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Schemes of (Re)interpreting the Cultural Themes in the Process of Building the City Image

Abstract: A city marketing narrative consists in an attempt to provide a new city image or strengthen the existing one. The process of creating the city's image may affect (re)interpretation of the history, culture, and heritage of the city. In city marketing narrative, the most desired meanings and associations are sequenced as primary, while the most unwanted ones are supposed to be gradually forgotten and eventually eliminated. The presence or significant absence of certain topics, use and abuse of positive themes, and elimination of negative ones may result in disturbing cultural themes. The article explores how the city marketing narrative (re)interprets myths, stereotypes, culture, history, and heritage. [1] The project [2] was focused on the city marketing narratives of five Polish cities (Lublin, Poznan, Wroclaw, Katowice and Gdansk). A quantitative and qualitative research study was conducted (in-depth interviews, n = 48; content analysis of cities' marketing narratives; CAWI, n = 314). The research made it possible to name three schemes of dealing with history.

Keywords: city marketing, cultural heritage, cultural identity, stereotypes, simulacrum.

City Marketing Meanings Interpretation as an Inspiration for Urban Sociology

City marketing, as defined by Philip Kotler, is a social and managerial process, initiated by municipalities for creating values to exchange with their partners (Szromnik 2007: 18). In city marketing, a city is presented *as if* it was a product, thus managerial and creative actions peak at presenting an enhanced vision of a city. The city image marketing narrative is frequently dissolving the negative aspects and overwriting them with positive elements. Although the experts in marketing underline the need for authenticity and credibility (Godin 2006: 26), marketing itself bears the stigma of untruthful creation (Pogorzelski 2010). Reputation and trust cannot be induced, they need to be earned. To build a successful brand, it is necessary to be persistent and consistent, which includes strategy, substance and symbolic actions (Anholt 2010: 15–17). "Countries that aren't strong need to be interesting — they need to exercise some power of attraction […], and the source of that attrac-

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[1] Referring to history, culture and heritage can be done in a variety of ways, both interpretation and reinterpretation. For embracing thoroughly the ideas of possible reference, the term "(re)interpretation" is used throughout the article.

[2] The project was funded by the National Science Centre Poland on the basis of the decision No. *DEC-2012/05/N/HS6/03962: Cities of meanings: images of Polish cities and social reception of their advertising versus transformation of tradition and cultural content*.

tion can only be their unique, individual identity, their culture, their history, their land, their traditions, their genius and their imaginations" (Anolt 2010: 37). The authenticity of the message content should also strengthen the city image. An effective marketing narrative can succeed if the city image is consistent with the desired identity communicated by the place. "The image of a place is a result of complex, long-term activities, which can build the unique character of the place" (Rianisto 2009: 63–64). City image includes such components as knowledge about the city, emotional attitude towards the city and possible behaviours including the city space (Florek 2006: 95).

In between an organic image and an induced image, there is a major risk: for the sake of the narrative, the city can become a hyperreal simulacrum. Being more attractive than the reality, a vision of (re)invented city can become more real than the real city (Baudrillard 2005). Credibility is suspended as emotions take over logic. Hyperreality is perceived better than reality, even though it is a copy (Eco 1996). Simulacrum allies with major shifts in importance hierarchy effecting in cultural commodification (calculating the value of the uncountable) and folklorisation (instrumental use of heritage). The selectiveness of the process of transmission of cultural themes (choosing the desired and rejecting the unwanted elements) is thoroughly described in the literature (Szacki 1971, Kula 2003, Hobsbawm 2008), and so are the processes of remembering and forgetting which are the main tools of manipulation (especially purposeful lack of memory) and coping with the past (Auge 2009, Ankersmit 2004, Halbwachs 2008). All of these actions result in myth creation, become the source of the genius loci and stereotypes. Overwriting the cultural themes is safe as long as the changes do not distort the collective memory code (Lotman, Uspensky 1977: 180). Since the code is necessary to understand the core values, meddling with it can result in the lack of understanding of the central cultural narrative.

Analysing the social context of the cities is the main activity of urban sociology. With appearance of metropolises, it pursued a sociological description of social and cultural consequences of urbanised areas with defining a variety of specific urban patterns, social relations, including emigration, gentrification, ghettoisation, political class interests facing new social movements, along with revolution in communication and economic impact some capitals have on the rest of the world, i.e. informational cities (Castells 1992) and global cities (Sassen 1994) creating a tight network of cooperation and competition. Among many research perspectives, culturalism aims at analysing city as a socio-spatial entity, in which meanings are created by a range of experiences, feelings and perceptions of the city, shared by the residents and users of public space (Jałowiecki, Szczepański 2009). Additionally, it enables the semiotic understanding of the city as an entity that can be read and interpreted as a coherent system of signs. This paradigm of urban experience investigation is particularly interesting as proved in modern tourism analysis, with "collecting signs" as a dominant perspective of experience (MacCannell 2005). "The gaze is constructed through signs, and tourism involves the collection of signs. When tourist see two people kissing in Paris what they capture in the gaze is 'timeless romantic Paris'. When

a small village in England is seen, what they gaze upon is the 'real olde England'" (Urry 2002: 3).

Not all the sights are encouraging. There are some negatively perceived urban spaces, focusing undesired gaze, for example post-industrial sites. Describing the process of adaptation of old industrial sites into the new social space, Rebecca Madgin notices: "To select the past in terms of retention or demolition requires a value judgment based on a considered equilibrium between historic significance and contemporary relevance" (2009: 73). It is impossible to name singular meanings in the polysemic nature of urban society. The conscious selection of distinctive elements (valued or contested) may project a simplified image stripped of complexity, that created the uniqueness in the first place (Madgin 2009: 173).

The process of producing meaning is a complex matter and includes dynamic interaction between signs, receiver (interpretant), object and context (including the recipient's personal experience, attitude and emotions) (Dingena 1994, Jhally 1990, Dyer 1982). Moreover, the meaning itself is followed by a process of negotiation. Stuart Hall distinguished types of meanings formation in the context of the reader and the system: (1) the preferred meanings are decoded in accordance with the encoder desires, being a part of a system, (2) negotiated meanings are somehow discussing the system, being a mixture of rejection and acceptance, and (3) oppositional meanings, contradicting the encoded meaning (1987: 68–71). A possible clash of encoded and decoded meanings is a challenge for city marketing.

City marketing narrative is a tool for enhancing demanded features, as (when skilfully performed) it introduces another layer onto the city meanings (Ward 1998: 239). An imaginary creation emerges, covering the primary meanings of history, culture, and urban space. City marketing narrative is involved in many possible antagonisms: who decides on the meanings importance?, are the needs and desires of political class and social movements not in opposition?, should the process follow cultural independence or globalisation?, is glocalisation a satisfactory compromise for preserving authenticity?, how to build a city narrative when social space bears the burden of i.e. gentrification and ghettoisation? Perhaps, next to the practices focused on socio-cultural inclusion and identity strengthening, a city marketing narrative could be another tool to help cities to fight modern problems. It could be a narrative that comes in handy when supporting recognition of urban pride derived from a unique city ethos (Bell, de-Shalit 2011).

It is here, at the junction of meanings management and distribution, where city marketing and urban sociology meet for new enterprises.

Main problem: Is it possible for city marketing to (re)build meanings around cities so thoroughly that it distorts the history? And consequently, if it is possible for city marketing narrative to be a major interference with historical interpretations, where are the borders of reinterpretations? There is a variety of elements that need to be discussed including the ways how cultural and historical themes are used (and abused) in city marketing narrative.

Methodology

Since the meanings are hidden in language and subjective interpretations, a constructionist research perspective was adapted. What is important for the interpretive constructionist researchers is how people view an object or event and the meaning that they attribute to it. "In this sense, multiple and even conflicting versions of the same event or object can be true at the same time" (Rubin, Rubin 2005: 27). It was crucial to grasp the variety of meanings on both sides of the narratives (sender and receiver's perspective), and create a bricolage of interpretations (Denzin, Lincoln 2010: 24). In an attempt to deliver diversified data, methodological (qualitative and quantitative) triangulation was applied (Flick 2011: 81). The city marketing narrative sender perspective was studied with a series of in-depth interviews (n = 48), conducted with experts representing a variety of disciplines: local and European politicians, entrepreneurs, journalists, PR / marketing professionals, media communications advisors, architects, designers, art curators, city guides, local activists, cultural animators, regionalists, scientists representing the fields of cultural studies, ethnology, ethnography, sociology, history, art history, geography, cultural geography, urbanism, public relations and marketing.[3] It was important to juxtapose the experts' views with those of the mass recipients'. Thus, a quantitative search was performed with a survey conducted among young fans of city marketing (CAWI, n = 314).[4] Additionally, an elaborate content analysis of city documents helped to build a discourse context via semiotic analysis of binary oppositions and the frequency and context of words: tradition, heritage, culture, and history (Rapley 2010, Rose 2010). Research included the following documents: strategies of development, communication strategies, European Capital of Culture applications (ECC Applications[5]), and visual materials used in recent[6] campaigns. Discourse analysis allowed to follow the crucial themes of conditions reinforcing the possibilities of cultural themes (re)interpretation (Peräkylä 2010). It also enabled to identify "interpretative repertoires," frameworks for meaning coding and decoding as well as descriptive sequences (Daymon, Holloway 2004: 143). The research process included indicating the elements of heritage that are considered important and the elements purposefully omitted, eliminated or blurred in the narrative as well as finding the possible reasons for that action and anticipating the consequences.

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[3] Experts' quotes are marked with a code including a city: LUB (Lublin), POZ (Poznan), WRO (Wroclaw), GDA (Gdansk), KAT (Katowice).

[4] Distribution via e-mail, and social media popular in Poland: Facebook, LinkedIn, GoldenLine and a variety of local forums in each city. Sample: 314 respondents (women 58%, men 42%). The survey was completed by the vast majority of young people (48.4% aged 18–25, 22.6% aged 26–30 and 11.1% aged 31–35) primarily with higher (76%) or secondary (23%) education; representatives of student environments (37%), white-collar workers, civil servants and teachers (27.3%), and directors, executives and professionals (19.6%), service and trade workers (6.1%) and private companies' owners (6.1%). Within the sample, almost half of the respondents represented the first generation of the inhabited city residents, 18.1% represented the second generation, 17.1% the third, while 16.1% the fourth and next ones.

[5] ECC Application of Lublin: City of dialogue; ECC Application of Poznan: Cultural storm; ECC Application of Wroclaw: Spaces for Beauty; ECC Application of Gdansk: Freedom of Culture. Culture of Freedom; ECC Application of Katowice: City of gardens.

[6] Recent campaigns means dated no earlier than 2008.

The following article is divided into sections. The first one focuses on the risks carried by implementing history, culture and heritage (re)interpretations in city marketing. The second one is a brief presentation of three schemes of possible (re)interpretations of history as evolved by the five analysed cities.

Cultural Themes (Re)interpretation in City Marketing Narrative

The variety of possible uses and, more interestingly, abuses of cultural themes in city marketing, builds a series of tendencies. In search for credible elements, city marketing narrative builds on history. Experts notice that operating the historical narrative was popular at the beginning of city marketing in Poland, years ago. "Today people want a story about a city, they are interested in modern life, they want a city to live, be a bit sexy" (GDA4). History can be an argument supporting and explaining the main narrative, yet it should not be the dominating element. This is particularly true in a situation when historical elements in advertising may turn into a kitschy and sentimental form: "it is the easy way out to play the sentimental card. I find it smart, crafty and having an economic impact, minimum cost, maximum gain" (KAT8). Moreover, it may seem as if "there was nothing more:" "Using historical element in building city image is risky and looks like a city has nothing but the past. Building communication around history may seem as if we have nothing except a memory of forgotten greatness" (POZ4). Moreover, experts are worried not with the simplification for marketing communication purposes, as it is understandable, but with the reductionism in content, universalism that leads towards blandness. Experts point out two kinds of history: an official history, formed by the most important information, devoid of any unnecessary contexts and unique meanings, and an alternative history. Such division is coherent with the culture model described by Edward Hall with external and internal (core) values of culture (1994: 14). However, what should form a continuum from official/fast absorbing stories to alternative/slow multidimensional exploration is presented in the city marketing narrative as an opposition of two different ways of understanding the city.

Ready-made interpretations peak at the form of folklorisation. However, experts perceive it as a "culture for beginners" which works effectively on a first time visit: "when we travel, we want to see the stereotypes, no matter how strong we deny it. If I go to China I want to see the red lanterns. […] when in Paris… I know it's corny, but I want to have a photo with the Eiffel tower.[…] because that is my association and I want to confirm it" (POZ3). Prior to a continuation or contestation of a stereotype it must be acknowledged. In a strong stereotype, an image can effectively predefine the expected experience. "For me a typical Upper Silesian is a person that speaks the dialect. That is, in marketing language, a tourist attraction. If I went to Upper Silesia and wouldn't hear the dialect I would be annoyed […] I want to hear the typical, I want to hear that dialect" (POZ3). A folklorisation activity helps to (re)create a hyperreal Upper Silesia, superior to the real one, just for the sake of visitors wanting to experience the stereotype. At the same time, there is an incoherent perception of the

stereotype, based on the evaluation of its elements. Many respondents claim that while the negative elements of the stereotype are not valid, i.e. industrial pollution, some positive elements of the "Upper Silesia myth" that are interesting, i.e. the dialect, are being rediscovered, recovered, reinterpreted. The stereotype redefined into a solely positive narrative can be upheld for the purpose of city marketing narrative serving not only as a unique selling proposition but also as an empowerment of historical and cultural "authenticity." This is only a step away from a city marketing as a narrative that builds history of its own. Such element of historical innovation works successfully in Wroclaw, where a city marketing narrative "is built on anti-history. There, the history was a burden and not an advantage, and that may be mainly the reason why the marketing narrative was accepted and absorbed by citizens" (GDA6). An "anti-history" is a reference to the German past of the city before the year 1945, and consequently a short time of Polish modern history. The city marketing narrative of Wroclaw exploits the theme of "a meeting place," mentioning how in the 1945, after Germans left the city, many Polish immigrants met in the city to start a new life. There is a romantic sparkle in the narrative, as the newcomers rebuilt the city and made it flourish again. This is, however, a city devoid of the past, as elements of pre-war German identity, are simplified into the material heritage. An "anti-history" grasps the tactic of "polishing the past," taming the quasi-foreign city into the quasi-Polish one. As experts put it: "A native citizen of Wroclaw is someone who only recently was born there. This city has no history" (KAT1); "The history of cities such as Wroclaw is fascinating, because it is a special story of Germanisation, repolonisation… Highlighting the important elements of the heritage and interpreting them in Polish favour" (POZ4).

Here an interesting observation: while most of the experts agreed history cannot be altered via city marketing narrative, that the core values are deeply hidden and strongly internalised by the society, experts in Wroclaw agreed that replacing city narrative with city marketing narrative "is solely a matter of technical efficiency and resources. Once one has large resources and an efficient team then each story can be replaced with a completely new one" (WRO1). It is not necessarily a thorough history alteration, yet surely a distortion (WRO4).

What happens to a city that permits a city marketing narrative to rule out certain elements of heritage or cover crucial historical facts? Selectiveness of memory and city marketing narrative are connected with ways of preserving urban sites. (Not) preserving the heritage is a mechanism of control (Madgin 2009: 197). The experts mention the necessity to raise social awareness on preserving crucial urban structures from deliberate destruction: "So far I thought that it is stupid that something is decaying, and then I read[7] that this is a targeted strategy of developers. For example, one does not protect the building so that it can decay in neglect up to the scale when it can only be demolished. First, one gets rid of the trouble of possible restoration, since it is cheaper to build from scratch. Second, with destroying the place, one destroys the community and its cultural ties" (GDA8) so no one may want to protect the

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[7] *Industrial Ruins: Space, Aesthetics and Materiality* by Tim Edensor.

building from demolition. Blurring the unwanted themes in city architecture results in simulacrum. The city of Katowice suffers from post-war modernism demolitions while new social movements fight for aesthetic, human-scale city with the heritage well preserved. The city of Poznan known for hanseatic trading traditions builds a quasi-medieval castle from scratch at the core of the old city market. Omitting and forgetting can be tools in dealing with historical traumas, yet they should not be performed instead of acceptance, without embracing the past no matter of the consequences for the city identity (Adorno 2010). In the case of some cities such practise is a success, for some, to the contrary.

Experts stress that marketing narrative should provide dense content to the elements people know from history, so fantasy is still to be bonded by facts. "We are not cutting off from the past, this is our basis. This is the only unchangeable element and we can only add new stories" (GDA4). Those new additions need to be consistent (KAT1). Experts point out the difference between fiction which the receiver may want to believe in, and fiction sold as truth, the latter being perceived as offensive: "Borders in marketing are made of values it can be noticed when the pompous promotional image becomes an empty shell" (WAW5). Thus, a smart narrative can expand. Examples provided by Lublin are mostly purposeful fantasies rooted in history. As a part of the city marketing narrative, window frames and shutters of Old Town buildings were filled with large copies of black and white photos of Lublin citizens from the beginning of the twentieth century: portraits, everyday situations, indoor and outdoor. As one of the experts explains: "we put those pictures in specially chosen alleys and neglected buildings […] we are taming the places which seem to be perceived as ugly. […] photos of people associated with the city, we believe that they lived here, we do not know who they really are […] we encourage people to explore other areas or even ask the question who these people were […] It is not writing history, it is a restoration" (LUB2). There is no ready-made interpretation and there is plenty room for both: authentic search for identity of pictured people and creating a fairytale about them. The narrative lays in the creativity of the receiver.

Among interesting cases of overwriting the history, there is a slight semantic shift that slipped unnoticeably into colloquial language, incorporating an expression of "multicultural" experience into the monocultural narratives. Cultural permeation in Polish cities was a significant element of history, yet it usually took form of an ethnical minority or religious diversification. Thus, applying a sociological term of multiculturalism is controversial. Despite that, the term "multicultural" is vastly used (and mainly abused) in city marketing narratives. "Multicultural" is a trendy cliché, a popular keyword that is supposed to enhance the narrative from a usual and blank "cultural minorities" into the hip and modern "multicultural experience:" "Multiculturalism is a buzzword, a cliché that is being worn out through the latest years all over again without much understanding of what a multicultural world actually is. Multiculturalism became a synonym for Judaeo-Christian heritage. We don't speak a lot about other religions" (LUB9). Thus in colloquial context, multicultural is treated as a synonym to any cultural diversity. Moreover, there is an understatement here as some forms of cultural plurality are a past experience of the cities (i.e. Jewish presence) rather than

a modern one. But when marketing narrative uses the phrase "multicultural city" it can sound as if the city still was diversified which, in monocultural Poland, is rather far from truth.

Also, city marketing sells (some of the) history. Is a city marketing narrative a form of selling the city's most vulnerable values? "Well, it is a bit selling the history but we cannot shut to the world and say 'this is ours' […] that would be egoistic" (GDA7). When asked about the risks of diminishing the cultural values, experts ask in a provocative manner: if we produce a pencil or pen with traditional embroidery design, is it selling the tradition? (GDA2). The example form Lublin proves that it is the quality that is the limit (mass production or hand-made): while celebrating an important historical event, the Union of Lublin "[w]e were wondering how to beautify the city. So, the artist sew crests, he embroidered big flags modelled on historical ones. They weren't commissioned to a commercial company and printed, they were hand-stitched, with artistic sensitivity, with a heraldist who said what we can and what we shouldn't change" (LUB7). That kind of cultural affirmation not only helps to raise interest in a particular place, but also enhances the self-identification process. Presence of history in modern style narrative (as in marketing) brings the historical issues back to discussion. Folklorisation helps to discover tangible values and forgotten traditions, clothing, dialects. They are becoming "trendy" and needed once again. Their functionality changes, yet the presence in cultural content preserves them. Local pride feeds on restoration and creative (re)interpretation of cultural themes.

A possibility of city marketing narrative becoming a new history was thoroughly discussed in the context of dwarfs in Wroclaw. An ethical issue arises when it is reminded that a dwarf was originally a symbol of fight for citizen's rights and freedom against the communist regime. In the narrative, trivialisation of the dwarf is explained with the necessity to make a difficult historical fact easier to understand for children. The concept evolved into a commercialised product with over 200 dwarf figures, the majority of which have no connection to the Wroclaw's Orange Alternative whatsoever. There is "a whole map you can explore with your child in search for a dwarf, you can buy a cup, a bag […]. Complete infantile interpretation" (KAT1). The idea seems to fall into an interpretative void. A child following fun with dwarfs may not necessarily embrace the idea of freedom fights in the eighties; an adult may be astonished at the scale of commodification. Therefore, experts claim there are ideas which cannot be sold and it is not correct to use such a symbol for marketing purposes (WRO3). Another interpretation would be, however, that there are ideas that need more creativity and taste to be commodified avoiding straightforward exploitation.

Self Creation into Self Distortion—Schemes of Possible (Re)interpretation

The juxtaposition of cities that have a different heritage and cultural burden enabled to observe different approaches towards (re)creating history: new interpretation, new chapter and new story. Each of the schemes forms a different pattern of relations

Figure 1

Cities Perception

Which cities in your opinion…*	Lublin	Poznan	Wroclaw	Gdansk	Katowice
…are the most prestigious	1.9%	36.9%	**79.6%**	**39.5%**	6.4%
…are the most popular among young people	5.1%	**28.3%**	**87.9%**	19.4%	14.3%
…are the most popular among job seekers	1.6%	24.4%	**62.7%**	17.5%	**32.5%**
…have the best cultural offer	11.8%	**24.2%**	**76.4%**	22.3%	1.6%
…have the best economical offer	1.6%	**44.9%**	**50.6%**	22.9%	**39.2%**
…are the most beautiful	19.1%	23.2%	**63.1%**	47.8%	3.5%
…have the most interesting sights for tourists	18.2%	18.2%	**56.5%**	55.7%	9.9%
…would you recommend to foreigners	16.9%	26.4%	**70.7%**	54.8%	17.8%
…are underrated by Poles	**58.0%**	9.6%	5.7%	7.0%	**66.6%**

*a multiple choice question.

Figure 2

Need of City Marketing

Which of the cities in your opinion needs city marketing the most?*	Lublin	Poznan	Wroclaw	Gdansk	Katowice
	66.6%	8.6%	1.9%	4.5%	59.6%

*a multiple choice question.

Figure 3

Opinion about a city in personal context

Finish the sentences:	Lublin	Poznan	Wroclaw	Gdansk	Katowice	None of them
I was always impressed by what is happening in…	5%	15%	**51%**	9%	8%	12%
I would never ever want to live in…	**27%**	10%	5%	3%	**32%**	23%
I would love to move to…	3%	8%	**41%**	27%	7%	14%
In my opinion, a city with the most untapped potential is…	**33%**	6%	4%	6%	**43%**	8%

between city marketing narrative and cultural themes and each pattern allows to anticipate the consequences, especially in the context of credibility.

"New interpretation" is a scheme in which a city acknowledged the history and with minor (re)interpretations continues the story. The study shows in this scheme the narrative is built in accordance with the receivers' expectations. The previously assigned meanings are validated through this narrative as the one and only proper interpretation. Consequently, the narrative confirms convictions and thus empowers them. Experts point out the negative aspect of that action: there is little room for alternations and surprises: any creative interpretation of the established set of meanings

Figure 4

City Marketing Narrative Consistency with Personal Experience

Is the city marketing narrative consistent with your personal perception of the city?	I definitely agree	I rather agree	I do not have an opinion	I rather disagree	I definitely disagree
Lublin. City of inspiration (inspires and transforms: a city where awareness of the richness of the past inspires the future)	14%	24%	**44%**	12%	6%
Poznan. City of know-how (entrepreneurship, competence, pulsating modern economy, the 1000 year old tradition of effectiveness)	28%	39%	22%	9%	2%
Wroclaw. The meeting place (is a city that unites)	**41%**	**34%**	15%	7%	3%
Gdansk. City of freedom (freedom, creative climate, the city free spirit, forces to think, to act, open to the world)	31%	37%	21%	10%	1%
Katowice. For a change (metropolis, the pride of the industrial heritage, an alternative to modern trends in culture, arts, education, business)	25%	**38%**	19.5%	14%	3.5%

can be rejected. The city marketing narrative is somehow conservative in meanings. However, that lack of spectacular attractiveness brings credibility.

This scheme was (in the analysed sample) represented by the actions of Gdansk and Poznan, where historical and cultural themes were accepted and incorporated into the city marketing narrative on a relatively high level. The study shows that Gdansk is one of the most prestigious cities and one of the most recommended to foreigners; perceived as traditional yet fashionable. Gdansk is a romantic city, crowded, yet friendly to live in, traditional, clean, welcoming, trendy, solid, active, and having an interesting cultural offer (see figure 5). Throughout history, the city was either the Free City of Gdansk or a germanized Hanseatic city. It was the Gdansk where World War II started, and it was the Gdansk where the freedom fights of Solidarity '80 broke out. The story is heavy here, but it was invariably about freedom. The main city marketing narrative has a double meaning: it is a city of freedom, but it also wants to free itself from history. Moving on is captured in the keyword of freedom which brands all the city enterprises. Here, in experts' opinion, it is dangerous: marketing the freedom? Still, the themes are consistent with the past experience.

Poznan is an opposite of heavy history. The city has flourished throughout the times, attractive mostly for the trade. It is also famous for the only successful uprising in Poland. Poznan is a city described by attributes such as modernity, reliability, activity, tradition, lack of romanticism and mystery (see figure 5). Main city marketing narrative: city open for new enterprises and smart hard working middle class. As experts suggest, since Poles love complaining and big heavy stories, there may be no story to sell here (POZ1). However, Poznan's optimism is welcomed by the youngsters:
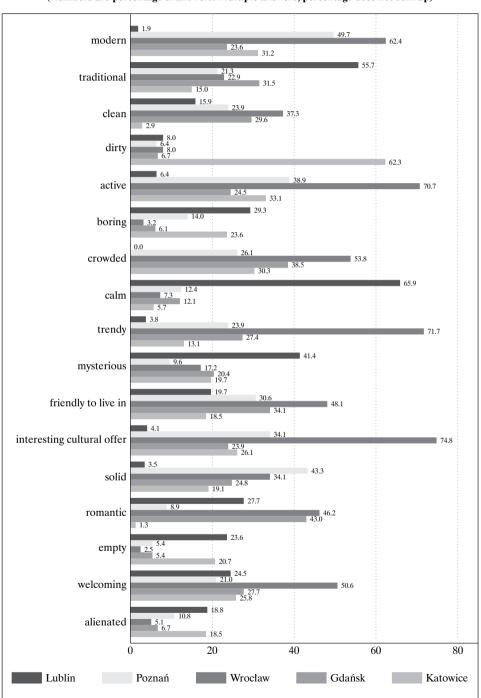
Figure 5

Subjective Opinion on City Perception
(Numbers are percentage of answers. Multiple answers, percentage does not sum up)

	Lublin	Poznań	Wrocław	Gdańsk	Katowice
modern	1.9	49.7	62.4	23.6	31.2
traditional	55.7	21.3	22.9	31.5	15.0
clean	15.9	23.9	37.3	29.6	2.9
dirty	8.0	6.4	8.0	6.7	62.3
active	6.4	38.9	70.7	24.5	33.1
boring	29.3	14.0	3.2	6.1	23.6
crowded	0.0	26.1	53.8	38.5	30.3
calm	65.9	12.4	7.3	12.1	5.7
trendy	3.8	23.9	71.7	27.4	13.1
mysterious	41.4	9.6	17.2	20.4	19.7
friendly to live in	19.7	30.6	48.1	34.1	18.5
interesting cultural offer	4.1	34.1	74.8	23.9	26.1
solid	3.5	43.3	34.1	24.8	19.1
romantic	27.7	8.9	46.2	43.0	1.3
empty	23.6	5.4	2.5	5.4	20.7
welcoming	24.5	21.0	50.6	27.7	25.8
alienated	18.8	10.8	5.1	6.7	18.5

it is popular among young people searching for a job, perceived as one of the most modern, solid and active Polish cities (see figure 1).

"New chapter" is a scheme in which a city acknowledged the history and with major (re)interpretation of a definite cut towards certain elements continues the story. The continuation is built on strong acceptance of history, taming both the positive and the negative. However, the cut from the negative is definite and determined. Such (re)interpretation is perceived as necessary to present the elements previously unknown or unpopular as they were not included in the predefined set of meanings in the recipients' expectations. Both elements cut and elements continued are part of legitimate cultural narrative, yet since the first were dominant and the latter unpopular, the scheme is risky—it implies convincing the recipients to be open towards new meaning and reinterpret or reject a stereotype. The recipient is asked to embrace unusual coding. Inconsistency with the previous coding, personal experience, emotions and attitude, can affect the meaning and distort the narrative. Lack of the will to perform legitimate decoding (undermining the usual) results in rejection. When cosy pattern is damaged whole narrative fails.

The city of Katowice, following 20 years of economic transformation and cultural development still cannot convince Poles to its transition from the heavy industry capital into a dynamic metropolis. The study demonstrates that Katowice, despite one of the best economies, is still one of the most underrated cities. The feature that clearly describes Katowice is dirt. Additionally, Katowice is active, modern, crowded, and welcoming. For some Katowice has an interesting cultural offer, for others it is rather boring (see figure 5). Stuck in the post-industrial myth, Katowice is perceived as mysterious, but still visiting Katowice is supposed to be a rather bad experience. The main challenge is cutting off the negatively perceived heritage in a creative way. The narrative aims at explaining the shift from industrial to post-industrial and adapting new contexts which is quite similar to the Ruhr District example (Prossek 2011). As the study shows, the narrative does not work until the person actually visits the city to fight the stereotype.

Research reveals that Lublin, once an important metropolis, is presently one of the most underrated cities, perceived as traditional and calm which for some is mysterious but for others can be boring. Lublin is a city perceived as mostly quiet, traditional, mysterious and romantic, but also boring and empty (see figure 5). The main challenge is redefinition of the East of Poland, being currently perceived as poor and "worse kind of the country" that has stopped in development a long time ago. To fight the haters and face the past, Lublin proved to be stopped in history indeed, yet in the mythical one, medieval. A specific narrative was created: the story of a city captured in a moment, aside of time, open for inspiration, holding a carnival, safe for those who are in search for a shelter. There may be no development here, but at the same time that development is not perceived as the main quality.

Although experts perceive this narrative scheme as the most authentic and consistent with the city spirit, survey proves that alterations, no matter how authentic, introduce destabilisation of meanings and are rejected. It is possible to observe extremely stereotypical perception: Katowice is not a city of culture and Lublin has

no prestige. In the category of the most underrated city Katowice and Lublin excelled over others. It is also Lublin and Katowice that are in the greatest need of promoting (see figure 2). Additionally, the low assessment of Lublin and Katowice is clearly visible in the declared reluctance to live in these cities (27% and 32%). In comparison, respondents would most likely move to Wroclaw (41%) and Gdansk (27%), although the city that most impress the respondents is Wroclaw (51%) (see figure 3).

"New story" is a scheme in which a city acknowledged the history and with major (re)interpretation of a definite cut towards certain elements proceeds to a new story. A city might have or might not have tamed the history, yet it introduced (re)interpretation in a form of new narrative. This scheme is practiced by Wroclaw and the study shows it is effective and perceived as credible. Since the story is brand new, there is no necessity to contextualize the narrative in the reference to the historical facts. Reinterpretations are unbound to the framework. Still, lack of continuity does not involve lack of legitimization—new story implies new contexts, new meanings and new impressions. Should those new interpretations find acceptance of the audience, should they be recognized as credible (not necessarily authentic, yet convincing), such narrative will act as effective. Wroclaw's success is a proof of efficiency of this scheme: the survey confirmed that Wroclaw's narrative is perceived as the most credible—not with the historical facts, but with the recipients' exportations (see figure 5).

In common opinion, the city of Wroclaw is perceived as a bright example of city marketing. Wrocław's city image includes such characteristics as interesting cultural offer, active, trendy, modern, crowded, welcoming, friendly to live in, romantic (see figure 5). The main narrative states it is an open city, a meeting place. At the core of the idea lies pretending that the city history started quite recently. Due to post-war shifts in countries' borders, the completely German Breslau turned into the completely Polish Wroclaw. The presence of Polish immigrants resulted in a marketing narrative addressing multiculturalism. It is a serious understatement as the city itself is not only monocultural but it also strongly underlines the statement that Wroclaw is at present Polish. The denial of German history of the city is reflected in the fact that the city narrative does not reach the years before 1945 and strongly builds new mythologies. Among the exploited themes one can find the protests against the Soviet rule (The Orange Alternative) with an infantilized dwarf used as a marketing tool. It must be noted that the advantage of the third scheme may be temporary, as well as low effectiveness of the second scheme. In time, a narrative based on an authentic story may be perceived as more valued.

Experts note that if the city comes up with a story, then perhaps it was the story (fiction) that was necessary, not the (actual) history itself. Moreover, "You can't prohibit such activities even though these measures are highly questionable" (LUB4). It is impossible to effectively undermine city marketing narrative as a false story, since the marketing story does not promise objective informative process. There is a playful element in history's (re)interpretation: "Why can't we tell ourselves a fairy tale?" (KAT3). A possibility that unimportant fable can distort the reality is regarded as one of low level of danger, or simply ignored.

Conclusions, Perspectives, Limitations

City marketing narrative creates a variety of possibilities for risky distortions in cultural and historical heritage, especially the ambivalence of both the coding and decoding the narrative content. Practice of blurring and omitting unwanted cultural themes and creating a marketing narrative simulacrum is not perceived as harmful as long as it does not exceed a common understanding of ethical and aesthetic action. Commodification of cultural themes is noticed, yet not perceived as dangerous and city marketing narrative does not pose a threat of "selling" cultural themes. Moreover, city marketing narrative is claimed to force a debate on city identity, especially on how the city spirit is understood, how the city space should be formed and how tradition and other cultural patterns should be performed. Thus, when managed correctly, an ambivalent city marketing narrative may act in a positive way.

Applying the Yuri Lotman scheme (collective memory and collective memory code) as well as the Edward Hall core values concept helps to understand the relation the city marketing forms with the possibility of distortion of transmission of cultural themes. City marketing narrative as a simulacrum is an artificial cultural artefact, selling a chosen story. Therefore, it commodifies not the core values but only a vision of core values, built for the needs of marketing narrative. Any attempt to alter the core values is noticed and debated, which means the meaning (re)interpretations are not internalised automatically. However, city marketing narrative interferes with collective memory as it introduces coding that is not neutral towards the cultural imponderables (evaluation, commodification): the original values might be questioned by the induced values. However, city marketing narrative can affect only the ways of understanding the imponderables and not necessarily alter them. The danger lies not in changing the original (core) values, but the code needed to understand (decode) them. Since alterations concern only the codes of understanding and not the imponderables themselves, such activity is not perceived as culturally destructive.

The results presented in the article are not intended for generalization. However, the juxtaposition of schemes with analyzing their context enables to form a framework for further studies. Having selected three schemes (new interpretation, new chapter, and new history) it is possible to embark on a subsequent research of testing their correctness and possibility of creating a generalized tool for analyzing the patterns of coping with history, considering the purposes and consequences. It would be interesting to perform a longue duree analysis and verify whether city marketing can alter the core values. Present research allows only to estimate the borders in which the alteration breaks the code (and not the core).

Meanings create "invisible city" (Calvino 2005), an urban spirit, ethos, genius loci. Meanings can be commented on, debated, (dis)continued. Ways in which urban meanings are treated show preferences of recipient's attitudes. The triad of the city, cultural themes, and city marketing narratives remains an interesting field of exploration.

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