensity of marketing activities aimed at increasing the recognition and familiarity of Warsaw against other European capitals and encouraging people to visit it. According to the research, while Warsaw is the most internationally recognized among Polish cities, it is little known compared to other European capitals. Those who have been to Warsaw show significantly more positive feelings toward it compared to those who have only heard of Warsaw.

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Branding i wizerunek miasta na przykładzie m.st. Warszawy

Streszczenie

Wizerunek miasta jest produktem ostatecznym i kształtuje się w toku działań mających charakter procesowy. Miasto, pragnące osiągnąć sukces rynkowy, powinno dążyć do kształtowania pozytywnego wizerunku. W tym aspekcie konieczne jest regularne badanie wizerunku postrzeganego miasta. Zasadniczą rolę odgrywa tu tożsamość i marka miasta. Celem artykułu jest identyfikacja wizerunku Warszawy promowanego przez władze lokalne oraz postrzeganego wizerunku miasta wśród jej mieszkańców. Potwierdzona została teza, że nie ma pełnej zgodności pomiędzy wizerunkiem Warszawy promowanym przez władze lokalne a wizerunkiem miasta w świadomości jego mieszkańców. Artykuł składa się z trzech części. W pierwszej omówiono pojęcia tożsamości, marki i wizerunku miasta. Druga charakteryzuje markę m.st. Warszawy i jej elementy składowe. W trzeciej zaś przedstawiono postrzegany wizerunek miasta stołecznego Warszawy. W artykule wykorzystano następujące metody badawcze: analiza literatury, analiza dokumentacji wewnętrznej Urzędu m.st. Warszawy w postaci raportów i raportów w obszarze zagadnień wizerunkowych. Ponadto analizie poddano dokumenty źródłowe w postaci strategii rozwoju miasta, dotyczących zagadnień promocyjnych i wizerunkowych miast w wymiarze krajowym i międzynarodowym. Zastosowano również metodę dedukcji. Przeprowadzone rozważania pozwoliły na pozytywną weryfikację tezy. Ponadto pokazały, że pozytywny wizerunek miasta jest istotnym czynnikiem jego rozwoju.

Słowa kluczowe: marka miejsca, postrzegany obraz, tożsamość miasta, marketing terytorialny/miejscowy