

# PRACE NAUKOWE

Uniwersytetu Ekonomicznego we Wrocławiu

# RESEARCH PAPERS

of Wrocław University of Economics

Nr 334

## Local and Regional Economy in Theory and Practice

edited by  
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Publishing House of Wrocław University of Economics  
Wrocław 2014

Copy-editing: Elżbieta and Tim Macauley

Layout: Barbara Łopusiewicz

Proof-reading: Barbara Cibis

Typesetting: Adam Dębski

Cover design: Beata Dębska

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Wrocław 2014

**ISSN 1899-3192**

**ISBN 978-83-7695-496-7**

The original version: printed

Printing: EXPOL, P. Rybiński, J. Dąbek, sp.j.  
ul. Brzeska 4, 87-800 Włocławek

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## IS THERE A CREATIVE CITY IN POLAND? DEFINING AND MEASURING THE CONCEPT IN POLAND

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**Summary:** The paper concentrates on the idea of a creative city and its implementation in Poland. In the research, the question was asked of whether a creative city exists in Poland, and as an answer recommendations are given as far as urban creativity in Poland is concerned. The main hypothesis verified in the paper states that Polish cities generally fulfill the requirements for being called 'creative' when it comes to a quantitative objective. However, they may lack the mechanisms and soft factors to fully exploit this potential. The cities chosen for this analysis are those whose promotional communication includes elements of creativity as major assets attracting inhabitants and investors. The conclusions from the presented analysis will allow for the identification of creative elements in urban development in Poland.

**Keywords:** creative city; indices of urban creativity; strategies of urban development.

DOI: 10.15611/pn.2014.334.23

### 1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to present the idea of a creative city, as well as to observe and analyze it in a Polish economic and social context. The motivation for this research comes from the fact that despite the lack of a comprehensive and coherent definition of a creative city, well-embedded in theory and academic discussion, many cities including Polish ones, use this notion in their promotion. Therefore, the research presented in this paper was conducted as an attempt to define creative cities, present their basic characteristics and on these grounds, compare the chosen Polish cities with the elaborated context. The cities chosen for this analysis are those whose promotional communication includes elements of creativity as major assets attracting inhabitants and investors. In a few of the analyzed cases (Wrocław, Lublin), the development strategy based on creativity is the aftermath of the cities' participation in the bid for the title of Cultural Capital of Europe in 2016. In other cases, like Łódź, grounding the competitive strategy of the city in creativity, is a choice made in order to best use development resources. The conclusions from the presented analysis will allow for the identification of creative elements in urban development in Poland, as well as answer the question of whether there is a creative city in Poland.

The presented analysis will verify the main hypothesis that cities in Poland fulfill the requirements for being called 'creative' when it comes to a quantitative objective. However, they may lack the mechanisms and soft factors to fully use this potential. Furthermore, the author will attempt to research both sides of the market for creativity, supply and demand, in the creative city context, trying to verify the statement that cities choose their strategic development path of a creative city with little regard to the demand for urban products and services.

## 2. What is a creative city?

As stated above, there is no coherent and established definition of a creative city. Most of the situations when the notion is used describe elements or requirements that should be fulfilled in order to call a city creative. Such an approach is more appropriate from the market point of view and easy to implement. However it does not explain the rationale behind such a development strategy, nor does it present the determinants of creativity and the complex mechanisms behind the idea.

The first, and probably the most comprehensive attempt so far to define the concept of a creative city, is attributed to Ch. Landry and Ch. Biancini, further developed by Landry himself in his works. He describes such a city in the following way:

“Great places embody seven elements. They are places of anchorage, they feel like home, there is with a sense of stability, tradition and distinctiveness. They are places of possibility, ‘can do’, stimulation and buzz. They are places of communication and networking, where it is easy connect, interact and move around, the outside world is accessible, and you feel you are part of a bigger, extensive web. They are places to self-improve, learn and reflect. They are places of inspiration. Culture is alive and, finally, a great city is well put together through design”. And also [Landry 2000, p. 3]: “Successful cities seem to have some things in common – visionary individuals, creative organisations and a political culture sharing clarity of purpose. They seemed to follow a determined, not a deterministic path”.

Therefore Landry also gives a definition in a rather descriptive way, by referring to concepts of culture, attitudes and mindset. Further, a creative city is defined as one where imagination is observed in all spheres of public and private activity and creativity is enhanced by the urban environment. It seems as if Landry also described the concept by means of enlisting the necessary elements, including both hard infrastructure and attitudes, which gives great room for interpretation and vast possibilities for use by city policy-makers.

It seems that in case of a creative city, just like in the case of R. Florida's creative class constituting a city's asset, soft resources are crucial. Mindset, attitudes, approaches and life-style create the necessary conditions in both theories (Landry's and Florida's), yet measuring them introduces an obstacle for other researchers. Both theories are implemented on a set of case-study cities, where quantitative values



for chosen indicators are available and comparative study possible. The following research is an attempt of measuring creativity in Polish cities which claim to build their competitiveness based on this asset. The chosen indices reflect data availability but also give an idea of what notions are being measured by Polish ‘creative cities’.

### **3. How to measure urban creativity?**

Landy’s methodology includes following groups of factors as those determining urban creativity:

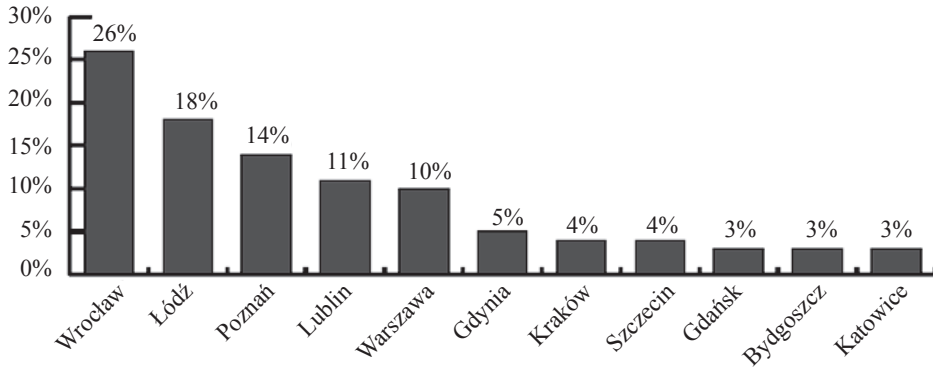
- Political and public framework
- Distinctiveness, diversity, vitality and expression
- Openness, trust, accessibility and participation
- Entrepreneurship, exploration and innovation
- Strategic leadership, agility and vision
- Talent development and the learning landscape
- Communication, connectivity and networking
- The place and place-marketing
- ‘Liveability’ and well-being
- Professionalism and effectiveness

Most of the above stated factors are of a qualitative character, and executing a comparative study based on them may meet obstacles. However there are some determinants that can be quantified by interested cities like openness measured with some of Florida’s Tolerance measures (like the share of immigrants, the Gay Index and measures of level of segregation between ethnic groups), connectivity with the existence and density of means of transport, or learning landscape with the number of research and development institutions and the number of tertiary education graduates. However, an important determinant in this theory is also created by the interconnection between single factors and synergies obtain by these cross-overs. This aspect of the creative cities theory poses an opportunity for Polish cities as they may fall short of other European, American or Asian metropolises in simple quantitative comparison, yet the mechanism created by policy-makers might serve as the spark for creativity. This hypothesis will be verified throughout this paper.

For the purposes of this paper, a quantitative analysis based on data for creative industries is implemented.

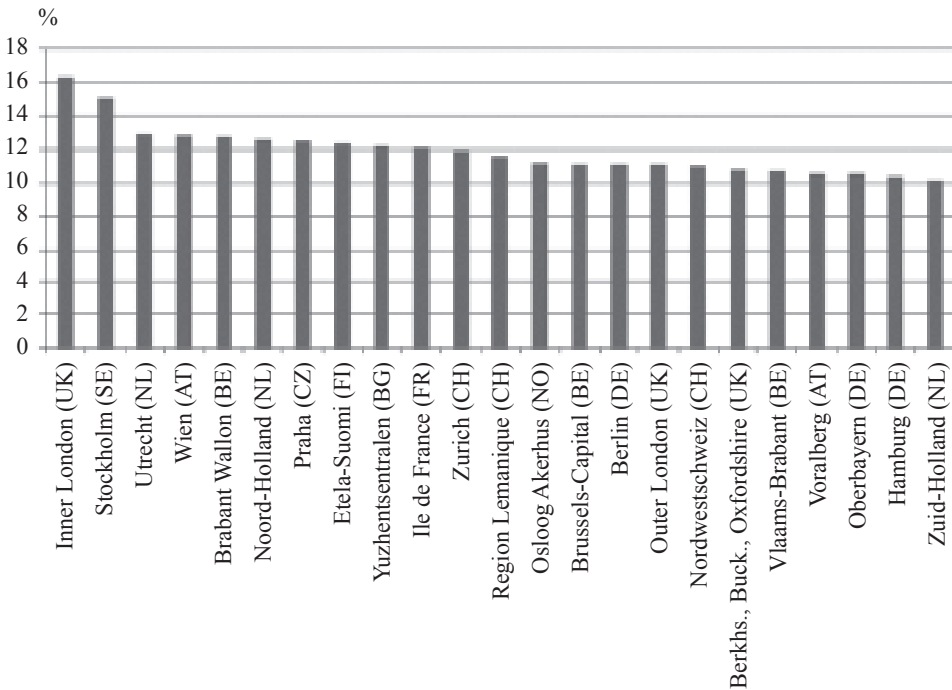
### **4. Are Polish cities creative?**

In order to verify the main hypothesis of the paper as well as the additional theses, case-studies were chosen. Three cities – Lublin, Łódź and Wrocław – were chosen, as all three of them emphasize creativity in their promotion and development strategies. Lublin is now a “city of inspiration”, Łódź is “creative city”, whereas Wrocław promotes itself by being chosen as the 2016 European Capital of Culture. The choice



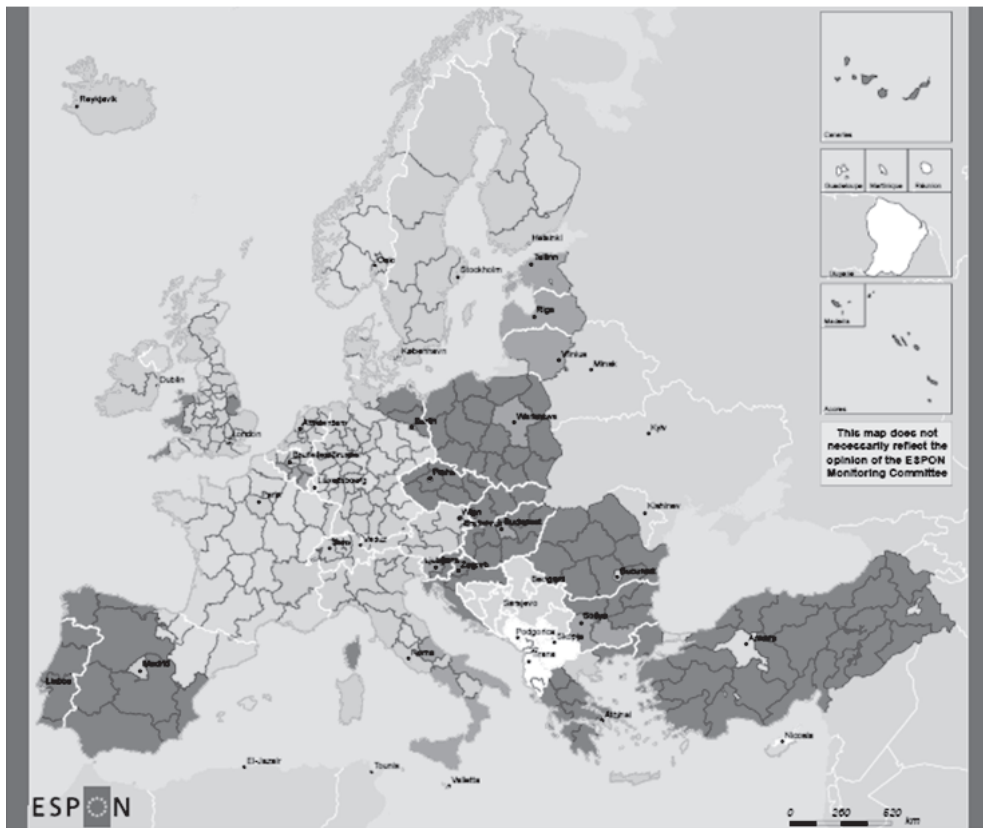
**Figure 1.** What is the most creative city in Poland?

Source: „Kreatywne miasta”, Brief for Poland, [http://www.creativeclass.com/rfcgdb/articles/Brief\\_116\\_B4P.pdf](http://www.creativeclass.com/rfcgdb/articles/Brief_116_B4P.pdf).



**Figure 2.** Creative workforce in European cities

Source: *Territorial Dynamics in Europe. The Creative Workforce*, Territorial Observation No. 5, ESPON, November 2011, p. 12.



Typology



- 0 = NUTS2 region with no significant co-deviation of creative workforce and GDP per capita from distributions' means
- 1 = NUTS2 region with high creative workforce, high GDP per capita
- 2 = NUTS2 region with low creative workforce, high GDP per capita
- 3 = NUTS2 region with low creative workforce, low GDP per capita
- 4 = NUTS2 region with high creative workforce, low GDP

□ NO DATA

Figure 3. GDP and creative capital of European regions (NUTS 2)

Source: as Figure 2, p. 7

of case studies is also based on the fact that two of them were bidding for the European Capital of Culture in 2016 which Wrocław won. Therefore it might be assumed that their creative capital is well developed and analyzed. Łódź, on the other hand, has just started its branding campaign with creative elements being at its core.

The choice of case-study cities can be also justified by the survey of “Brief”, a public relations journal. Figure 1 presents the responses to the question of what city is the most creative in Poland.

One serious bias that the above cited survey presents is that it assumes the fact that a creative city in Poland exists, and that all of them have some degree of creative capital. Therefore the survey must be analyzed carefully, taking into account this bias. Still, it presents the point of view of the respondents engaged in creative employment to whom the journal is addressed.

On the other hand, in the ESPON analysis of the creative capital of European cities, presented in Figure 2, Polish cities are not included. The authors calculated and compared the creative workforce in Europe and the research proves Polish cities are not the most common location for creative activity.

Polish regions are categorized in a further ESPON study as those with low GDP and low creative capital (Figure 3). Since increasing the level of overall country’s economic wealth, especially as opposed to other EU Member States, may not be within an imaginable perspective, Polish cities still might work towards closing the gap in creative capital and moving to category 4 of the study, i.e. regions with low GDP and a high creative workforce.

In the context of the above figures and the overall bad results of Polish cities and regions in the sphere of creativity, the data presented in the further part of the paper might be counterintuitive. Table 1 presents the rather good results of the analyzed Polish cities when compared to other European cities – even those associated with creative brands (Amsterdam, Barcelona and Copenhagen).

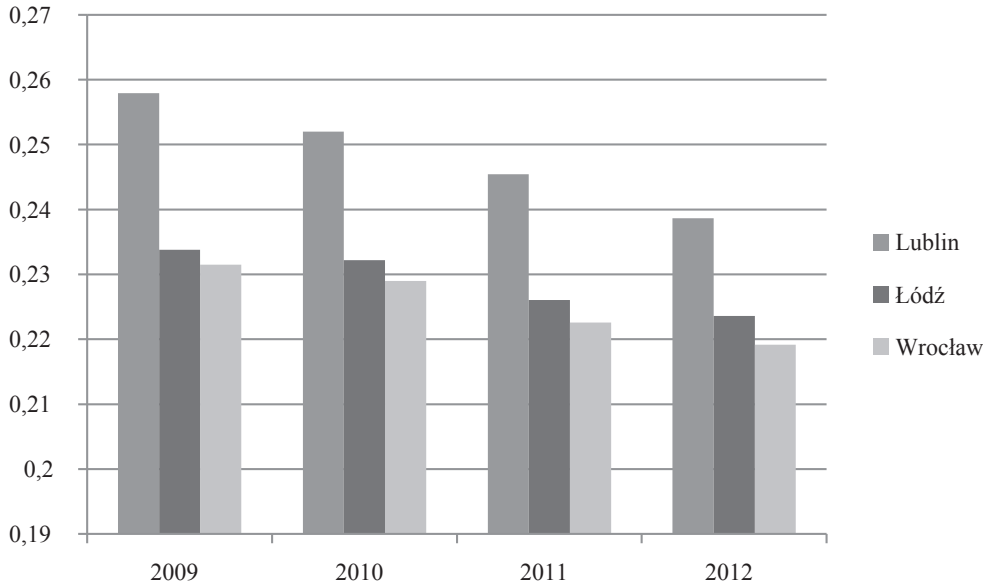
**Table 1.** Creative potential of chosen Polish and other European cities

	% of those employed in manufacturing of ICT products	Proportion of local companies that produce ICT products	Students in higher education (ISCED 5-6)/100 residents population
Lublin	0,22	0,17	1000,2
Łódź	1,05	0,37	655,76
Wrocław	0,57	0,39	905,88
Amsterdam	0,05	0,07	206,26
Barcelona	2,03	0,34	550,08
Copenhagen	0,25	0,94	334,77

Source: Urban Audit, 2004 survey, <http://www.urbanaudit.org/DataAccessed.aspx>.

The most vital advantage that Polish cities have above other European cities is the number of tertiary education students. In particular Lublin and Wrocław rank as excellent in this respect, but in all three cases access to a well-educated workforce is a strong competitive advantage. Data for other creative assets are also comparable in the European urban environment. Both ICT production and employment in ICT manufacturing is at average European level in Polish cities. Therefore it seems there

is no development gap between Polish and other European cities when it comes to creative potential.



**Figure 4.** Number of creative industries enterprises as a percentage of all enterprises registered

Source: own calculation based on GUS data, Bank Danych Lokalnych [http://www.stat.gov.pl/bdl/app/strona.html?p\\_name=indeks](http://www.stat.gov.pl/bdl/app/strona.html?p_name=indeks).

Data for the number of enterprises in creative sectors (Figure 4) prove that good proportion, 20 to 25 per cent, of all Polish enterprises are active in industries assumed to be building creative capital<sup>1</sup>. The proportion of entities in the creative sector is the highest in Lublin and slightly lower in Łódź and Wrocław. The declining trend is the most concerning issue in this analysis. It might be attributed partly to the economic crisis and the vulnerability of the companies from the creative sectors to market fluctuations.

Another important conclusion from the presented data is related to the good position of Łódź in this ranking. Łódź is mostly associated with its manufacturing industry, and lately also with business support centers. The fact that the creative sector is active in Łódź proves that the strategy of creative development was well chosen, however the falling number of enterprises should be alarming to those introducing the “Kreatywna Łódź” brand. While analyzing Łódź’s strategy, it is significant that the branding campaign is based on the analysis of the sector and the city’s creative

<sup>1</sup> Creative industries, according to the Polish Ministry of Economy include the following sections of the PKD classification: Section G division 47, Section J divisions 58, 59, 60, Section M divisions 71, 73, 74, Section R divisions 90, 91.

potential<sup>2</sup>. In the report, not only the creative sector in the city is analyzed but also a comparative study with other major Polish cities is made. In this context, the strategy of Lublin<sup>3</sup> and the choice of the creative path of development is embedded only as an impression and seems to be a subjective will of the city's Council. The document contains no quantitative data of the creative sector, even though Figure 5 presents a rather optimistic picture of Lublin.

## 5. Conclusions

- The analyzed case-study cities (Lublin, Łódź and Wrocław) are all associated with creativity when it comes to public opinion. Surveys prove that they all rank well in creative class perception and are attractive for their creative atmosphere, good conditions for launching innovative products and services but also offer well-developed local communities.
- When compared in the European environment, Polish cities show a similar level of creative capital. They rank well when it comes to tertiary education participation and the number of creative industry enterprises. Unsatisfactory results are observed in research and development financing, which might be partially explained by the low level of overall economic development (as measured by GDP) but might also be a result of long-term neglect in this sphere of the economy.
- Taking into account the fact that the analyzed Polish cities show good values of indices related to creativity, yet on the other hand, their creative capital and creative class is not immediately associated with their development strategy, it seems as though there is no necessary mechanism in place which might increase the impact of the assets they possess. Polish cities require support in this respect in order to fully use the potential of their creative assets, as well as create and maintain their metropolitan character.

## 6. Recommendations

- It is essential that the local level (both government and community) is engaged in the creation of urban policy and the branding campaign. An important factor in the choice of the development or branding strategy based on creativity is the existence of some capital or elements able to create assets in this respect. As stated in Pratt's article [Pratt 2008, p. 35]: "A creative city cannot be founded like a cathedral in the desert: it needs to be linked to and be part of an existing cultural environment. We need to appreciate complex interdependencies, and not simply use one to exploit the other." Therefore, especially when creativity is concerned, the local level is the essential agent of change and legitimization gi-

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<sup>2</sup> [Pożycka].

<sup>3</sup> „Strategia Rozwoju Lublin 2020”, <http://um.lublin.eu/um/index.php?t=200&id=168953>

ven by this group and may stand as a prerequisite of a successful policy. It is also important to remember that even in top-down programs, local agents play that essential role.

- Policies for creative cities should be prepared with a long-time perspective. They include a substantial number of ‘soft’ elements, like atmosphere, attitude etc., therefore time must be considered as one of the factors in achieving the synergy effects and the introduction of all the necessary mechanisms.
- When a development strategy is undertaken with a goal of establishing and maintaining a creative city, it is important to include both sides of the market. Both the supply of the creative products and services should be put in place, as well as the demand for it be secured. Therefore such a strategy should be chosen with regard to the urban setting, including the characteristics of the inhabitants (education, life-style) and enterprises (sectors, size). While concentrating on attracting the ‘creative class’ seems like the most obvious and popular action in implementing a creative city strategy, it seems just as important to make sure their production will meet demand.
- The previous recommendation might be easier fulfilled when the competitive advantages of a city are taken into consideration. A thorough analysis of the city’s resources and assets is necessary to assess its competitive position and building on that base, a strategy of a creative development path might be undertaken. In other words, the city’s specific characteristics should be the basis for a competitive strategy, especially one involving aspects of creativity, as it relies mostly on soft factors.
- The fact that Polish cities are not associated with creativity despite the assets they possess might be explained by the importance of the perception in succeeding with such a development strategy<sup>4</sup>. The image of a city is extremely important when choosing location for running a business, living or visiting is in question. Hence, even with all the ingredients for creativity in place, if a city is perceived as traditional, it may not be able to attract representatives of a creative class. Therefore, in order to communicate their assets and attractiveness, cities need a branding campaign.

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<sup>4</sup> For a more thorough analysis of the importance of perception for creative cities, including case studies, go to: [Hospers 2003, pp. 260-269].

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## **CZY W POLSCE ISTNIEJE MIASTO KREATYWNE? PRÓBA DEFINICJI I POMIARU ZJAWISKA W POLSCE**

**Streszczenie:** Celem badania prezentowanego w artykule jest zbadanie sposobu wdrożenia idei miasta kreatywnego w polskich miastach. Autor stawia zatem pytanie, czy miasto kreatywne w ogóle istnieje w Polsce, a na podstawie przeprowadzonej następnie analizy – wskazuje na rekomendacje dla implementacji idei kreatywności w rozwoju miejskim w Polsce. Główna hipoteza stawiana w badaniu zakłada, że miasta w Polsce spełniają wymogi miasta kreatywnego, jeśli chodzi o wartości ilościowe. Niemniej jednak, brak jest wypracowanych mechanizmów i czynników miękkich, które umożliwiłyby pełne skorzystanie z tego potencjału. Miasta poddane analizie w badaniu wybrane zostały ze względu na obecność w ich przekazach promocyjnych elementów związanych z kreatywnością bądź nawet na silne związanie strategii rozwoju miasta z sektorem kreatywnym. Wnioski z badania pozwoliły na wskazanie na elementy kreatywności w polskich miastach.

**Słowa kluczowe:** miasta kreatywne, wskaźniki kreatywności miejskiej, strategie rozwoju miejskiego.