
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

INTERDISCIPLINARY POLITICAL AND CULTURAL JOURNAL, Vol. 19, No. 1/2017

103–128, DOI: 10.1515/ipcj-2017-0007

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**ROLE OF UNIVERSITIES IN CITY RENOVATION AND IN
SHAPING ITS INTERNATIONAL BRAND:
A CASE STUDY OF THE POLISH CITY OF LODZ**

ABSTRACT: This paper aims at highlighting the role of higher education institutions in Lodz in the regeneration of urban space and in building the international brand of a university town. Higher education institutions in Lodz are managers and administrators of many historic buildings that testify to the identity of the city and its rich historic legacy. Besides renovating these buildings, universities provide them with new functions by opening them up to local and international communities. Innovation in regenerating cultural heritage may become a distinguishing feature of both Lodz universities and international city's brand strategy. The key challenge to Lodz is to complete the global regeneration of a post-industrial city in social, cultural, economic, and spatial dimensions using EU funds.

KEYWORDS: City renovation, university branding, city of Lodz, sustainable city development, University of Lodz, cultural heritage, post-industrial city.

Preface

As administrators of historical buildings – which define the identity and cultural legacy of a city – universities may easily create positive image of a city. The regeneration of architectural resources and new functions, which they acquire as a result of opening them up to local and international communities come as value-added to the process. An innovative approach to how cultural

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heritage is regenerated can surely be a feature that distinguishes higher education institutions in Lodz and the strategy of the city brand. The international brand of Lodz may, and should strongly, accentuate these values of urban space regeneration that connect with city identity.

Role of universities in building a brand of university town

Cities that host universities may, and should, make the academic potential part of their brand strategies. Lodz is an example of such a strategy as it is building its international brand around values typical of academic cities. The brand may become international when the strategic goals of the city of Lodz – its higher education institutions (HEIs) and foreign investors – get harmonised. This requires a lot of openness to cooperation and the ability to approach the planning of the sustainable development of the city from an interdisciplinary perspective.

Synergy between city brand and university brands

The key challenge that the authorities of an academic city are faced with consists in building a cooperation platform with higher education institutions that is coherent with values underpinning the city brand. Lodz, a city currently inhabited by ca. 750 k residents (2016), at the turn of the century could be proud of its almost 100 k population of students. That was a valid argument for foreign investors considering the city a potential location for their investments. The academic potential of the city is shaped predominantly by its public universities: the University of Lodz, Lodz University of Technology, Medical University, Leon Schiller National Film, Theatre and Television School, Academy of Music, and Strzeminski Academy of Fine Arts. Their further development will have a huge impact upon the image of Lodz on national and international stage (Domański, 2014).

Today, European cities face serious challenges. The key challenge for Lodz is to complete the global regeneration of a post-industrial city. Besides the architectural part, regeneration should have its social, cultural, economic and spatial component. It is also

implied by a shift in the EU approach to funding regeneration in cities (Domański, 2014: 10, after: <http://wiadomosci.onet.pl/lodz/rewitalizacja-miast-to-wyzwanie-dla-samorzadow/f9pq7>, access on: 02.12.2016).

Directions in which cities develop should be consulted with academic circles, whose representatives could be brought together in interdisciplinary expert teams combining all types of expertise (university, technical, medical and artistic). Consultations should be conducted mainly with reference to social innovations that are decisive for the quality of life in the city. The process needs experts who are impartial, professional and ethical. Thus far, experts from universities have usually been treated as agents, whose role is to legitimise decisions already made by politicians or representatives of local authorities. In future, they should act as independent authorities and professionals able to reliably assess planned goals from the viewpoint of social interest.

The modern marketing strategy for city development must be able to attract new residents. That can be achieved through a variety of unique projects implemented in cooperation with higher education institutions and business. Projects must be built on a lasting competitive advantage of a city and its universities to arouse interest among people from outside the city, in particular from abroad, and attract them to the city. We mean here students, but also representatives of professions relevant for the sustainable development of the city.

Modern cities and regions are increasingly often perceived through the lens of “their” universities or integrated consortia of higher education institutions as natural attributes of urban or regional brands. They help cities come up with a comprehensive offer addressed to students, business people, foreign investors and residents. The role of HEIs is also relevant for business, conference, fair, festival or sports, and leisure tourism. This is because universities often administer the best infrastructure resources, so it is surely important to engage them harmoniously into effective city management and building its attractive image. On the other hand, the city should make more and more urban infrastructure (land and buildings) available to universities so that they could meet residents’ needs even better.

HEIs cooperation with the city should be strategic and independent of political colours of subsequent local authorities (Engstrand A.K., Satre Ahlander A.M., 2008). Universities are expected to act as integrators of interdisciplinary projects,

which enable cooperation among several HEIs and approaching individual projects from multiple perspectives. Lodz still lacks meaningful interdisciplinary projects implemented as a cooperative effort of the city and representatives of different universities. The reason is the deficit in design thinking, on the side of universities and urban authorities. Universities should come up with the idea of such cooperation, which requires a comprehensive overview of social, economic and cultural issues, and seeks a model for sustainable development of cities. All of that must proceed with simultaneous continuous improvement of the quality of life in the city in mind to make it an attractive place for students and graduates of HEIs.

The need to harmonise cooperation among universities

In parallel to mastering the cooperation of the city with its HEIs, increasingly better cooperation among the HEIs is also necessary in building the brand of a university town, its further internationalisation and social innovation. Paradoxically, finding joint projects that could be implemented collectively is the biggest problem as universities want to pursue their own goals and cherish their independence very much. On the other hand, using already renovated resources in the hands of individual universities to better meet the needs of international projects and local communities seems the most obvious area of joint efforts.

Universities should be ready to participate in the shaping of the urban and regional environment at various levels (social and cultural environment, environmental protection). They are also expected to play a significant role in drafting development strategies for the city and region. That is why the involvement of academics in interdisciplinary studies in the field of public transport, environmental protection, boosting entrepreneurial spirit, social and cultural environment, and developing a model of sustainable development for the city and region would be particularly valuable.

Nowadays, the key marketing challenge to cities and universities is to identify their common and coherent positioning. In order to achieve it, we need to align the major distinguishing characteristics underpinning the brand of the city with the brands of its universities. We mean here values such as innovation,

creativity, entrepreneurial spirit, openness or an international approach. They should be fundamental to the city brand, as well as to the brands of its universities. The higher the coherence between these sets of values, the greater the clarity and credibility of their positioning. Success can be guaranteed by building the city brand together with universities. They should share the ownership of brand strategy for their city and strongly identify with it, while authorities of the city and region are expected to delineate development axes for self-government units in cooperation with HEIs.

Other key challenges of the future are connected with seeking increasingly greater synergy between universities based in a given area. The point is not just to attract a student to a university but to win her/him for the city. In future, potential students should be confronted with more complementary and interdisciplinary educational offers of faculties within the same university or different HEIs in the same city. The complementary positioning of universities would be an unprecedented solution under Polish circumstances (joint curricula, diplomas, sharing the same infrastructure). It is also a crucial area where new educational offers can be generated, based on the sum of competences and resources of various HEIs. The synergy of local higher education resources still remains underused in building the competitive advantage of cities and regions, especially at the international level.

The effective marketing of a city and its HEIs also necessitates joint promotion activities. Joint marketing communication should be *de facto* an extension of a joint positioning strategy and building brands for the city and its universities. To achieve it, we need to harmonise the marketing communication of the city, region and academic institutions, in particular when presenting promotional content at fairs, international marketing events, in promotional publications and on the Internet.

For academic marketing, as well as for city marketing, the key measure of efficiency is the proportion of people who stay in the city having completed their studies. These can be people originating from a given city or region or, more importantly, those who have come to study here. The joint impact of city and regional authorities exerted on the group of "incoming" graduates is a very good measure of the attractiveness of a given location, the quality of life and future development perspectives. Authorities in university towns, which can hardly retain their best graduates or attract graduates from

other influential academic centres, should ask themselves about the attractiveness of their cities and efficiency of their efforts.

Higher education institutions have become vital components of clear-cut city positioning. Each city is assessed through the lens of its attractiveness, innovation and international relations of its universities. This calls upon the HEIs to have a more comprehensive view of their offers in the symbiosis with city and regional marketing. When choosing between two comparable educational offers of two different universities, a student will opt for the university based in a more student-friendly city.

Thus the challenge for the future is, on the one hand, to create a global academic product and, on the other hand, to build strong, clear relationships between the image of a university and that of a city and region. Educational services, together with cultural, sports and leisure ones, will be of key importance for the positioning of cities and regions. Promoting a city as a thriving university centre should be based on a comprehensive strategy that highlights values especially relevant for students. These values should include elements dependent on the universities, as well as factors shaped directly by the city.

Creating an image of a university town necessitates the development of a student-friendly city product. Factors which positively impact the image of a university town include in particular: the appearance and aesthetics of the city, quality of municipal transportation and terms on which students may use it, safety and its subjective assessment, cultural and entertainment services addressed to students, sports and leisure services, overall atmosphere, the cost of living and availability of housing, city openness to young people, openness to foreigners and innovation. Most of these elements are independent of universities. They depend on the city and its strategy. Hence the role of the self-government is crucial as its policy shapes a specific image of the city.

It seems that for some cities their “academicness” comes as an effect of presence of several universities in the same location. In effective academic marketing a coherent strategy which clearly highlights academic values delivered by the city is much more important than the number of universities and students.

Table 1. Students at public higher education institutions in Lodz in the academic year 2013/2014

University of Lodz	Lodz University of Technology	Medical University	Strzeminski Academy of Fine Arts	Academy of Music	Leon Schiller Film School	Total
40,105	20,021	8,156	1,035	700	791	71,152

Source: data from universities.

In the academic year 2013/2014 the population of students at public HEIs in Lodz accounted for over 70,000 plus ca. 10,000 students at non-public HEIs. It is a significant drop compared to the peak year of 2000 when the student population in Lodz reached ca. 100 k. Such a substantial drop in the number of students calls for a new approach to attracting students from outside of the region, in particular from other countries. Building a coherent strategy of a university town should start with the identification of values relevant for both the students and graduates who – having completed their studies in a given city – should be willing to stay there to live and work. Building the image of a university town only for the time of studies offers no guarantee that the most talented graduates will stay there when they have completed their education.

Universities as leaders of city regeneration project

most of HEIs in Lodz own buildings deeply rooted in the multicultural identity of the city and its cultural heritage. Universities have got consistently engaged in renovating their historical buildings and introducing new functions that perfectly match the profile of the international brand of the city. In this case, the promotion of individual HEIs is linked with the promotion of renovated cultural heritage of the city, which can either be given new educational functions or can be used as a venue for conferences or entertainment events. HEIs have demonstrated that they are excellent administrators of buildings they have renovated, which – as a result of opening them up to the local environment – have become part of the university branding and a part of the brand of the university town.

European funds have played a huge role in regeneration of historical premises. The city and its HEIs absorbed them perfectly well. Besides restoring historical elements of cultural heritage, the projects were aimed at introducing new innovative functions so much appreciated for the sustainable development of the city and for building its brand.

Role of HEIs in urban space of Lodz

Building a city brand highlights the context of mutual relations between academic and urban space (Amirkhanian, Habiby, 2003; Benneworth, Charles, Madanipour, 2008; Madanipour, 2010). Universities in city centres may take advantage of the opportunities to impact their immediate neighbourhood. Unfortunately, Polish HEIs usually have very limited links with their immediate neighbourhood. Their offer is mainly addressed to potential students and to the rest of the academic community. Faculties at universities focus their efforts on internal academic relations rather than on interactions with the neighbouring urban space. For the HEIs, relationships with the city boil down to official contacts at the level of top authorities instead of decentralised relations.

The latest trend in university governance is to locate academic space in new campuses outside of the very city centre. That is supposed to help manage a condensed university infrastructure better. However, taking HEIs out to the city suburbs poses questions concerning the new quality of links between academic and urban space. These questions also make references to the consequences of an increasing distance between both spaces and new forms of building mutual relations. By asking them we want to know whether new academic space, more distant from the city centre, will become an isolated space focused on itself and its internal interests. There is a risk of HEIs becoming closed or becoming less open to relationships with their urban environment. However, a university located in one campus, in a modern infrastructure may also produce new, positive relations with the environment.

The case of Lodz is in many aspects unique as we are dealing here with highly differentiated strategies of individual HEIs with respect to how they develop and how they build their relations with the city and its inhabitants. In Lodz, many academic units are housed in historic buildings. By managing and administering these

premises the HEIs contribute to the regeneration of the material heritage of a multicultural Lodz. In this context we can also speak of an important impact of HEIs on their urban environment through the adaptation of historic apartment houses, detached houses, palaces, and mansions of industrial tycoons. In Lodz, the process resulted from both vast and diverse material heritage managed by the HEIs and from the nature of these premises, their architectural merits and an attractive location in the city centre.

Although the size of buildings and their original functions were not always up to the present and future needs of HEIs, academic patrons often managed to restore their original beauty. The HEIs use them not only for their own needs but have also created a new, distinct quality of academic space in the centre of Lodz. The development model of Lodz HEIs housed in historic buildings may become an important distinctive feature in city promotion. Under this model the historic bodies of buildings are supplemented with modern teaching functions. In this original model old historic structures are complemented with new functions. It is important to harmoniously match old and new functions. The new harmony may become an interesting distinctive feature of the city and a synonym of its sustainable development. Innovation in this case consists in seeking creative harmony in combining old and new functions of historic buildings anchored in a city identity (urban palaces and mansions).

Such a synergy of academic space with its urban surroundings may, and should, become a distinguishing promotional characteristic of Lodz as a university town (Academic Lodz). It should also be interpreted as a unique value for the HEI, students, city authorities and various stakeholder groups. Looking for synergies of distinct academic space with the neighbouring urban space should be a major challenge for the city and its HEIs. We mean here the dissemination of knowledge about premises occupied by the HEIs, but also better availability of universities for its neighbours and stakeholder groups. Apparently, the biggest challenge for Lodz HEIs located in the most attractive regenerated buildings will be making them increasingly more available to the local community and different partners for joint activities and to deliver interdisciplinary projects.

No doubt, all of Lodz HEIs should be praised for taking care of the cultural heritage of the city. For many years all of them have consistently regenerated historic buildings which they administer. The tangible effects of their activities are the conservation of the

cultural heritage of the city and bringing it closer to students, as well as domestic and foreign visitors. Public universities are careful guardians and managers of assets entrusted to them and city ambassadors in external relations.

Photo 1. Academy of Music in Lodz housed in Karol Poznanski's Palace



Photo: Tomasz Domański.

The model described above was successfully applied by the Academy of Music in Lodz housed in the historic Karol Poznanski's Palace erected in the years 1904–1908 for the son of Lodz industrial tycoon Izrael Kalmanowicz Poznanski. The eclectic building style combines elements of Italian Renaissance and Baroque with Art Nouveau motifs typical of Lodz. It is one of the best examples of how a HEI can become a good administrator of a valuable historic building in the city. The building is used not only by students and staff members, but it also performs cultural functions for the city and its inhabitants. Its total regeneration budget was ca. EUR 5.5 million, out of which almost EUR 3.75 million came from the regional self-government budget (EU funds) and ca. EUR 1 million from the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. The rest was paid for by the Academy.

Many HEIs in Lodz have gotten perfectly accommodated in their unique post-industrial premises closely linked with the 19th century industrial history of the city. Lodz universities played a major role in adapting these historic buildings to educational functions. For the strategy to be fully successful we always need a coherent policy of cooperation between the city and its HEIs. Such premises should be acquired by universities for a proverbial penny so that they could plan renovation already as lawful owners. Post-industrial premises house many faculties of the Lodz University of Technology and its library. In Lodz, the immediate neighbourhood of former industrial premises offered excellent opportunities for comprehensive regeneration.

Photo 2. Central Library of the Lodz University of Technology in post-industrial premises



Photo: Tomasz Domański.

For example, the campus of the Lodz University of Technology extends across 32 hectares in the city centre. Many premises typical for the 19th and 20th century industrial identity of Lodz have been regenerated for educational purposes. They excellently perform their new functions and are surrounded by an attractive park. The former factory warehouse owned by a well-known Schweikert family

of Lodz industrialists (1912) houses the Central Library of the Lodz University of Technology. The building's floor area of ca.10 km² and ca. 100 m long was one among the first in Europe which used reinforced concrete in its structure. It has been perfectly adapted for the needs of the library.

Photo 3. International Faculty of Engineering in a regenerated post-industrial building



Photo: Tomasz Domański.

Another case of regeneration is the International Faculty of Engineering (IFE). The building smoothly combines modern architectural design with industrial identity of Lodz. IFE teaches engineering courses in English and French. There are almost 1,300 students at IFE and 25% of them are foreigners (<http://www.ife.p.lodz.pl/>).

A different solution is based on the model where HEIs are housed in historic buildings originally designed as educational premises. Then the continuity of original function is preserved while premises are adapted to new challenges. The examples of such arrangements include educational premises from the interwar period (1918–1939), which should become the symbol of Lodz. They naturally extend the historic function of the building, enriching it with new elements. They also harmoniously link the past with the future and swiftly engage with a sustainable development

model of the city. Their location in the city centre provides excellent opportunities for generating synergies between academic and urban space which neighbour each other.

At the University of Lodz the model was applied, inter alia, at the Faculty of International and Political Studies and in the new Rector's office of the University of Lodz.

Photo 4. Historic Art Deco style building of the Faculty of International and Political Studies



Photo: Tomasz Domański.

The seat of the Faculty was built at the beginning of the 20th century and in the period between the wars it housed junior secondary and secondary school for girls. It is a comfortable educational building in Art Deco style. The advantages of interwar architecture still work nowadays, especially when the teaching model provides for working in small groups using interactive teaching methods and an individual approach towards students. The building is located in the very city centre, in the immediate vicinity of a new railway station and the New Centre of Lodz. The Faculty is an example of an innovative academic unit which teaches students interested in working in an international environment in Poland and abroad. The Faculty has got ca. 1,000 students and

an increasing number of those who take up specialisation courses taught exclusively in English, such as International Marketing (bachelor and master degree), Asian Studies (bachelor degree), International Encounters in Culture (bachelor degree), or Political Management (master degree). The number of foreign students in the academic year reached 210 people from almost 50 countries. The Faculty enjoys the highest internationalisation index at the University of Lodz – 15%.

Photo 5. Regeneration of the Rector's office of the University of Lodz in a historic building from the early 20th century



Photo: Tomasz Domański.

The New Rector's office (Rectorate) of the University of Lodz in Narutowicza St 68 is housed in a regenerated building of the former School of Merchants Guild, which in the early 20th century (1909/1911) – as assessed by engineers and architects – was among the top modern buildings in the city. After World War II, in 1945, the building was one of the first to be owned by the University of Lodz established the same year. Its present renovation cost EUR 3.5 million.

Universities as leading investors in new architectural projects

In parallel to regeneration and renovation projects in historic buildings, higher education institutions in Lodz also create modern urban space. They are the biggest investors in regeneration but also in modern architecture. The two architectural models smoothly combine in the process of the sustainable development of the city. Substantial financial support from the central government budget and from the EU funds gave the HEIs in Lodz in the years

2004–2014 a unique opportunity to develop a modern university infrastructure. Universities were the main beneficiaries of EU funds and, by the same token, major investors were capable of influencing the image of Lodz.

Table 2. Investment outlays of Lodz public HEIs on infrastructure
[in millions of euro]

University	Total investment outlays in millions of euro (1 euro = 4 PLN)	Period
University of Lodz	128.75	1994–2014
Lodz University of Technology	94.87	2004–2014
Academy of Fine Arts	22.5	2004–2014
Medical University	143.75	2004–2014
Film School	8.75	2004–2014
Academy of Music	30.0	2004–2014
	428.62	

Source: internal statistics from Lodz HEIs.

The data above provides evidence that HEIs investments in educational and research infrastructure have become the priority for the city and region. It is a future – and development-oriented approach, which well serves the sustainable development of the city.

Together with regeneration, all this effort has led to the emergence of many new architectural structures, which have become the symbols of Academic Lodz. New university buildings have recently been the most powerful architectural and city planning projects in the city. They have also become meaningful components of urban space and this is how academic space has gotten intertwined with the urban space. A university town has received an unprecedented opportunity to build up its image through modern, original architectural structures. The image of the city at the turn of 20th and 21st centuries was largely shaped by architectural projects developed to meet the needs of the HEIs. New university premises have become attributes of the brand of Lodz as a University Town (Academic Lodz).

Photo 6. Modern building of the Faculty of Philology of the University of Lodz



Photo: Tomasz Domański.

This strategy is reflected in the construction of a modern building for the Faculty of Philology over the years 2011–2014, which resulted in a very interesting architectural structure. The total cost of investment, including the equipment, reached almost EUR 27 million, out of which 4.4 million was the subsidy from the central budget of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education. This investment project gave Lodz a new interesting building in terms of architecture.

Photo 7. Modern building of the Academy of Fine Arts



Photo: Tomasz Domański.

The building of the Academy of Fine Arts is another example of a project delivered in co-financing arrangement with the European Union Regional Development Fund “Textile and Clothing industry cluster” under the Operational Programme for the Lodz Region for the years 2007–2013. Its idea combines cultural, educational, entrepreneurship and research aspects.

Photo 8. Symbiosis of regeneration and modernity – Building of the “Factory of 21st Century Engineers”



Photo: Tomasz Domański.

The building of the “Factory of 21st Century Engineers” at the Lodz University of Technology is a contemporary synthesis of post-industrial and modern architecture. The building constructed over the period 2011–2013 links regenerated old factory premises owned formerly by Szaja Rosenblatt with a modern multi-storey structure. The new building is a good example of a symbiosis of old factory premises with a new teaching and research infrastructure. Lodz University of Technology received ca. EUR 13.5 million from the EU funds (Operational Programme Infrastructure and Environment). The “Factory of 21st Century Engineers” houses classrooms, computer rooms, laboratories and technological facilities with the total area of 8,500 m². The

project will surely contribute to higher internationalisation rates and better competitiveness of the University of Technology. It will also improve the impact of the University in domestic and international markets.

The overview presented above was intended to present consistent efforts made by Lodz HEIs in ensuring sustainable development of the city, its architecture and space.

Universities and their green environmentally-friendly surroundings

Taking care of environmental issues is another element of HEIs strategy connected with sustainable development. The environmentally-friendly image of universities clearly impacts the positive image of the city as an attractive place to study. Most universities in Lodz are located in environmentally-friendly neighbourhoods of parks and bigger green areas. All of Lodz HEIs operate in similar locations, which helps create the image of Lodz as Academic Lodz in parks. All the HEIs may strengthen the image by initiating new green and environmentally-friendly projects.

Academic space filled with green areas and parks may also become the flagship for the city. The space should be increasingly more open to the inhabitants and to visitors coming to the city. HEIs located in former industrialists mansions are surrounded by beautiful urban gardens and parks planted by their original owners. In new facilities parks are systematically planned. HEIs face a huge task of not only consistently taking care of inherited tree population but also of continuously expanding it.

Biedermann's Palace owned by the University of Lodz is an example of historic park space. The palace and the park around it are a symbol of the largest higher education institution in Lodz. The property is used mainly for representative functions to host prestigious meetings and conferences. Nowadays, the Biedermann's Palace houses the Museum and Archives of the University of Lodz and assembly halls used for meetings and conferences.

Photo 9. Biedermann's Palace in a historic park



Photo: Tomasz Domański.

Photo 10. Rector's office of the Lodz University of Technology located in an old park



Photo: Tomasz Domański.

Rector's office of the Lodz University of Technology is housed in a historic villa in the centre of a park open to city residents. It is one of the best examples demonstrating how historic premises can be used for the needs of Lodz HEIs. The villa owned by Reinhold Richter is an example of eclectic architecture, which smoothly combines Gothic, mannerism, and Art Nouveau styles (1903–1904).

Photo 11. Rector's office of the Lodz Film School in a former industrialists mansion surrounded with park



Photo: Tomasz Domański.

The third example is the park, which surrounds the Rector's office of the Lodz Film School, the most recognisable higher education institution in Lodz and one of the best film schools in the world. The Film School is the most recognisable university in Lodz. It is worth considering how to use its reputation and brand potential in building the brand for the city and to link it to broadly understood group of creative industries.

The green campus of the Lodz University of Technology located in the city centre also merits our attention. Parks densely fill up the campus in between new and revitalised factory buildings and villas adapted for the needs of the University.

Potential employers in the vicinity of HEIs

When thinking about a new role for higher education institutions in developing urban space we also need to stress their power of attraction of office buildings owned by potential employers. Such a trend is positive for the sustainable development strategy of the city and building its attractive international brand. New office space owned by foreign and Polish investors is located in the immediate vicinity of universities. These are places where students and graduates can find jobs. Most of them are outsourcing, IT and business services companies. In the future we should expect the vibrant development of incubators of entrepreneurship, including incubators of creative industries.

Photo 12. Foreign employers in the immediate vicinity of universities – seeking new proximity for university and business
(Green Horizon – Infosys, Southwestern, PWC)



Photo: Tomasz Domański.

An example of such a complementary strategy of mutual attraction is a modern Green Horizon building owned by Swedish company SKANSKA. It houses Infosys and other foreign outsourcing (Southwestern) and consulting (PWC) companies which employ students and graduates of Lodz HEIs. The latest trend connected with the globalisation of the market of business services consists

in encouraging students of Lodz HEIs to start working in such companies already during the studies. These are the sources of their first experiences connected with working in an international team and with foreign clients. The physical vicinity of the HEIs helps conveniently and flexibly combine studies with work to accumulate professional experience.

Another example of such a complementary approach of universities and potential employers is an office centre – the University Business Park with the total area of 18,400 m², located vis-à-vis the main campus of the Lodz University of Technology. The centre houses consulting and outsourcing companies which employ students and graduates of the University of Technology and other HEIs in Lodz.

The aforementioned examples of investment projects also demonstrate the increasing role of social innovations in sustainable development of cities through locating employers in the proximity of higher education institutions (very convenient from the point of view of potential employees). The projects of adaptation of historic buildings to new functions described earlier are excellent examples of how HEIs open up to the city space.

Conclusions

New joint undertakings of the city and its universities should be aimed at developing new hybrid space in regenerated urban premises for interdisciplinary projects in the area of culture, science and entrepreneurship. As an example we can take the new project EC1-City of Culture in the post-industrial space of the former power station. New generation institutions of culture and science may become a valid source of new interdisciplinary projects and contribute to the building of a clear, international brand of the city.

The described regeneration projects conducted in historic buildings owned by universities have strengthened the wider process of renovation of cultural heritage of Lodz and highlighted its multicultural identity. Such projects are very much in line with the sustainable development of the city and link its identity with the building of its unique international brand. This strategy leads Lodz to the model of an “ideal city” – a city friendly to students and investors, open to innovation taking care of the environment, available to Polish and foreign students, to whom

it offers employment opportunities during and after their studies (international employers in the neighbourhood).

Photo 13. EC1-City of Culture–post-industrial hybrid space for interdisciplinary interventions



Photo: Tomasz Domański.

Apparently, the key to success of such strategies will lie in a well-planned and consistently delivered concept of partnership marketing. Within its framework, the city and its HEIs – in cooperation with business – should be able to work out solutions favourable for harmonious development of all partners to this triad. Internationalisation of the strategy connected with the inflow of foreign investment will remain a serious challenge to the city and its HEIs. The success of internationalisation will depend on the harmonisation of strategic objectives of the city, HEIs, domestic and foreign investors.

Lodz is bidding for an International Specialised Expo to be held in 2022 on city regeneration. The described examples confirm that Lodz makes an excellent example of a comprehensive approach to city regeneration in cooperation with higher education institutions. The key challenge for the city is to seek even more synergy between its brand building strategy and strategies of its HEIs. The strategy will also call for a broader opening up of

monumental buildings administered by the universities to local and international communities.

Lodz has a significant potential for creating a powerful brand of a university town. However, it needs to further master its coherent marketing strategy and strategies of its public HEIs. Their cooperation should continuously improve the standard of living in the city to make it an attractive location for students and graduates. The vision of Lodz as a university town must be coherent with the vision of the strategic development of the city.

Under the present circumstances we are constantly facing a dissonance between the attractiveness of the educational offer in selected universities and the perception of the city as an attractive place to study, live and work. City regeneration projects, improvements of transport infrastructure and environmentally-friendly efforts have substantially changed its image. In changing the image of a city, a major role is played by the HEIs in Lodz, which through investing in infrastructure have developed the image of the 21st century city investing in development and education. To make the best use of the new infrastructure as a platform to improve inhabitants' knowledge, and enhance their innovation and creativity in all spheres of everyday life remains a serious challenge. In future, universities and artistic schools will be faced with the challenge posed by creative industries. They will contribute to the city dynamics, its sustainable development and further regeneration. Creative industries may also become sources of innovation that could be used in other sectors.

Relationships between cities and universities based in them have produced various models of cooperation or interaction, such as: "networking model," "entrepreneurial model," "heritage model" or "campus model" (Conz, Denicolai, Ricardii, Zucchella, 2015). This variety reflects the multitude of opportunities to exert an impact upon one's immediate neighbourhood. Universities improve the quality of life in a given academic centre, they attract the most talented individuals, stimulate cultural tourism as managers of historic buildings in cities, and generate knowledge transfer to the local community. It seems that the HEIs in Lodz are increasingly using these models more often to create the brand of an academic city, regenerate its architectural resources and co-develop a sustainable development strategy.

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