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# WROCLAW IN COMPARISON WITH OTHER EUROPEAN CREATIVE CITIES

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# WROCLAW W PORÓWNANIU Z INNYMI EUROPEJSKIMI MIASTAMI KREATYWNYMI

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DOI: 10.15611/pn.2017.473.12

JEL Classification: R

**Summary:** Cities and metropolises are progressively adopting the concept of the ‘creative city’, in an attempt to differentiate themselves from other cities, and as a remedy for problems of urban development in the postindustrial economy. The creative city combines traditional cultural products, cultural services and heritage with the emerging creative industries such as media, entertainment or architecture. This paper examines how the creative city concept is being developed in Central Europe, analysing Wrocław as an example of the Polish creative city, compared with Budapest, as a Creative City of Design and Prague, as a Creative City of Literature.

**Keywords:** creative cities, economic growth, Wrocław, Budapest, Prague.

**Streszczenie:** Miasta i metropolie stopniowo przyjmują koncepcję „miasta kreatywnego”, próbując odróżnić się od innych miast oraz jako remedium na problemy rozwoju miast w gospodarce poprzemysłowej. Miasto kreatywne łączy tradycyjne produkty kulturalne, usługi kulturalne oraz dziedzictwo z pojawiającymi się branżami kreatywnymi, takimi jak media, rozrywka czy architektura. Niniejszy artykuł przedstawia rozwój koncepcji miasta kreatywnego w Europie Środkowej, poprzez analizę Wrocławia, jako przykładowego polskiego miasta kreatywnego, w porównaniu z Budapesztem – Kreatywnym Miastem Designu i Praga – Kreatywnym Miastem Literatury.

**Słowa kluczowe:** miasta kreatywne, wzrost gospodarczy, Wrocław, Budapeszt, Praga.

## 1. Introduction

Cities are the engines of development. They have always been the main centers of human activity and progress. They provide opportunities for individuals (employment, education, housing, and transport) and for business (low investment costs, secure financial services, educated workforce, proximity to sales market and suppliers) which are supported by the process of urbanization. However today, the global struggle of cities for the attention of mobile groups, such as knowledge workers, investors and tourists, means that they have to compete with each other in the field of creative development.

Nowadays, cities have become not only one of the major players in the global economy, but they also increasingly cooperate and compete at the same time in different areas – not only locally and regionally, but also globally. Accordingly, the rise of the urban travel in Europe increases the importance of tourism as a key factor for the integral development of cities [UNWTO 2012].

Cities and metropolises are progressively adopting the concept of the “creative city”, in an attempt to differentiate themselves from other cities, and as a remedy for problems of urban development in the postindustrial economy. The creative city combines traditional cultural products, cultural services and heritage with the emerging creative industries such as media, entertainment or architecture.

The main aim of this article is to review the ways in which the creative cities concept is developing in Central Europe, based on a broad literature review. The paper analyses the main characteristics of the selected creative cities in Europe. Wrocław is an example of the Polish creative city examined in this study, according to its creative city strategy, in comparison with Budapest, as a Creative City of Design and Prague as a Creative City of Literature.

## 2. Literature review

There are many studies regarding the concept of the “creative city” [Landry 2000]. Nowadays, terms like the “creative class” [Florida 2002] and the “creative industries” [Smith 1998] are increasingly used in relation to the key elements of urban development [Richards, Palmer 2010]. The major reason for this is the appearance of Richard Florida’s 2002 book “The Rise of the Creative Class”. In this book, Florida stated that, there are three forces acting positively on the city: technology, talent and tolerance. Florida argues that places that are tolerant, open, with varied of demographic structures and that are friendly to all groups of people attract creative individuals, and thereby stimulate the growth of the creative industries and the wider economy. In turn, the “creative class” including scientists, artists, engineers, musicians, writers or entrepreneurs is looking for communities with “high-quality amenities and experiences” in order “to validate their identities as creative people”

[Florida 2002, p. 218]. It is on such assumptions that many “creative city” policies have been developed.

Furthermore, Florida stresses the importance of “the unique set of characteristics that defines a place and makes it attractive” [2002, p. 280], called the “quality of place” – which combines people’s diversity and a broad choice of accessible activities. However, “a good quality of life does help cities to attract talent and grow economically, but on its own, it is unlikely to be the engine that turns a struggling community into an innovation cluster” [Moretti 2012, p. 193]. Similarly Turok points out that Florida’s “emphasis on knowledge workers choosing to live and work where the quality of life is high, and on successful businesses following their residential preferences, contradicts the overwhelming evidence that employment is the main determinant of migration patterns” [Turok 2004, p. 9].

It is argued that ideas included in Florida’s book can hardly be considered new, as according to Edward Glaeser, precursors of the knowledge-creation, idea generation in urban economies and creativity are Adam Smith, Alfred Marshall and Jane Jacobs. Jacobs also indicates that cities themselves cannot survive without a viable economic base [1984, p. 257].

Florida’s creativity-based attraction model emphasizes the new concept of quality of place in three aspects: “built environment and natural environment”, “the diverse kind of people”, and “the vibrancy of street life” [Florida 2002, p. 232]. In turn, Michael Porter [1989], offers a competitiveness-based urban renovation model focusing on an innovation based economy. Both creativity and innovation play an important role in building the image of the city and influence its further development. Scott [2000] also points out that the creative industries contribute to cities economic success. Furthermore, as Landry and Bianchini indicate “the industries of the twenty-first century will depend increasingly on the generation of knowledge through creativity and innovation” [Landry, Bianchini 1995, p. 12]. Similarly the knowledge-based economy is connected with creativity and innovation through knowledge-intensive activities. In the knowledge-based economy, the creative potential of the city is seen as the basis of its future development. As Atkinson and Easthope indicate “the idea of an economy based fundamentally on skills and services containing creativity has become a popular discourse that has deeply affected the ground rules for generating economic development” [2009, p. 1]. The role of creativity has been recognized in several fields like urban planning [Landry, 2000], cultural clusters [Mommaas, 2004], and creative tourism [Richards, Raymond, 2000].

The European Commission also widely promotes creativity through the implementation of the Creative Europe programme, which aims to boost the cultural and creative sectors across Europe. Launched in 2014, it supports artists, cinemas, films, and initiatives such as the European Capitals of Culture or the European Heritage Days [EC, 2014]. The Commission also identifies industries which will become more important in the future, including for example occupations related

to the Internet, information technology, transport, entertainment and recreation, education and tourism.

Globalization is also seen as a key driver of urban development and determinant of change [Brinkley 2006]. Kenworthy indicates that globalization has strengthened the role of cities in driving the global economy [Kenworthy 2006, p. 80]. Due to globalization “cities more than ever before are becoming increasingly dependent upon other cities and regions” [Egger 2003, p. 1]. Taylor [2002] stresses that in the past the emerging concept of “world city” involved only a few cities, but it has changed in the last two decades. Today, a world city network contains many cities located in various parts of the globe. In turn, “the world city network has heightened the competition between urban regions for global capital and jobs” [Kenworthy 2006, p. 80]. “The rapid advance of globalization means that every country, every city and every region must compete with every other for its share of the world’s consumers, tourists, investors [...], and for the attention and respect of the international media, of other governments, and for people of other countries” [Anholt 2007, p. 1]. Competing for attention on the global stage also requires a great deal of creativity from cities.

### 3. The creative potential of Polish cities

Urban areas are today’s principal breeding grounds for the development of new strategies, policies and initiatives aimed at making culture and creativity a driving force for sustainable development and urban regeneration. Culture and creativity can stimulate growth and innovation and the promotion of social cohesion, citizen well-being and inter-cultural dialogue. In this way cities respond to the major challenges with which they are confronted, such as the economic crisis, environmental impacts, demographic growth and social tensions [UNESCO – Creative...].

Poland has great potential for the development of creative industries. The main strengths of Polish regions, in regards to cultural and creative potential, include the following:

- rich cultural heritage resources and increasing cultural offer,
- high level of individual creativity and entrepreneurship,
- the existing network of cultural institutions and the emergence of new cultural spaces,
- important meaning and high quality offer of cultural organization created by the non-government organizations,
- an extensive network of art schools,
- strong presence of Polish culture on international board and cultural exchange with foreign countries,
- a strong Polish film industry.

The long-term perspective of the development of Poland called *Poland 2030* prepared by The Ministry of Administration and Digitization also includes creativity as a factor of competitive advantages. According to this document, the development

of basic urban infrastructure is important (transport, sewerage, lighting, cultural services – libraries and community centers, etc.), but also new-relational spaces that promote active public life, allowing interaction, releasing creativity that improves quality of life.

The creative sector in selected Polish cities represents an opportunity for the rapid development of their main assets. It is therefore important for both government and non-government organizations to work together to achieve their development goals.

### 3.1. The creative city of Wrocław

The Polish city examined in the article is Wrocław. It has adopted a creative city strategy. Wrocław's greatest wealth is the coexistence of different cultures and religions. It aims to build a new image of the city as the creative business center in Central Europe, and cooperation among universities in this area will help to increase the number of university graduates in the creative field.

In the city strategy, "Wrocław in perspective 2020 plus", Wrocław is described as a friendly city, open to each other and to newcomers, a city with a feeling of energy where people can pursue their dreams. The main strengths of the city include: vibrant and original artistic environment, regular events of national and international importance, considerable potential for recreation within the city, significant and varied cultural opportunities, a high level of entrepreneurship and emerging clusters of competence.

It should be noted that according to the Mercer Survey on Quality of Living worldwide city rankings, in 2013 Wrocław was ranked 107 – as "an emerging European city". It is indicated that "since Poland's accession to the European Union, Wrocław has witnessed tangible economic growth, partly due to its talent pool, improved infrastructure, and foreign and internal direct investments" [www.mercer.com].

The city of "Wrocław has identified creativity and culture as central elements of its social and economic development strategy" [OECD 2013, p. 25]. In recent years, the city of Wrocław has invested EUR 2.5 billion in infrastructure, mobility and cultural, business and sport venues that have transformed Wrocław into a city with a strong sense of history and place, and a dynamic view of its future. [OECD 2013, p. 2].

The most popular tourist attraction in the city is the Panorama of the Battle of Raławice, which is visited by 300,000 visitors each year. Another very popular attraction is the Wrocław Zoo with its excellent *africarium*, which was opened in autumn 2014, and which is the most visited attraction in the country (over 1.8 million visitors in 2015).

Research from 2016 shows that Wrocław was visited by 5 million tourists, including 1.4 million from abroad. 95% of tourists were satisfied with their visit, 82% of tourists consider to visit Wrocław again, and 78% will recommend the city to

friends. As much as 88% of guests found the residents of Wrocław to be hospitable. Most foreign tourists visiting Wrocław came from Germany, Great Britain and Ukraine, followed by Italy, the USA and Spain. They chose Wrocław as a place to visit and rest.

In 2016 Wrocław received many prestigious awards and was the only Polish city recommended to visit by the portal TripAdvisor. Its success was certainly connected with a rich program of the European Capital of Culture Wrocław 2016. The opening weekend of this program called “Awakening” was attended by more than 100,000 people. Among the other events a remarkable impression was raised by the following shows: the inaugural weekend of the UNESCO World Book Capital, the European Night of Literature with the participation of the biggest stars of Polish scenes, the World Day of Jazz, a guitarists Guinness World Record for the joint performance of a song Hey Joe by Jimi Hendrix at the Wrocław market square, an extraordinary concert by David Gilmour on Freedom Square, concert of the group Rammstein and opera multi spectacle Zarzuela on the Wrocław Stadium or European Film Awards with the participation of the biggest stars of the world cinema [<http://www.national-geographic.pl>].

According to the fDi report Polish Cities of the Future 2017/18, Wrocław has an active foreign investment policy and potential investors are fully informed of what is happening in the city. Wrocław Agglomeration Development Agency maintains a dedicated investment promotion website, offering an economic handbook with advice on doing business in the city, as well as publications for foreigners living there. Information is also published for high school students to encourage them to study and live in Wrocław, and another website offers information to tourists to attract them to visit the city, which could lead to more investment. Further supporting the city’s digital offering, a mobile app – Invest in Wrocław Region – helps investors with their site-selection decisions [<http://www.fdiintelligence.com>].

### **3.2. Budapest – the Creative City of Design**

Budapest is a metropolis and a dynamically growing creative industry and startup capital for the Central and Eastern European Region. It functions as a bridge between the neighboring regions and has a mediating role in the relationships of East and West, as well as North and South in the transfer and dissemination of culture, innovation, goods, capital, skilled labor and knowledge. As a European capital, Budapest is a valuable and key cultural, social and economic value and a regional hub. The city is home to many UNESCO world heritage sites. Budapest is the national center of knowledge, the primary Hungarian source of economic growth and innovation and has unique cultural and architectural characteristics and strong social integration force and appropriate potential for the economic development [<http://budapest.designterminal.hu>].

Budapest is a city of living history where the ingenuity of the latest generation of Hungarians is also evident. Ruin pubs are reinterpreting centuries-old café – culture, where young minds and ideas from every corner of the world meet. A new wave of inspired chefs is rejuvenating Hungarian cuisine garnering the highest praise from home and abroad. Elegant wine bars bring the best of Hungarian vineyards into the heart of the city [<http://culturalbudapest.gotohungary.com>]. In Budapest tourists can meet local entrepreneurs in their downtown workshops which are offering different textiles, clothes and accessories.

The municipality works in close collaboration with civil society to better foster a good quality of urban life. Among other multi-stakeholders initiatives, the “Your place, your success!” campaign, the “I’ll be right back” project and the Culburb project demonstrate the particular dynamism of the city in terms of reshaping neighborhoods and suburbs in difficulties to cultural facilities and creative industries [UNESCO Creative ...].

As a UNESCO Creative City of Design, Budapest envisages:

- implementing an incubation programme for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) in the field of design, open to creative entrepreneurs from Budapest and other Creative Cities of Design;
- fostering networking through the Made in the City initiative, aimed at establishing cross-cutting activities between creative fields covered by the network;
- involving other Creative Cities in Budapest’s major events, such as the Design Week Budapest, the Brain Bar Budapest and the Budapest 3D Printing Days, to share innovative ideas and experiences in connecting creativity, new technologies, and sustainable development; and
- increasing the quality of urban life through the Smart City Lab, serving as a platform between civil society and public institutions for the systematic improvement of municipal urban planning [UNESCO Creative ...].

The opinions of creative professionals and managers in Budapest show that in the course of their decision-making regarding their place of residence or business location selection, they tend to consider both hard and soft factors but, in general, the hard factors are more influential. The relevant strengths of the region included the job market and career opportunities, working conditions, the level of higher education and universities, the conditions of the residential environment and good public services. Weaknesses included environmental problems (e.g., pollution, noise, lack of cleanliness), the taxation system, social housing sector problems, lack of tolerance and social cohesion and the poor political culture [Edegy, Kovacs 2010, p. 137].

### **3.3. Prague – a UNESCO Creative City of Literature**

Prague is the capital and largest city of the Czech Republic, located in the western part of the country, by the Vltava River. The city is an administrative, industrial, commercial and service, academic, tourist and cultural center of international importance.

Prague is one of the most important cultural centers in Europe. In 2000, the city was one of nine European Capitals of Culture. The city has many thriving theaters, libraries and museums. Next to them are small, non-governmental organizations and artist cooperatives. Prague is also one of the largest centers of film production in Europe. The heritage of Prague is truly multicultural. Many famous writers are associated with the city, including Franz Kafka, Max Brod, Rainer Maria Rilke, and Jaroslav Hašek and Arnošt Lustig.

Prague has been awarded the prestigious UNESCO City of Literature title, which UNESCO grants to cities of the world for the special place literature occupies in their life. Only seven cities have become recipients of this designation since 2004. Entering Prague in the list of the cities holding this distinguished City of Literature title means admitting Prague into the elite group of the Cities of Literature in the world.

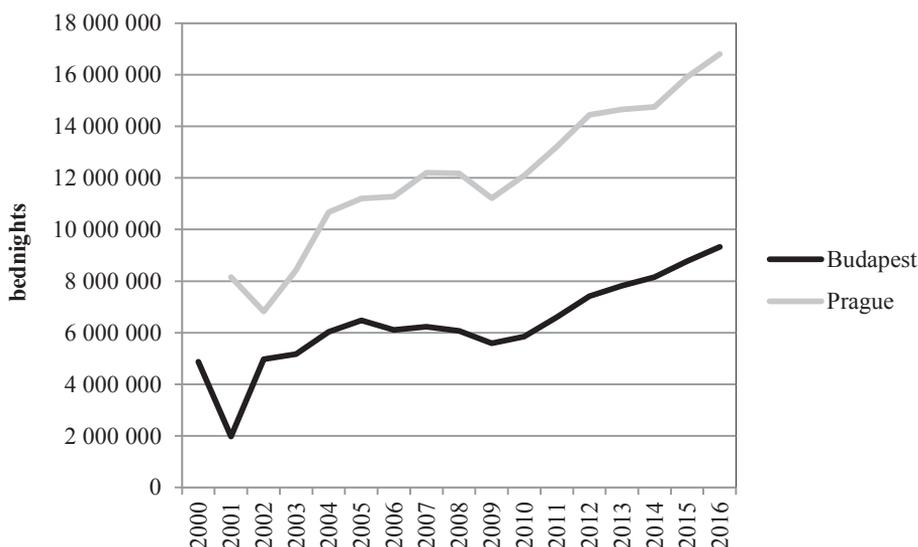
An architectural pearl celebrated for its renowned, well-preserved historical centre featuring a unique collection of buildings registered on the UNESCO World Heritage List (1992), Prague is also a city with great intellectual and creative resources. With its long and rich tradition of literature, Prague is home to an active and diverse contemporary literary scene. A multicultural book centre, Prague has one of the highest concentrations of bookshops in Europe and contains approximately 200 bookshops and 20 literary cafes. The city launched its first international poetry festival in 2004, becoming the Prague Microfestival in 2009. The Prague Writers' Festival celebrates the Czech Republic's writers and the International Literature and Theatre Festival, *Deti Ctete* (Children, do you read?) is one of Prague's most successful festivals [UNESCO, Creative ...].

According to Mercer 2017 Quality of Living survey, Prague (69<sup>th</sup> place) is the highest on the ranking city list in Central and Eastern Europe, followed by Budapest (78<sup>th</sup>). In the 2017 ranking Wrocław does not feature on the Mercer list.

In 2016, incoming tourism in Prague registered further significant growth. New records were set both in the number of guests staying in collective accommodation facilities, and the number of their overnights. Both values have been rising steadily since 2012, from which date the figures can be reasonably compared (fig. 1).

As in previous years, Prague was the most visited Czech region. Based on the data from the Czech Statistical Office (ČSÚ) Prague was visited by 7.07 million people, with 6.05 million of them being foreigners. The number of nights that visitors stayed also increased in comparison with 2015. The Czech Republic and Prague and were mostly visited by tourists coming from Germany, Slovakia, and Austria.

In comparison, Hungary's tourism industry had an exceptional 2016 year, with the increase of the international tourist arrivals from 14,316 in 2015, up to 15,256. According to the figures of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (KSH) the number of guest nights rose to 7.0% in 2016. It should be noted, that the number of tourist arrivals increased in Hungary by 7.1% in 2016, more than the European average 2.0% or the global average 3.9%, according, to the data from the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). The growth rate in Hungary exceeded the growth rate in the Czech Republic and Poland.



**Figure 1.** The number of bednights in Prague and Budapest

Source: own source.

## 4. Conclusions

As the competition between cities grows, they seek other ways to differentiate themselves from each other, such as through creative city and the creative industry strategies. The concept of the creative city has been adapted by many regions and metropolises in Europe, including such cities as Wrocław, Budapest and Prague. Cities around the world invest in a combination of different factors to distinguish themselves from other cities. Turok [2008] identifies the main elements of city's distinctiveness which include among others, key occupations and lifestyles. He indicates that recently there has been a growing policy interest in the human and social capital, as the factors of the economic success of a place. In today's crowded marketplace, the brand image of a place and its perception – also play a significant role in attracting visitors and investors to the city. Place reputation that includes “a range of associations, memories, expectations” [Anholt 2007, p. 5] is another source of differentiation. There is also a growing interest in place branding strategies closely associated with the image and identity of a place. The creative city concept seems to be crucial to some city's branding strategies, in which a city is known from its creative and cultural events. An effectively managed creative city with the central objective of improving the quality of life increases its competitiveness in economic, social and environmental terms.

Wrocław, Budapest and Prague offer different types of experiences. Depending on individual preferences cultural and creative tourists can either visit Wrocław – a magical city of different religions and cultures, Budapest – a great city for explorers, full of hidden spots and sprawling districts, or Prague – a city of a “hundred spires”, with remarkable old town architecture.

Wrocław offers rich cultural attractions and is considered to be a prestigious academic centre in Poland. It has many theatres, clubs, museums and galleries which provide a variety of artistic events. It is also internationally acknowledged for its musical festivals and its creative architecture.

Budapest is a vibrant city of 2 million people which offers many cultural attractions. It is also an affordable city for comfortable living for visitors. It has an easy access to the major cities in Europe and also inexpensive air connections.

Prague has also convenient air travel connections with the main European cities. Prague was ranked 9<sup>th</sup> in the Trip Advisor world list of the best 25 destinations in 2016. Budapest was not presented on that list. Prague presents itself as a changeable city, with a mixture of alternate styles from romantic to successful, and from ancient and modern.

The Central European cities examined in this study: Wrocław, Budapest and Prague have invested large sums of money to change their image on the competitive global marketplace. In turn, the growing distinctiveness of cities provides new development opportunities for them in the field of creative industries. The power of Polish and European cities lies in the appropriate use of their development strategies for the benefit of their citizens, businesses and tourists.

The overall conclusion from the analysis is that a creative city policy in itself is not enough to overcome the comparative disadvantage of centuries of cultural development. Prague and Budapest still have far larger numbers of visitors and their growth is more consistent. Wrocław can achieve notable growth in one year as a result of the ECOC, but this growth cannot be maintained without further investment in events and cultural infrastructure.

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