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Town design and town communications in the process of image creation of Wroclaw and Malaga

Abstract

Creating a positive image is one of the most important activities undertaken not only by enterprises, but also by territorial units. Cities and regions can see the need to create and maintain a good image as an important factor of competitive advantage facilitating opportunities for dynamic development. Nowadays, the most active in this respect are large urban centers which are managed in a creative way, and a good image, which is their most important intangible asset, definitely facilitates competition in increasingly demanding markets. The paper aims to present activities within town design and town communications, which, apart from town behavior, belong to the basic components of the process of creating the image of modern cities. One of the qualitative methods, which is a case study, was applied due to the possibility of making comprehensive comparisons based on the information identified. The examples of two culturally distant cities were used, namely the Polish city of Wroclaw and the Spanish city of Malaga, which, in many areas of creating their image, carry out similar activities. In both cities, the commercialization of city symbols is visible at the expense of historical and cultural aspects. The communication with stakeholders is similar, in which interactive techniques dominate, and particular activity manifests itself in social media and in the development of urban applications that perform both information and entertainment functions.

Introduction

Various marketing activities are the domain of not only enterprises, organizations and institutions, but also territorial units. Countries, regions and cities see the need to undertake such activities which may become an important asset that supports dynamic development and the possibility of obtaining multi-dimensional benefits. Currently, the most challenges in this respect are faced by urban centers, which want to be positively perceived by the environment, including residents and investors, and their ambitions are also growing to enhance their attractiveness in the eyes of tourists. One can see a tendency to more and more creative city[1] management, taking into account the complexity of processes that influence their character and the possibility of their further development (Ooi and Yuen, 2010). Globalization is one of such processes. Cities, while competing with each other for the interest of the media, investors and tourists, or for the possibility of organizing sports or entertainment events, more and more often confront not only centers located in a given region, but also geographically very distant ones (Herget, Petrů and Abrhám, 2015, 121). This creates completely different possibilities, but also the necessity of using new operation methods in the conditions of much stronger competition.

Therefore, in the marketing management of contemporary cities the greatest attention is paid to the process of creating their image. A good image is considered, as in the case of a company and an organization, as the most important intangible asset of the city, which definitely facilitates the possibility of competing in the increasingly demanding markets.

1. Theoretical framework of the research

The problem of creating an image on the ground of territorial marketing was taken up by American urban planner Kevin Lynch in the 1960s, who pointed out that the way a place was perceived was influenced not only by direct contact with urban reality, but also by the activities of various media (Lynch, 1960, 6). Cities were treated as places of trade, but also symbolic (impressions and cultural expressions), and the process of shaping the image was to take into account economic and social changes, on the one hand, and local identity (Jansson, 2003, 463), on the other. In contemporary cities, apart from stimulating the development of entrepreneurship, attention is paid to the achievements resulting from tradition, so that the shaping of the urban environment can be sustainable (Levenda and Tretter, 2020, 490).

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[1] An interesting study on the development opportunities of one of the most creative cities not only on the African continent can be found in Nkula-Wenz (2019, 581–597).

Currently, the subject of research and analyses is the image of territorial areas perceived both from the perspective of people living in a given area and other entities. This image is treated as the result of direct and indirect contacts of people with a given place, it is the image created in the minds of the residents, but also of "external clients", among whom tourists play a special role (Lalli and Plöger, 1991, 25–26). Therefore, the image of the city can be defined as "the totality of subjective perceptions of reality that have arisen in human minds as a result of perception, the impact of mass media and informal information messages" (Szromnik, 2016, 146). Thus, it is the sum of ideas obtained on the basis of experiences, knowledge and stereotypes that influence the attitude towards a given place on an emotional level (Herget, Petrů, and Abrhám, 2015, 119).

The image of a city is inextricably linked with the image of a region or a country (Szromnik, 2016, 158). This relationship is two-way in its nature; therefore, the image of a particular city may affect the perception of larger territorial units which it is part of. Similarly, the way how the image of a country or region is perceived determines to some extent the perception of a given city. It is worth assessing the strength of this correlation and the way it influences when creating an image management strategy. A similar relationship can be seen in the case of the so-called "country of origin effect," which can also be applied to a region or a city. The image of a given territory can positively influence the perception of the brand or the product category associated with it. This influences the decisions of companies that are more willing to invest in areas with a favorable image, as they hope that it will translate into an attractive image of products manufactured in a given area. Thanks to this bilateral relationship, territorial units can, in turn, gain recognition and strengthen their image in the eyes of recipients (Piechna and Renigier-Biozor, 2010, 174).

2. Research methodology

In the process of creating the image of a settlement unit, one can designate three main components (Töpfer and Müller, 1988):

— town design, i.e. the visual image of the city,

— town communications, i.e. the way in which the city communicates with its surroundings,

— town behavior that constitutes a set of behaviors and actions undertaken by a town.

These three elements are interdependent and interact with each other, and play a fundamental role in the image creation process. The first two are the subject of this paper, the purpose of which will be to present various aspects of shaping activities within town design and town communications, along with their conditions and consequences for further dynamic development of cities.

To illustrate these issues, one can apply the case studies of two large European cities, namely the Polish Wroclaw and the Spanish Malaga. Although they are culturally distinct, both have many common features. Both cities are among the largest in their respective countries and places with a rich history where different cultures intertwined, which largely determined the present identity of these cities. Cultural distinctiveness, on the one hand, but also many similarities, inspired the authors to analyze in detail the visual and communication aspects of the process of creating the image of these cities. Due to the purpose of the research, the case study method seems to be the most appropriate because of the possibility of identifying cognitive problems. It enables comprehensive comparisons to be made on the basis of information from various sources.

3. System of graphic standards and city symbols within town design

Elements of a town's design create a visual image of a city, and their combination contributes to its recognition and makes it stand out from others. The town design in a broader sense covers not only a unified system of graphic standards, but also the architecture and urban values of the city and other areas that make up the urban fabric (Akhmedova and Zhogoleva, 2017). However, the elements of visual identification are the most important, i.e. the coat of arms and the flag, colors and symbols of the city (e.g. characters related to the town, unusual buildings or monuments, natural attractions and names). The system of graphic standards also includes a fixed typeface used in promotional materials, a font used in official correspondence, and graphic design for leaflets, catalogs, folders, books and maps branded by the city. The visual identification system also applies to all types of content made available on the city's websites or its profiles in social media. The method of external and internal labeling of municipal offices and institutions and their decor (interior aesthetics, facilities for applicants, legibility of information boards), as well as badges and clothing of officials, law enforcement services and technical employees also play a significant role. The method of marking public means of transport and the organization of events the city is involved in are also important.

Consistency in the use of individual elements is important in the town design concept. Thanks to it, the city is consistent and in an ordered state in the eyes of the recipients. The use of repeating motifs does not have to be schematic and lead to monotony, as they can be flexibly adapted to the situation, and supplemented, while at the same time being part of a comprehensive vision. Activities related to the development of urban space should also be undertaken with the intention not to violate the identity of the city, but rather to gradually modify and shape it.

The coat of arms, the flag and the logo are the city's identities. The coat of arms of Wroclaw was established by the City Council in 1990 on the basis of the shape given to it in 1530 by Ferdinand I of Habsburg (Figure 1).[2] It has the form of a shield divided into four parts. In the upper parts, there is a lion with a crown, referring to the Czech coat of arms, and a black eagle with outstretched wings, symbolizing the Silesian Piast dynasty. The bottom of the coat of arms is the initial of Wroclaw and the bust of Saint John the Evangelist. The central place is occupied by the head of John the Baptist, the patron of the city and its cathedral. The colors in red, white, yellow and black harmonize with the red and yellow flag of Wroclaw, which the coat of arms is also often placed on.
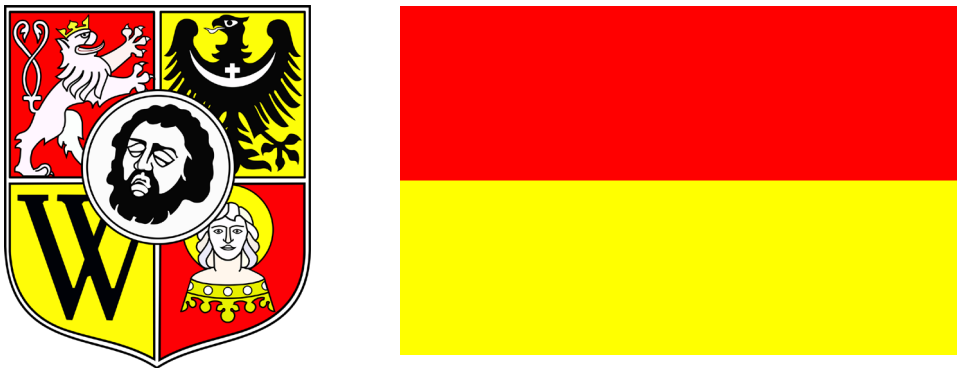
Figure 1. The Wrocław coat of arms and the flag

Source: www.wroclaw.pl/herb-logo-barwy. Date of access: 11.07.2021.

On the other hand, the coat of arms of Malaga was established in 1494 by order of the Catholic Kings' dynasty,[3] which was ruling in Spain at that time. Against the backdrop of the red sky, it features the Gibralfaro Castle with a courtyard full of Christian prisoners. The red symbolizes the areas around the city during the bloody Reconquista. In the upper part there are the figures of the martyrs, Cyriac and Paula, the patrons of the city, facing each other. The edges of the hill and fortress are washed by the sea of silver-blue waves that emphasize the importance that kings Isabella and Ferdinand wanted to give to the port of Malaga. The scene is placed against the background of a larger, green and purple shield. The coat of arms is crowned with a golden royal crown encrusted with precious stones and surrounded by the inscription: "Very noble and very loyal Malaga, always bold, first in danger of freedom, very hospitable and very benevolent" (Muy noble y muy leal ciudad de Málaga, siempre denodada, la primera en el peligro de la libertad, muy hospitalaria y muy benéfica). These terms were added to the coat of arms at various times, the last one in 1922. The flag of Malaga contains the coat of arms of the city, from which it took over its dominant colors (Figure 2).

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[2] www.historia.org.pl/2014/03/11/herb-i-pieczec-miasta-wroclawia. Date of access: 11.07.2021.

[3] www.diariosur.es/malaga-capital/significa-escudo-malaga-20180214124648-nt.html. Date of access: 11.07.2021.

Figure 2. The Malaga coat of arms and the flag

Source: es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Símbolos_de_Málaga. Date of access: 11.07.2021.

While the coat of arms is deeply rooted in history, the logo tends to show the city's contemporary image, or the one to which it aspires. The Wroclaw logo was selected in a competition in 1996 and has remained unchanged since then (Figure 3).[4] The blue and yellow bands with a red triangle between them form the letter "W." Contours resembling the characteristic Gothic facade of the Wroclaw town hall are marked with a black line.

The logo of Malaga consists of the name with the slogan: "Ciudad Genial," which can be translated as "brilliant or wonderful city" (Figure 3). The word "genial' in Spanish is quite multifaceted, with a range of positive meanings; it can also be understood as giving pleasure, joy or favoring a creative genius.[5] In 2017, the logo was given a more modern shape by changing the initial letter "M" — in the current version it is made of colorful brush strokes in the colors of red (symbolizing creativity and development), blue (sky and sea), green (nature and life) and black (passion accompanying dedication to art and culture).[6]

Figure 3. The logos of Wroclaw and Malaga

Source: www.malagaturismo.com. Date of access: 11.07.2021; www.wroclaw.pl/herb-logo-barwy. Date of access: 11.07.2021.

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[4] www.wroclaw.pl/herb-logo-barwy. Date of access: 11.07.2021.

[5] Based on the dictionary Real Academia Española, www.rae.es. Date of access: 11.07.2021.

[6] www.malagaturismo.com/es/noticias/detalle/malaga-ciudad-de-museos.-donde-habita-el--arte-la-nuevamarca-turistica-para-reforzar-la-oferta-cultural./553. Date of access: 11.07.2021.

Both Wroclaw and Malaga have developed a coherent system of graphic standards, which is successfully used in correspondence, when designing promotional or informational materials, signs of municipal buildings, etc. Both settlement units have created extensive documents defining individual guidelines: *Visual Identity Book* approved by the Office City of Wroclaw and the *Manual de Usos de la Identidad Visual Corporativa Municipal* concerning Malaga, divided into 11 chapters.[7] In the case of Malaga, the typeface of official clothes, marking of public transport, street signs, taxis, police vehicles and badges were also specified. The development and unification of norms concerning the above-mentioned standards proves the awareness of the authorities of both cities that it is important to build a coherent system of visual identification. Therefore, the rules applied in Malaga include many more elements than in Wroclaw.

Each city has different symbols, by means of which it tries to distinguish itself from other centers. Dwarves have become one of the most characteristic symbols of Wroclaw in recent years. These are small figurines that began to appear in various parts of the city since 2001, in reference to the opposition activities of the 1980s undertaken by the Orange Alternative movement (Wawrykowicz, 2017), whose members painted dwarves on stains of paint, with which militiamen covered anti-communist slogans placed in urban space. One of the best remembered initiatives of the Orange Alternative was a 1987 event in which people wearing dwarf hats were taken to provoke a reaction from the police. The behavior of the services exceeded the expectations of the holders of the action, who expected that the militiamen would try to remove the headgear of the participants, but they began to arrest people disguised as dwarves, which had an even more grotesque effect.

In the following years, it was found that the dwarf could be the original symbol of the city (Figure 4) and a tourist attraction.[8] Since then, the number of dwarves has grown steadily, and currently there are nearly 400 of them in Wroclaw. City games related to this subject are held. The mobile applications "Wroclawskie Krasnale" (Wroclaw's Dwarves) and "Go Wroclawskie Krasnale" (Go Wroclaw's Dwarves) have been also developed, enabling the localization of as many of them as possible.

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[7] www.malaga.eu/el-ayuntamiento/imagen-corporativa/#manual-de-usos. Date of access: 11.07.2021; www.bip.um.wroc.pl. Date of access: 11.07.2021.

[8] www.wroclawskiekrasnale.pl. Date of access: 11.07.2021.

Figure 4. Wroclaw's Dwarves: "Economist" and "Sisiphus"

Source: www.krasnale.pl. Date of access: 11.07.2021; www.wroclaw.fotopolska.eu. Date of access: 11.07.2021.

One of the symbols associated clearly with the capital of Costa del Sol is *biznaga*, an intricately made plant composition of jasmine flowers attached to a dried base. *Biznageros*, i.e. the creators of these exquisite bouquets, exuding a subtle scent, must show a considerable dose of precision and patience. In the summer, one can meet them dressed in traditional costume, selling *biznageros* in the historic part of the city (Figure 5). During the Malaga Film Festival, the main distinction is *Biznaga de Oro*, or Golden *Biznaga*, and thanks to this award, the symbol is well recognized among the inhabitants of various regions of Spain.

Figure 5. *Biznagas* and *biznaguero* selling them

Source: www.facebook.com/MalagaTurismoOficial. Date of access: 11.07.2021.

Although *biznaga* is an inseparable element of the identity of the capital of Costa del Sol, the most emblematic symbol of Malaga in recent years has undoubtedly become the painter Pablo Picasso, who was born there in 1881. The connections between the city and the artist have been more strongly emphasized since the establishment of the Pablo Ruiz Picasso Foundation by the city council in the 1980s, which focused on researching and popularizing the artist's output.[9] These connections have been particularly emphasized since the inauguration of the Picasso Museum in 2003. The figure of the painter has become, in a way, the leitmotif around which the entire image strategy of Malaga, aspiring to be a city of culture and art, a city of museums, is built (Figure 6). The local airport was also named after him.[10] Some point out that the desire to use Picasso's profile to promote Malaga has led to a certain mythization, obscuring the true biography of the artist who left his hometown at the age of 10, returning to it just a few times, the last time at the age of twenty (Zapata Vázquez, 2018). The significance of the city in the painter's life is exaggerated. There are criticisms that the historic center is beginning to resemble a theme park dedicated to the person of Picasso, while the motives for making Malaga a center so strongly committed to commemorating the Spanish artist are not convincing.

Undoubtedly, the promotional activities of Wroclaw and Malaga show a consistent focus on one symbol, which is to become a hallmark, both in the eyes of residents and tourists. Malaga focuses on cultural heritage, which is to be embodied by the famous painter, while Wroclaw wants to stand out as a city where more and more often one can come across figurines of dwarves, which in an unobtrusive, often humorous way, blend into the city space, arousing a rather positive emotions and thus consolidating the image of a friendly place. Although both symbols are avoided and seemingly do not share many features, paradoxically they share a certain detachment from historical truth. Dwarves could become a symbol of human determination in the fight against totalitarianism and an important testimony of the past, bringing the history of the anti-regime opposition closer to generations who did not remember the times of the Polish People's Republic, or to foreign tourists. Meanwhile, their role was limited to a marketing tool, and insufficient exposure of the historical significance of Wroclaw dwarves leads to a kind of infantilization of the city's symbol. In Malaga, we are dealing with the opposite phenomenon: reinterpreting Picasso's biography and exaggerating the influence of his hometown on the artist's life and work. These activities, in turn, distort the authenticity of the city's image, and create an image whose sole purpose is to stimulate cultural tourism. Both examples clearly show the danger associated with the commercialization of city symbols, leading to the creation of an illusory image that can insufficiently or excessively emphasize certain historical and cultural aspects.

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[9] www.fundacionpicasso.malaga.eu. Date of access: 11.07.2021.
[10] www.aeropuertodemalaga-costadelsol.com. Date of access: 11.07.2021.
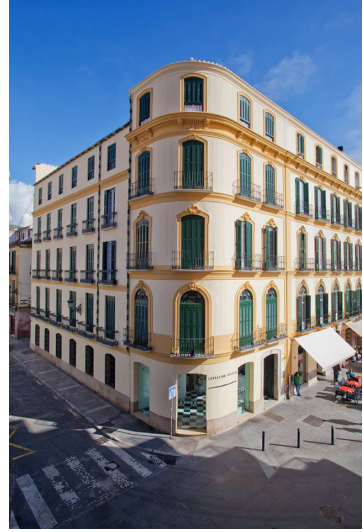
Figure 6. The Picasso Monument at *Plaza de la Merced* in Malaga and the artist's family home, now the seat of the Picasso Pablo Ruiz Foundation and museum

Source: www.facebook.com/MalagaTurismoOficia. Date of access: 11.07.2021; www.museocasa-natalpicasso.malaga.eu/. Date of access: 11.07.2021.

4. Town communications

Another component of the city's identity is town communications, i.e. a system of a territorial unit communication with various groups of recipients. It includes a variety of forms for communicating information to stakeholder groups. Public relations, publicity and sponsoring activities focused on building and maintaining appropriate relations between the territorial unit and target markets play a key role in the process of communication of the city with target groups.

The city's communication system is a multifaceted and complex issue. Its components largely influence the perception of a territorial unit by all target groups. Currently, the Internet is a very important communication channel, and websites administered by local authorities are among important sources of information about the city. In both Wroclaw and in Malaga, there are websites of this type with news and general information, while the official website of Wroclaw, www.wroclaw.pl (Figure 7) also includes foreign-language versions (English, German and Ukrainian), while the Malaga website www.malaga.eu (Figure 8) is available only in the native Spanish, but it seems more intuitive and looks better visually and no commercial advertisements appear on it. Both cities also have a separate tourist service. In this case, the Wroclaw website www.visitwroclaw.eu is run in Polish,

English, German and Spanish, while the www.malagaturismo.com website dedicated to tourism in Malaga is available in seven languages. The multilingualism of the website is a great advantage for a tourist, both at the stage of choosing a destination and during a visit to the city. In this respect, Malaga has a certain advantage over Wroclaw, as it offers more convenient access to information to a wider audience. Due to the aesthetic graphics and modern design, the official Wroclaw tourist website seems to be more functional and user-friendly. The most important attractions of the city are well exposed. The main page also displays an interactive map with points important from the tourist's point of view — places worth visiting, events, restaurants and hotels. While the Malaga logo is clearly visible on the website, only the black and white thumbnail of the coat of arms appears in the footer of the website on tourism in Wroclaw.

Figure 7. The official website of Wroclaw

Source: www.wroclaw.pl. Date of access: 11.07.2021.
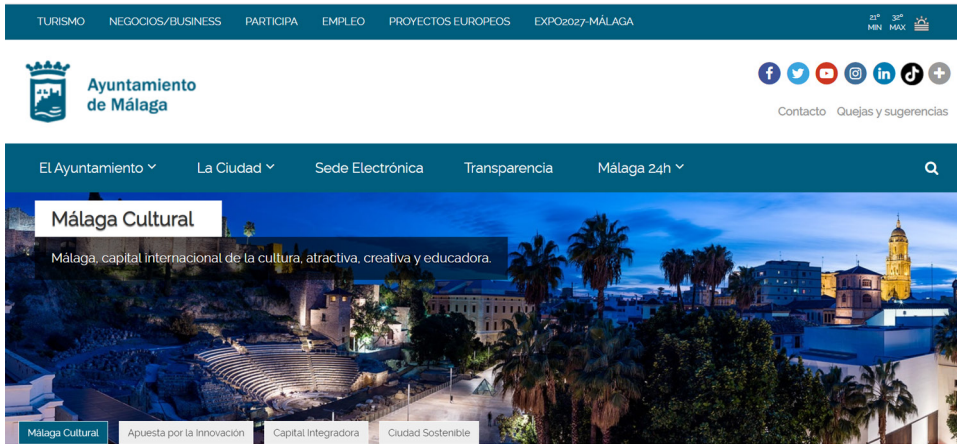
Figure 8. The home page of the Malaga City Hall website

Source: www.malaga.eu. Date of access: 11.07.2021.

Due to the growing importance of online communication channels with target groups, it is also worth comparing the activity of Wroclaw and Malaga on social media. Both cities have official fanpages on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. The number of users watching the profile of the capital of Lower Silesia called "Wroclaw [Wroclove]" on Facebook is 304 thousand, which is a much better result than for Malaga (184.4 thousand) — "Málaga Ciudad Genial."[11] Wroclaw frequently uses the option to create events on Facebook, while information about events taking place in Malaga is most often included in posts and graphics. On the Malaga fanpage, one can find entries with translations in other languages, which proves the willingness to build relationships with foreign segments; while only content in Polish appears on the Wroclaw profile, which narrows the target group. Since 2016, the Visit Wroclaw fanpage has also been in operation, which so far has almost 40 thousand followers.[12]

The profile of Wroclaw is also more popular among Twitter users, with 81.2 thousand followers, while for Malaga the number is 31.1 thousand.[13] However, it should be borne in mind that the community of as many as 156 thousand users are gathered around the official fanpage of the Malaga City Hall, which is aimed primarily at residents and is more informative than the one administered by the Wroclaw Tourism Department, which is oriented towards presenting the values of the city as a travel destination. The profile of Wroclaw is very active on Instagram, attracting 124 thousand followers, and the Malaga account attracted

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[11] www.facebook.com/wroclaw.wroclove. Date of access: 11.07.2021; www.facebook.com/MalagaTurismoOficial. Date of access: 11.07.2021.

[12] www.facebook.com/visitwro. Date of access: 11.07.2021.

[13] www.twitter.com/wroclaw_info. Date of access: 11.07.2021; www.twitter.com/turismode-malaga. Date of access: 11.07.2021.

63.8 thousand application users.[14] The Malaga fanpage on Instagram usually publishes the same content as on Facebook and Twitter; Wroclaw's Instagram profile is significantly different from the other two on social media and has a much more artistic color. The photos posted there show Wroclaw from different perspectives, thanks to which the profile also acquires a more universal dimension. The charm of the city is presented in a subtle and interesting way.

Technological development is also conducive to the creation of applications dedicated to the city, which can serve both informational and entertainment functions. Wroclaw encourages the use of the Footsteps[15] mobile application on its tourist website. It has the character of a personalized guide which, after selecting a profile matching their personality (e.g. an art lover, a gourmet, a tourist), proposes a route that will best fit their expectations. People using Footsteps have an interactive map at their disposal, and the application includes photos of attractions, their descriptions, thematic videos and links to the official websites of individual places. Footsteps is currently only available in Polish. The website www.visitwroclaw.eu also mentions other mobile applications that can make it easier for visitors to move around the city, make a visit to the Wroclaw Zoo more attractive or facilitate the search for dwarves, but most of them are not strictly platforms created on the initiative of the city hall.[16]

Malaga recommends four applications to tourists. The first one, called Audio Tour Official Malaga, is the official city audio guide, with 95 marked locations on the map. Like Footsteps, it also has a lot of additional information. Malaga City Hall initiated the creation of the Playas de Málaga application dedicated to city beaches; it includes, among other things, the characteristics of each of them, notifications about current weather conditions and emergency numbers. Another application recommended by the tourist website is Aparcamientos Málaga SMASSA, which informs one in real time how many parking spaces are available in each car park and how to get to them. Málaga Turismo, in turn, is a knowledge base about the tourist attractions of Malaga.

Malaga's offer in terms of mobile applications strictly focused on tourists is richer than in Wroclaw, where one can, however, easily reach for applications that facilitate access to information about the city or travel around it, which are aimed at various target groups (e.g. iMPK [e-Municipal Public Transport Service], Wrocławski Rower Miejski [Public Bikes in Wroclaw], Uber). Mobile applications make it possible to shape the image of a place; thanks to them, cities can be perceived as modern and progressive. They create an opportunity to personalize the messages conveyed to tourists and to obtain information about their features.

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[14] www.instagram.com/wroclaw_official/. Date of access: 11.07.2021; www.instagram.com/malagaturismo/. Date of access: 11.07.2021.

[15] www.visitwroclaw.eu/odkryj-wroclaw-z-footsteps. Date of access: 11.07.2021.

[16] www.visitwroclaw.eu/zwiedzanie-wroclawia-w-wakacje-przy-pomocy-aplikacji-na-smartfon. Date of access: 11.07.2021.

The official websites of cities and their profiles in social media or travel mobile applications, apart from being informative, have many features of advertising messages. They can take a variety of forms, and usually a catchy slogan is its essential element. The most popular promotional slogan, "Wroclaw — the meeting place," refers to the words of John Paul II, who in 1997 called the capital of Lower Silesia "a city of meetings — a city that unites," reminding everyone that different cultures intertwine here.[17] The slogan "Wroclaw — a city of meetings" suggests that this place is conducive to building interpersonal bonds. The graphic form of the promotional logo, developed in many language variants, was standardized (Figure 9).[18]

Figure 9. Logo "Wroclaw — the meeting place" in Polish and English language versions

Source: *Księga identyfikacji wizualnej*, Urząd Miejski Wrocławia, www.bip.um.wroc.pl. Date of access: 11.07.2021.

The Malaga slogan, which is an integral part of the city's logo, is the aforementioned "Ciudad Genial." Recently, the slogan "Malaga — the city of museums" has been used for promotional purposes, the main task of which is to emphasize the rich cultural offer of the place. The typeface used in the city's logo is based on a graphic depicting the six most symbolic museums: the characteristic colorful edifice of the Pompidou Center, the Malaga Museum, the Center for Contemporary Art, the Picasso Museum, the building that houses the collection of the Museum of Russian Art and the Automobile and Fashion Museum (Figure 10).[19] Below the slogan there is an inscription: "where art lives" (*donde habita el arte*). The colored graphics are only available in the Spanish version and may be less readable if foreigners come into contact with them.

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[17] Wrocław w perspektywie 2020 plus, p. 17; The Pope's words were adopted as the city's mission, which was partially modified only in the newest strategy of Wrocław; www.wroclaw.pl/strategia2030. Date of access: 11.07.2021.

[18] Księga identyfikacji wizualnej, Urząd Miejski Wrocławia, www.bip.um.wroc.pl. Date of access: 11.07.2021.

[19] www.malagaturismo.eu. Date of access: 11.07.2021.

Figure 10. Graphics "Malaga — the city of museums"

Source: www.twitter.com/turismodemalaga. Date of access: 11.07.2021.

Based on the analysis of the content of the book guides, one can see how the slogans and thus the entire branding process of Malaga have evolved over time (Barrera Fernández and Meethan, 2014, 220–221). At the beginning of the twentieth century, great importance was attached to religious buildings, and the book guides also mention sanitary conditions. Later, the focus was on aspects such as the favorable climate, the possibility of swimming in the sea and the multitude of monuments. In the last decades of the last century, more attention was paid to the gastronomy of Malaga and the sports activities one can try there.

As part of public relations, communications for the media[20] are regularly published on the official websites of Wroclaw and Malaga in a special tab. *Publicity*, however, plays a more significant role in relation to the tourist segment. For Wroclaw, the opportunity to gain greater international recognition was the title of the European Capital of Culture 2016, the organization of the World Non-Olympic Sports Games in the summer of 2017 and the first distinction in the Best European Destination 2018 competition. Reaching a bit further in the past, the European Football Championship (UEFA Euro 2012) co-organized by Poland, during which matches were also played in the capital of Lower Silesia, also turned out to be of importance. In the case of Malaga, one should mention one of the most famous cultural events in Spain, which is the Malaga Film Festival (Festival de Málaga), with over twenty years of tradition. This event is widely commented on

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[20] www.wroclaw.pl/komunikaty-dla-mediow. Date of access: 11.07.2021; www.malaga.eu/el--ayuntamiento/notas-de-prensa. Date of access: 11.07.2021.

in the press every year.[21] Malaga is also famous for its annual August break (Feria de Málaga), which is a city festival lasting several days, organized on a grand scale and attracting crowds of tourists each year from Spain and from other parts of the world.[22]

Both Wroclaw and Malaga have decided to introduce a special card, thanks to which tourists can take advantage of various price offers. Cards can be purchased at tourist information points or via the mobile application.[23] Wroclaw Tourist Card holders can count on promotions in selected restaurants and hotels, bargain prices of admission tickets to tourist attractions, discounts on transport services (e.g. cheaper taxi or discounts on car rental). In addition to similar benefits, the Málaga Pass also provides access to tourist attractions without the need to wait in line. In Wroclaw, one can choose from a 48- or 72-hour card; in the case of Malaga, in addition to those listed, it is possible to buy a one-day or weekly package. As part of the Málaga Pass, each of the four options is assigned a list of attractions, to which you have free access after purchasing the card. However, these packages are rigidly defined; only using all the points guarantees savings at the level of 33%. The formula of the Wroclaw card is more flexible when it comes to the selection of attractions that a tourist wants to see; within the limit of points, it is possible to visit any chosen place without paying extra for admission. The Wroclaw Tourist Card provides two price options: reduced and normal. There is even a separate website for Malaga at www.malagapass.com, where one can find detailed information about the card. The weakness are the regulations, available only in Spanish, which may discourage some foreign tourists from taking advantage of the offer. The website itself, however, has several language versions, which is convenient for foreigners visiting the city. There is no mention of the Málaga Pass in the "Applications" tab of the Malaga travel website, although it is listed elsewhere on the website.

5. Conclusions

There is no doubt that creating the image of cities is an exceptionally current research problem, and various solutions for shaping their visual image and the way of communicating with the environment are the basis to achieve a competitive advantage. The perception of places is influenced by many different factors; therefore this issue should be treated as a whole. The authorities of the city of Wroclaw and Malaga seem to notice this complexity and shape the face of their towns and

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[21] www.festivaldemalaga.com. Date of access: 11.07.2021.

[22] www.feria.malaga.eu. Date of access: 11.07.2021.

[23] www.visitwroclaw.eu/wroclaw-tourist-card. Date of access: 11.07.2021; www.malagapass.com. Date of access: 11.07.2021. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic the tourist cards in Wroclaw are currently not available until further notice.

the system of communicating with stakeholders, among whom tourists play an important role, in a controlled manner. Both cities have developed a uniform system of visual identification and communication, in which an increasingly important role is played by activities aimed at tourists based on mobile applications that enable independent sightseeing and facilitate movement in the city space, as well as giving an opportunity to take advantage of attractive price promotions in public transport, gastronomic premises and when visiting tourist attractions. Both Wroclaw and Malaga also strive to gain international publicity by organizing or participating in supra-regional events. Both cities are also aware of the ongoing changes in the preferences of travelers and are trying to fit into the new, more and more common tourism model on the basis of 3E (entertainment, excitement, education).

Each city builds its image on the basis of a certain set of attributes it has, but even seemingly different cities, such as Wroclaw and Malaga undertake similar activities, although based on slightly different distinguishing features. This type of comparison can be used as an inspiration for better planning of image strategies and introducing improvements, for instance in the field of websites, presentations in social networks or the use of the aforementioned mobile applications as a communication channel.

The similarity of image strategies is probably influenced by globalization processes. Therefore, far-reaching similarities can be noticed even in the case of distant centers coming from significantly different cultural circles. However, apart from the similarities, the differences should also be emphasized. Some of them result from different sets of advantages that make a given place attractive. The greatest advantage of Malaga seems to be the climatic conditions and natural values, and in the case of Wroclaw, a specific dynamics of the place, manifested by a multitude of events, as well as the dynamic development of the city as a significant academic and business center. Transport messages are related to the advantages of cities. While the slogan "city of meetings" fits in with the character of a place hosting numerous events, the legitimacy of calling Malaga a "city of museums" is questionable, due to the prior preference for the natural values of this place.

Currently, in territorial marketing, the development of interactive activities, both conducted in the virtual world and in urban space, is of decisive importance. Therefore, more and more new tools are used to create an attractive image of the city in the eyes of target groups, i.e. residents, investors and tourists. They can become a link for the local community and an opportunity to influence the personality of the city.

The case study method applied made it possible to collect and critically analyze a lot of information and may constitute a starting point for further quantitative research. The information and analyses contained in this paper and the results of quantitative research may become the basis for modification and, consequently, improvement of the image creation processes of both cities in terms of town design and town communications.

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