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Rebranding the city: the case of Berlin

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Introduction

In a globalised and interconnected world, the communication of innovative and unique ideas is becoming increasingly difficult. Everything has evolved and older methods have been replaced. Marketing strategies have completely changed the way products are sold and advertised, focusing on distinguishable aspects and highlighting their uniqueness. Similarly, cities have needed to adopt a modern vision so as to compete in the market; however, a city is not a mere product and urban marketing campaigns are more complex. Internally, they must generate cohesion among citizens, create a positive image, encourage creative ideas, connect residents with their city and raise their awareness. Externally, they must increase competitiveness, attract tourists, stakeholders and investors, stimulate the economy and motivate external entrepreneurs to develop their businesses in the city.

This thesis attempts to analyse the complicated process leading to the city branding, focusing on the case of Berlin. The German capital city is a fascinating topic, rich in inspiration, and this dissertation offers a careful analysis of its rebranding strategy, including the change in Berliners' mentality and attitude, the raising awareness of social values, and the forward-looking objectives.

By examining Berlin's rebranding strategy and exploring numerous topics, it is possible to better comprehend the dynamics behind it. The principal and innovative purpose of this thesis is to determine whether there is a connection between the brand and the positive results obtained in the economic system, in the population's satisfaction, and in the city's touristic and economic international enhancement.

From being the city of the German Democratic Republic during the Cold War, to its reunification and resolution of horrific past events, to the multiethnic metropolis, catalyst for change, to the apex of innovation and sustainability: Berlin is the city where everything still seems possible.

The dissertation is divided into three chapters, each of which addresses different topics with the Berlin brand as the *fil rouge*. The first chapter is an introduction to the topic and can be considered a framework for the entire work. Starting from the definition of place marketing and place branding, the thesis proceeds with the analysis of the city, which will be the main subject of the research. In the 1980s, neoliberalism had a profound

impact on the way of living in a city, and city marketing campaigns started to emerge with the innovative *labels* – which are attributes describing the city. Then, it became clear that these were no longer enough and cities must be associated with a unique atmosphere, leading to the development of the city brand.

The second chapter of the research presents Berlin and its historical background. The dramatic history and the Cold War have strongly influenced both the territory, which had to be completely reconstructed, and the population. The Iron Curtain – a political metaphor describing both the political and physical boundary dividing Europe – had divided Berliners for twenty-eight years; consequently, even after the fall of the Wall, citizens were profoundly different from each other and the social reunification was a protracted process. Berliners needed to feel part of a big entity; they had to find their safe place in the city and a new urban identity was necessary. However, some public-private organisations gave an enormous contribution to the reimagining and rebranding of the city, starting with the reconstruction of iconic sites – such as *Potsdamer Platz*, the *Reichstag* building and *Friedrichstraße* – and proceeding with the valorisation of creativity.

In 2008, the *Be Berlin* brand was launched, and indeed, the project strengthened Berlin's community. The campaign's innovation was in the initial stages, when residents were encouraged to tell and publish their stories about Berlin, focusing on the city's districts or direct experiences. The best way to certify that something is special is by proving its authenticity, and narratives had this aim. The result was a wonderful patchwork of messages, made up with multiple fragments and voices. The extraordinary uniqueness of each narrative was enhanced, making the Berlin brand original. Additionally, the chapter thoroughly analyses the brand in every detail – the main aim, the initial phases, the graphic design, the results and the new touristic initiative – and examines the reasons that led to the rebranding of the city in 2020.

The third chapter began by describing Berlin's rebranding with the new *WeAreOneBerlin* brand, which eliminated the previous individuality and aroused a collective spirit. In a world where individualism and capitalism reign, Berlin tries to highlight tolerance, diversity, union and freedom. The rebranding campaign has assumed considerable importance and people were delighted to see and experience this change. Active participation was fundamental, as in the first branding campaign in 2008, and

Berliners were encouraged to participate and share their ideas so as to improve together and find the best solutions. Moreover, technology and social media channels have greatly reduced waiting times, making communication immediate and easier than before. People can stay informed about daily events, cultural activities, new projects and future developments of the brand. Finally, the research goes on to discuss the future-oriented projects of the city and some innovative and original topics. The increasing attention towards environmental sustainability and the development of green energy supply solutions are supported by the Berlin brand, as it conveys a positive image to residents and external stakeholders. The study will provide a final analysis with future-oriented considerations, leaving the subject open to new reflections.

Chapter 1. Framework: place marketing and place branding

This chapter attempts to provide a brief framework of the literature relating to place marketing and place branding activities connected to the place and thereafter to the city. After having analysed these concepts, the attention moves to narratives and place storytelling.

1.1 Place marketing

Before analysing the meaning and complexity of place marketing, which is one of the main themes of this research, a general introduction to the concept is needed. The term marketing and the term place will be defined in order to provide a clearer framework and before proceeding with the following topics.

With regard to marketing, the term was formulated in 1910 by the famous economist Philip Kotler, who defined it as “the science and art of exploring, creating and delivering value to satisfy the needs of a target market at a profit [...]”. This definition was traditionally associated with the creation of value, *i.e.* the process that helps companies to create a unique product for consumers, which will be perceived as the best option in the competitive market. Three different types of marketing are used today and they could be defined as three phases of the same general, more extended strategy. Analytical marketing is the more static part of the entire process and aims to study the market, the consumers, the competitors (*i.e.* both companies which produce similar products and potential companies that could unexpectedly enter the market) and finally studying one's own business reality – with the SWOT analysis that examines deeply the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats of the company. Moreover, strategic marketing involves a meticulous planning of the company, aiming to identify the consumer's needs in order to produce and offer a product which will be perfect for them. The main objective is to obtain customer loyalty and brand loyalty, which are fundamental for the marketing campaign. Operational (or tactical) marketing is the final part of the entire process and it is the most practical phase. However, cooperation is essential and each part of the process needs to be complementary to the others. The term marketing was later extended to other fields, such as geography, slightly changing its original economic meaning.

As far as place is concerned, the definition of the term is a little bit more complex. The British geographer Tim Cresswell (2004) provides an adequate explanation for the term place and notes that as people think they know what a place is, it gets harder to go beyond the common-sense and define it. Although the general meaning of place refers to a punctual or localised space, which people commonly perceive as something local, physically near and smaller than the territory, in the geography field it is loaded with other symbolic meanings. The author makes an important distinction between space and place, stating that “places are all spaces which people have made meaningful [...] and all spaces people are attached to in one way or another”. Individuals, social groups and communities add values, memories and significant experiences to the place; therefore, it becomes a meaningful location and an existential space. Some expressions are coined, such as *sense of place*, which Cresswell (2004) defined as a subjective and emotional attachment to the place, *place attachment*, which Hidalgo and Hernandez (2001:274) defined as “an affective bond or link between people and specific places”, and *place identity*, *i.e.* the feeling of belonging to a specific place.

As previously stated, the place reflects changeability, since it is constructed by people who are constantly changing and endlessly redefined. In the 1990s, with the phenomenon of globalisation, the idea of a permanent place disappeared and Doreen Massey (2008:257-263) coined the expression “global sense of place”, introducing the idea of mobility and continuous flows. Hereby, the traditional definition has been replaced with a more fluid and interconnected one. Nevertheless, the geographer Cresswell (2004) heavily criticised globalisation, which has eliminated local cultures and has produced homogeneous places, citing the expression “placelessness”. This term evokes the lack of place attachment caused by the effects of modernity, such as mass consumption, speed and rapid movement, global commerce, etc.

In conclusion, combining the two definitions above, the result will be that place marketing is the territory promotion, using its local attractions, traditions, peculiarities and people’s perceptions. Place marketing should emphasise positive aspects of a place in order to make people aware of its potential and make the inhabitants proud of it. From a marketing point of view, a place competes with other places – be it a city, a region or a nation – since their aim is attracting people, business and resources to visit it and invest their money on it (Bhasin, 2020). Therefore, place marketing has attained a lot of

importance in the past few years and its crucial role consists in finding the best way to differentiate the place, highlighting its uniqueness so as to gain a competitive position in the market (Warnaby and Medway, 2013).

1.1.1 Place as “product”

There is a large number of published studies describing the place’s role related to place marketing and Warnaby and Medway (2013) offer an explanatory consideration of places seen as “products”. Their study shows that the place notion simultaneously evokes two elements; the first is *materiality*, which is the tangible one and refers to boundaries and topography, while the second is the *realm of meaning*, which is a more abstract concept and refers to the mental capability to construct reality, ideas, values and psychological relationships (Sack, 1990:661). The recent practice of place branding puts emphasis on the realm of meaning and on an abstract concept which is not visible or tangible (Warnaby and Medway, 2013:5). However, both materiality and the realm of meaning, are mutually supporting processes, since they coexist and influence each other. For instance, the authors cited above pointed out that architecture and urban built environment have an important role in connecting place marketing activities and narratives, especially when the buildings are perceived as “iconic” and they can represent the city as a whole – such as the Coliseum in Rome, the Eiffel Tower in Paris or the London Eye in London.

This section has attempted to provide a brief summary of the literature relating to place marketing, defining the term and explaining its development over recent years. The following paragraph will analyse the concept of “place branding”, which has already been mentioned, so as to complete the general framework of this thesis and proceed with the main topic.

1.2 Place branding

The word “brand” has a long history, the Romans and the Greeks already used the concept of a brand with trademarks in order to specify someone’s property. However, the etymology of the word derives from the old Norse word *brandr*, which literally means “to burn” and it is connected to the practice by which owners of livestock marked their animals to identify them (Maurya and Mishra, 2012).

At the end of the last century, the concept of brand changed significantly and the American Marketing Association (AMA) broadened the definition of a brand to “a name,

term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors [...]”.

Place branding and place marketing are clearly connected to each other and some studies reveal that place branding can be described as an evolution from place marketing (Govers, 2011); however, a sharp distinction should be drawn. On the one hand, place marketing aims to attract tourists, future investors, stakeholders and influence local politics in order to compete with other cities, regions or nations. The issue considered by Govers (2011) is that marketing communications reveal themselves to be inappropriate instruments for place branding, as they do not take identity into account, which is shaped and produced by residents. On the other hand, the brand is based on the sense of place and identity of the local population, and place branding – and the creation of a positive place image – is fundamental for successful tourism and investment promotion (Govers, 2011).

In their detailed analysis, Colomb and Kalandides (2010) argued that the place branding has a dual aim. The former is oriented to the outside and implies developing a “*unique selling proposition*” which guarantees visibility and a competitive advantage, while the latter is oriented to the inside and pursues the aim of reinforcing the local identity and sense of community. Moreover, place marketing and place branding have been subject to an extensive critique, especially within the geography literature. Colomb and Kalandides (2010) provide some analyses from human geographers and sociologists, explaining three main issues.

Firstly, even though place branding should create a unique image and a different perception of the place, the result is merely homogeneity and the loss of the place identity. The creation of similar buildings and projects causes a physical homogeneity, while marketing campaigns, slogans and catchwords lead to a discursive one (Colomb and Kalandides, 2010).

The second issue considers the process of re-imagining a city and the critics pointed out that some important aspects would be ignored through the process of “commodification” of place, *i.e.* the process by which places and local cultures become simply “commodities” to be consumed and advertised. Similarly, Warnaby and Medway (2013) stated that whether a “formula” – a common pattern for different cities – is adopted

and many similar techniques are used, no city will have its own uniqueness and differentiation will be useless.

The third problem is related to the ambiguity and tension between the inward orientation – the inhabitants’ identification with the city and sense of local pride – and the outward orientation – the improvement of a competitive position and attractiveness. For critical researchers, the inward orientation could play a significant role in controlling and convincing people that they are important, and in distracting their attention from economic and social problems, such as unemployment, public expenditure reduction, social inequalities increase, etc. (Colomb and Kalandides, 2010).

Having discussed and defined place marketing and place branding, the following paragraphs will focus the attention on a more specific place: the city.

1.3 City marketing

In the middle of neoliberalism, during the 1980s, cities began to implement urban politics and selling strategies, which would later be termed city marketing strategies. These policies are based on some attributes, qualities and *labels* of the city. Considering the literature, some of the most important city labels are:

1) Vibrant city – although the word vibrant is self-explanatory, its definition presents a slight nuance, since it means both a city full of energy and life, and a colourful, bright and striking one. The attribute vibrant is overloaded with symbols so as to attract visitors and evoke variety and brightness of colours. As a matter of fact, artificial lights play a key role in vibrant cities since they can produce colourful spectacles of lighting design in the contemporary city. Notable examples include the festival of lights of Lyon and the one illustrated in Figure 1, which represents the festival of lights in Berlin.



Figure 1: Brandenburg Gate and Berlin Cathedral

2) City of entertainment – a city full of enthusiasm and joy, which is often associated with images of adventure parks. The prototype is Disneyland Park, which was unveiled in California in 1955 with the attractive slogan “the Happiest Place on Earth”. However, the aim of the city of entertainment was not only to convey images of adventure parks, but also to initiate a process of urban regeneration. Many cities, such as Baltimore and its port area, changed completely and urban areas were transformed into tourist destinations. Waterfront areas were converted into pedestrian zones, which are used by residents and visitors today as leisure spaces where they can spend free time, relax and consume goods.

3) Green city – the title is assigned by the European Commission to the cities that meet specific requirements and they will benefit from the received nomination, because of the affluence of tourism, investors and events. Although it is tough to define the “greenness” of a city, Kahn (2007:3-5) tries to explain the term, stating that a city is considered green whether both environmental aspects (*i.e.* clean air and water, nature and parks, etc.) and social aspects are fulfilled. With 70% of the European population living in urban areas, environmental conditions have a great impact on daily life and tourism. According to the European Commission, the psychophysical well-being depends on clean air and water, low noise emissions levels and free access to natural areas such as public parks. Cities will become stimulating places where to live, with the primary objective being the health and well-being of citizens.

4) Technological city – the main concept involves the regeneration and transformation of former petrochemical industry areas, which are converted into centres of innovative start-ups and technology companies with glass buildings. The most famous example of a technological area is the Silicon Valley and the term “siliconization” was coined from it. The term refers to the irresistible expansion of scientific-technology sectors, which are worldwide spread today.

5) Smart city – based on the idea of efficiency, this concept combines environmental aspects with technological and industrial dimensions. A city may be defined as smart when traditional services and networks become more efficient with the help of technology and digital solutions. The most important objectives are the reduction of the carbon footprint, for instance by using green and renewable energy or sustainable energy sources, the development of a smart mobility by implementing public transport, the application of a smart governance, which implies online administrative services and a well-coordinated

management, and finally the collaboration of smart people with a smart living so as to create a positive social environment. The evidence suggests that city residents, tourists, stakeholders and enterprises will all benefit from these initiatives.

1.4 City branding

City branding has become an essential component of urban development strategies in the 21st century. Since 2000, city marketing strategies have been replaced by city branding strategies, which are communicative campaigns aiming to associate a city with an atmosphere, sensation and perception. The city is commercialised, but the focus is on emotions and local experiences. In contrast to city marketing, which uses *city labels*, city branding takes the toponym, *i.e.* the place name, as the main objective of the campaign. Figure 2 illustrates the brands of New York and Amsterdam, which are famous examples of this technique.



Figure 2: successful city brands of New York and Amsterdam (sagrafica.it)

The literature on city branding has a relatively short history, as it has attracted attention in the last three decades. Nonetheless, the practice of city branding has evolved considerably. The article of Green, Grace and Perkins (2016) clearly illustrates that city branding has rapidly spread throughout the western world, becoming a standard practice for ensuring economic development and sustainability. In contrast, cities in the eastern world have had some difficulties in finding an efficient city brand. The global City Index 2023, which is the world's most comprehensive research study on perceptions of city brands, ranks and classifies city brands. It announces that at the apex of the list is London, followed by New York, Paris, Los Angeles, Sidney, Singapore, Tokyo, San Francisco, Dubai (which proves to be the top city brand in the Middle East) and Amsterdam concluding the top ten of the ranking.

To conclude, in this section it has been explained the process and development of marketing strategies that can be applied to cities. In recent times, the importance of city branding has grown exponentially. Today, a city without an effective brand loses visibility and, as a consequence, money and investors. Effective city branding not only enhances the city's image but also fosters a sense of pride and belonging among its residents.

This thesis focuses on the Berlin branding campaign and the last important component that needs to be defined before proceeding is the storytelling strategy, as narratives played a key role in the development of Berlin's brand. For this reason, the following paragraph moves on to consider this strategy and its application in places.

1.5 Place storytelling

As explained above, this section provides a brief overview of storytelling and the article written by Green, Grace and Perkins (2016) may be a good introduction to the topic. The article offers a critique and argues that between 2000 and 2010, governments tried to adapt corporate branding (which is used by companies to sell and promote their products) to places, specifically cities. The problem is that cities can not be compared to products for sale and different strategies should be used. One of the approaches that was largely employed is storytelling.

The original research conducted by Bassano et al. (2019) states that narratives, and as a consequence storytelling, are an intrinsic human practice, as human beings have always told stories, myths and legends. Humans are attracted to stories, which have always been an important aspect of communication, culture, heritage, language, memory and so on. Consequently, storytelling about places – or place storytelling – can have a crucial role, whether it is successfully promoted by local governments and organisations (Bassano et al., 2019). It can favourably influence communicative and marketing activities, since it raises the sense of belonging and identification.

By highlighting the cultural heritage, local traditions, and personal experiences of residents, it creates an emotional connection that both increases the sense of belonging among the local community and makes a city more appealing to tourists and investors. Therefore, it can become a useful tool for territory management. Place storytelling helps local stakeholders to identify themselves and they are more motivated to tell their personal stories (Bassano et al., 2019).

This recent practice is an added value for place branding activities and can be considered an investment that arouses the atmosphere, that will emotionally involve real clients and will attract future tourists and investors.

The storytelling technique and the importance of the city residents' stories will be recalled in the following chapter of the thesis, with the specific example of the Berlin city brand and its creation.

Chapter 2. The Be Berlin campaign

The following section of this research moves on to describe in greater detail the historical and social situation in Berlin after the fall of the Wall, with a special emphasis on people's perception of the city. The reconstruction activities and the change of the cityscape and architecture brought to a different perspective; people wanted to collaborate and participate in the process of reshaping Berlin urban space and identity.

2.1 The Berlin reconstruction

In the 1990s, after the fall of the Wall, the socialist legacy disappeared from the East-Central European cities and the latter gained self-ruling independence. Those cities were far behind the economic system of Europe, and they had to grow and adapt quickly to the new democratic economic structures introduced by the United States of America (Tölle, 2010). The governments and the urban elites of East-Central European cities wanted to reinvent cosmopolitan cities by creating new, modern, international and capitalist place identities, while completely rejecting their recent socialist past (Tölle, 2010). The German capital city of Berlin was the most exposed city on the front-line of the Cold War, as a consequence, the process was more complicated than anywhere else.

The first attempt at renovation suggested eliminating the Soviet element – *i.e.* the Soviet architecture, the traces of communism and the Berlin Wall too – from the central places. For twenty-eight years, the Wall represented the contrast between opposite ideologies and, even after the end of the Cold War, the population expressed conflicting sentiments. On the one hand, people showed loyalty to the East German regime; on the other hand, they acknowledged the oppression and suffering it caused. Tölle's research (2010) clearly explains that the renovation efforts and the de-industrialisation process led to a severe crisis that was not only economic but also political and social. Urban poverty and political instability rapidly increased, and the main effect was a general dissatisfaction and a loss of the initial euphoria for the city's reunification. The sense of difference did not disappear and people continued to differ between Easterners – called *Ossis* in German – and Westerners – called *Wessis* (Tölle, 2010:352). The attempt to demolish the Wall and the remnants of Bernauer Straße – where the Wall's construction was the most brutal and dramatic example due to the physical division of houses and families – failed and in some districts of the city it is still possible to see remnants of socialism.

The second renovation approach was based on a project of the Director of Urban Development, Hans Stimmann, and it was called “Critical Reconstruction”. The project aimed to reconstruct the city looking back at traditional architectural styles and typologies, selecting and renovating pre-war and pre-Nazi street and square outlines (Tölle, 2010). Simplicity should be the main attribute of these new constructions, with major examples of Critical Reconstruction in Berlin including Potsdamer Platz, the Friedrichstadt Passagen and Alexander Platz. Despite these efforts, the Urban Development team understood that Berlin could not return to its “Golden Age” and this project ultimately failed. As a matter of fact, by the end of the 1990s, it became clear that Berlin could not compete with London and Paris, nor could it compete with the cities of Western Germany, such as Stuttgart and Düsseldorf (Tölle, 2010). For this reason, a new strategy was needed in order to reach the levels of other European capital cities and an internationally oriented project needed to be considered.

The third approach was based on the concept of urban identity – *i.e.* the overall place identity of a city – which has been considered in the city development, as it implies that an urban space turns into a distinguishable place thanks to its special identity (Töll, 2010). The study carried out by Anholt (2005) presented a concrete concept, stating that in a globalised world, the only way to survive and stand out among the rest is to be unique, different, credible and appealing. Therefore, Berliners realised that the Cold War period should be a part of their narrative that needs to be told. Without any shadow of a doubt, as a result of this process, the story of the Wall is dominant in the urban identity of the city nowadays. Berlin tells this constant story of transition and the Wall offers the most impressive images (Töll, 2010). As this third project very clearly demonstrates, Berliners and the government should focus their attention and energies on their main strength: change.

Cities are always changing; a city could never be static and it naturally enlarges and evolves by destroying and replacing its parts (Oktay, 2002). Human activity has played a crucial role in this process of change, as cities are made up of people and urban identity is the result of a collective process based on interpretation and narrative rather than on purely design features (Tölle, 2010).

2.2 A new urban identity

Having analysed the Berlin reconstruction process, its primary purposes and the various projects which have led to the realisation of a new urban identity and a new cityscape, it is now necessary to draw attention to the population and analyse Berliners' sensations and perceptions towards the "new" urban identity. The collective process mentioned in the previous paragraph considered both the interpretation and narratives which are the starting point of this thesis' main theme. Narratives and stories told and collected from the Berliners made the basis for constructing and creating the first city brand in 2008.

Between the early 1990s and the early 2000s, the German capital city tried to conceive new branding campaigns and new slogans in order to eliminate the war influence and the dramatic history of the city. In the previous years, some public-private organisations were set up in order to promote economy, tourism and place marketing (Colomb and Kalandides, 2010). Two of the most famous companies are *Partner für Berlin* (PFB) and *Berlin Tourismus Marketing GmbH* (BTM). The contribution that they gave for the reimagination and rebranding of the "New Berlin" was extraordinary. From 1996 onwards PFB has provided innovative activities involving the new city landscape and constructions with a special attention to the natural context, for instance guided tours and open-air cultural events (Colomb and Kalandides, 2010). These activities were primarily around the three main sites of the capital city, *i.e.* the new *Potsdamer Platz*, the *Reichstag* building and the area around the *Friedrichstraße*. Each site hid specific values and effectively conveyed a message.

Firstly, *Potsdamer Platz* became the visual symbol of urban transformation in the reunified Berlin since it was the first construction site of post-Wall Berlin (Colomb and Kalandides, 2010). The square caught the attention of the best European architects and the Berlin government decided to split the area into four different sites so as to give investors the opportunity to invest in it. During the reconstruction, *Potsdamer Platz* was the widest worksite all over Europe. In this specific site, a giant temporary construction was about to be built. In 1995 the "Infobox" in *Potsdamer Platz* opened and people, both tourists and citizens, could enter and admire the developments in the heart of Berlin (illustrated in Figure 3). The construction was twenty-three metres high, it had glasses on its surface and its aim was helping people to imagine Berlin's evolution and

transformation primarily around the main square. Only after five years, on the 30th of December 2000, the “Infobox” was definitively closed since it had fulfilled the objective and all the buildings around it were completed. Moreover, the “Infobox” will be replaced with a green area, transmitting the environmental importance and attention. Ariane Ribbeck, the head responsible of the project, asserted that the symbolic meaning was fulfilled too, because the square is now full of curious East and West Berliners that come here to buy or eat something, take a walk or relax with friends. The division between the East and West population does not exist anymore (Ribbeck, 2000).

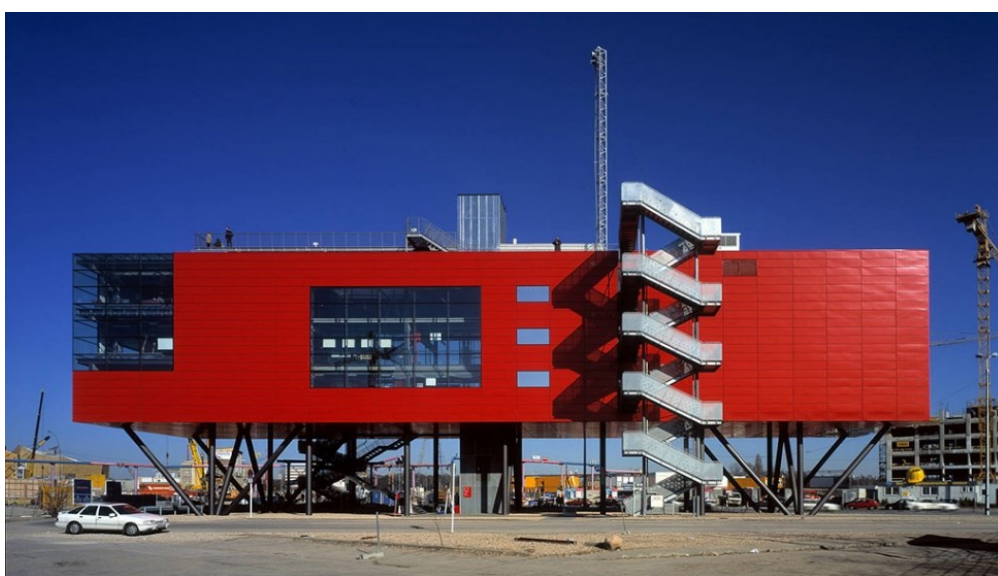


Figure 3: Infobox in Potsdamer Platz (Bollinger+Grohmann)

Secondly, the *Reichstag* building needed to vehicle the move of political and federal institutions from Bonn – the capital city of the German Federal Republic from 1949 to 1991 – to Berlin. City marketing techniques played an essential role and the visual transparency of the new *Reichstag* cupola designed by Norman Fosters was associated with political transparency (Colomb and Kalandides, 2010).

Finally, the area around the *Friedrichstraße* was designed by Hans Stimmann, the Urban Director of the Critical Reconstruction, holding the Weimar Republic era (1919-1933) and the 18th century Prussian Enlightenment period up as an example. The overall aim was rejecting the remnants of the GDR's heritage (Colomb and Kalandides, 2010). So far this paragraph has focused on Berlin's reconstruction after the Cold War, having analysed the most important sites of the city. The following section will discuss the role

of creativity and the importance of people's contribution for the realisation of the new city brand.

2.3 From iconic sites to creative people

Several factors contributed to the gradual shift from marketing campaigns focused on iconic sites of the city, to creativity and creative people. The first factor that contributed to this change was the economic and demographic decrease, thus it became clear that Berlin could not compete with other cities on a global scale and reach their economic performances. Additionally, the financial scandal known as the "Berlin bank scandal" harmed the city's image. As a result, the need for finding new image campaigns, new slogans and a new Berlin brand began to grow (Colomb and Kalandides, 2010).

In 2001, the "red-red" coalition of Social Democrats and the PDS won the elections, therefore the theme of creativity emerged and the new category of creative industries had an incredible expansion, becoming the fastest growing sector in Berlin's economy. Colomb and Kalandides (2010:11) examined some data and showed that in 2002 the Berlin creative economy counted 18,000 small and medium-sized enterprises, representing 8% of the entire workforce, and an average of eight billion euro as annual turnover. Moreover, the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy asserted that "the cultural and creative industries represent diversity at its best" basically because of the wide range of sectors they involved: music, books, arts, broadcasting, design, photography, architecture, journalism, advertising, etc. (www.creative-city-berlin.de).

Using the nightlife attractiveness and cultural scenes, creative entrepreneurs had been invited to start up a firm in Berlin. The Eastern districts of the city were transformed into a modern playground for artists, creatives, young travellers and tourists, as many creative spaces were located in the Eastern part of Berlin (Colomb and Kalandides, 2010:12). *Hackesche Höfe* is one of the most popular attractions in Berlin and what can be clearly seen in Figure 4 is the phenomenal growth of creativity and cultural activities in this quarter. *Hackesche Höfe* is the largest single courtyard complex in Germany and they have been placed under protection since 1972 (visitberlin.de). At the beginning, the courtyard was used for offices, industries or houses, however in the 1990s a regeneration process has created this magnificent quartier full of bright colours, new creative industries, cultural institutions, bookshops, cinemas, bars, restaurants and pubs. The courtyard has become one of the most fashionable quarters for the nightlife in Berlin.



Figure 4: Hacksche Höfe (www.hackesche-hoefe.com/)

2005 was the year of regeneration and inventiveness, when the communicative system realised that a new Berlin image as a creative city was needed. Consequently, creativity has become the *fil rouge* that led to the new Berlin city brand three years later. Combining creative factors and narratives would have been the best option for rising social emotions, such as sense of place and urban identity, and the marketing campaigns aimed for it.

Having discussed the creativity concept and the way it had an impact on population and place branding campaigns, the research will carry on with the evolution of the brand and will go deeper into the next topic, the *Be Berlin* campaign.

2.4 The *BeBerlin* brand

In May 2007 the new Mayor of Berlin, Klaus Wowereit, took a proactive role in the city promotion and launched a call for proposals, which have been claimed to be essential to create and develop a new branding strategy for Berlin (Colomb and Kalandides, 2010). The campaign was financed both by the Senate and local entrepreneurs, sharing the common goal for finding an authentic slogan, a graphic design and a communicative idea that could arouse everyone's interest and curiosity. The German capital city needed a change in order to reach the attractiveness of the other European capital cities and additionally in order to promote itself around the world. On 11th March 2008 Wowereit publicly brought the new Berlin campaign to life under the slogan *Be Berlin* (in German, *sei Berlin*).

The following paragraphs and sections will provide a complete overview of the multiple elements that composed the *Be Berlin* brand, starting from the analysis of the campaign objectives and its initial phases, then moving on to the role that narratives had in the development of the campaign, exploring the logo and the official websites graphic design, next presenting the concrete city image and concluding with the Berlin's touristic initiative.

2.4.1 The campaign aims and its creation phases

As far as the campaign goals are concerned, the study conducted by Colomb and Kalandides (2010:13) shows that the branding project had three different objectives.

The first one has been thoroughly discussed in the "Berlin reconstruction" paragraph of this thesis, since the first campaign aim was to heal the social divisions and eliminate the bad memories of the past. The elimination process was not immediate, as it had started in 1989 with the attempt of removing the socialist trace, then it had proceeded with the Critical Reconstruction of Stimmann, and finally with the urban identity program. Hence it took time to achieve it and the results had been visible only after twenty years with the *Be Berlin* campaign in 2008.

The second aim of the branding action was exalting the city's uniqueness and novelty, promoting diversity and intercultural education – the acceptance of other ways of thinking, living and behaving. The aspiration was enabling Berlin to attract tourists, artists, stakeholders, businesses and investors, so as to promote the city both as a trip destination, a beautiful place where to live and the perfect city for business affairs.

The last goal was about the creation of a clear and transparent city image; therefore, the best solution was the involvement of residents, who are the vibrant and living part of the capital city. Hence Berliners suddenly became storytellers and ambassadors of their city. The citizens' stories, narratives, experiences and interpretations contain a subjective factor, which ensures uniqueness and diversity. The same place could be seen from many different points of view and the branding campaign has been largely enriched by them. In addition, the creative aspect has significantly extended to a more daily and near dimension.

According to Colomb and Kalandides (2010) the city branding campaign had been made of two distinct phases. First of all, the Berlin population was directly involved, mobilising an active participation in the collection process of memories, stories and

narratives. They had been asked to write their stories and their thoughts about Berlin and its places, so as to collect a huge number of stories and start from real statements and situations. A more detailed account of narratives and storytelling strategies is given in the following paragraph, since it is an important and innovative aspect of the *Be Berlin* brand and a more exhaustive and meticulous analysis is needed.

On the other hand, the second phase of the city branding program was internationally oriented and the slogan “Place to be” was launched in March 2009 with a special event in New York. Berlin should have been presented as a modern, future-oriented production place which could compete with cities all around the world. Moreover, local industries strongly believed in the outstanding “Made in Berlin” products and at the end of 2010, thirteen well-known Berlin companies presented a new slogan campaign “*ich bin ein Berliner*” (wir.berlin).

The instruments used for this phase of the campaign were more conventional and worldwide spread than the narrative methods used in the previous phase. Events, advertising campaigns and the media were largely used and the main objective was attracting tourists, investors, students and stakeholders to come, visit the city and invest their money.

2.4.2 Authentic narratives

As indicated previously, a more detailed analysis for narrative strategies is needed. It is reasonable to start with the specific guidelines published in the official website of the city so as to formulate the personal narratives. The instructions sounded as follows: “your story has to be authentic and original: what differentiates it from events in other cities, or makes it unique? Your story should tell about change and describe how Berlin has influenced you or has changed you in some way. Your story should be fun, engaging and should encourage further actions or thoughts”.

The authors Colomb and Kalandides (2010:14) asserted that “the campaign is clearly based on unique messages which are, in many ways, Berlin-specific”. The individual “success stories” were posted on the website, since they could have been in different forms – such as video recording, audio recording, written on a piece of paper, digitally written etc. – and above all “success” was not only economic, but also scientific, cultural or non-profit.

The citizens' narratives should not be a single message or a slogan, they were gradually encouraged to find a multiplicity of messages, using the pattern "be..., be..., be Berlin". The most beautiful and meaningful pattern was created by a seventeen-year-old girl, who wrote "be unique, be diverse, be Berlin" and these attributes and values became the fulcrum of the following marketing activities.

The *Be Berlin* campaign was different from all the city branding campaigns of 1990s, because for the first time in Berlin's history the ethnic minorities had been considered and appreciated. Two essential social values were promoted: tolerance and diversity. Therefore, also some Turkish and Arab teenagers from a school in a Berlin district are portrayed and told their stories of success. The message behind the campaign concerned also those marginalised people, who contributed with their work and commitment to the change of the city (Colomb and Kalandides, 2010).

The authors cited above, Colomb and Kalandides (2010), questioned that despite the fact that tolerance and diversity were largely promoted, they could have been negatively used in the second phase of the campaign, since it will turn into an "outward-oriented" city branding operation, interested in the international dimension. Nevertheless, there is no evidence in the literature that proves that tolerance and diversity had been only used as instruments in order to catch attention and then left behind without concrete actions. Nowadays Berlin is a multicultural city and the data reported on the official website show that more than 190 different nationalities live in the city, with the consequence of having more than 250 active religion minorities and same-belief communities (even though the German word *Weltanschauungsgemeinschaften* expresses the concept in a better way, meaning a strong sense of community whose aim is developing the same vision of the world). This special feeling plays a key role in the community life in a multicultural metropolis. Additionally, the research shows that Berlin has the biggest homosexual, lesbian, bisexual and trans communities in Europe.

To conclude, in the official website (wir.berlin) it is possible to read a statement which wonderfully expresses multicultural values and it sounds as follows: "Diversity means variety. The variety of Berliners characterises the city and contributes to its attractiveness".

2.4.3 Graphic design

The following part of this research moves on to describe the graphic design of the brand and the importance of it in catching someone's attention. Before proceeding, it is necessary to define the difference between a logo and a brand. The former is the graphic element, which allows people to easily and rapidly identify a company, an organisation, a product or a service. While the latter is the combination of all tangible and intangible elements which characterise the organisation itself. For these reasons, the logo is essential for a place branding campaign since it is the element of visual recognition.

Undoubtedly, the *Be Berlin* branding campaign had created a specific logo (illustrated in Figure 5), which is simple and well-defined. The chosen colours are red and white, which are the colours of the flag of the capital city. The new brand *Be Berlin* was mentioned and in the middle of the two words there is the *Brandenburger Tor* (Brandenburg Gate in English), which is one of the most iconic and important monuments of the capital city. The brand *Be Berlin* was created in English (in German it would have been *Sei Berlin*) so as to use the assonance between the verb *to be* and the city name Berlin, but also in order to give an international and global imprint to the brand. The verb *to be* is charged with a more precise meaning which could be translated as “be a part of”. Not by accident, the aim of the campaign is to let people feel part of the city and the brand obviously reflects this desire.



Figure 5: the official logo of the campaign (Run Design)

Nonetheless, the logo of the city was not the only graphic element of this marketing campaign, as a red frame was also used in order to convey messages or slogans. At the beginning, it was used with the “be..., be..., be Berlin” pattern and people could fill the gaps with their own interpretations. Later the red frame (illustrated in Figure 6) showed important messages from the government, marketing agencies and tourism industry because it had become an intuitive instrument of communication. The original idea in the red frame below was oriented to families and young generations, stating that it is worthy

to visit Berlin with children as it is a beautiful city where to live. Whether parents refuse travelling to the capital city, the young generation will certainly go there in future.



Figure 6: A red frame poster (wir.berlin)

The red frame was physically located in some important places of the city so that people could use it as a framework for their photographs. This graphic element was merchandised in pamphlets, advertisements, gadgets, posters, t-shirts or shopping bags and people got used to the sight of this new red element. Thanks both to the clear and unique narrative and to the graphic elements such as the logo, the red frame and the advertisements around the city, Berlin acquired a new concrete city image and some international initiatives were announced and carried out. In 2009, Berlin was nominated as “City of change” and in 2012 it was described as “A great place to live”.

The following paragraph will briefly analyse another initiative which is closely connected with the *Be Berlin* campaign, however it is tourism-oriented and has a more cultural and touristic approach.

2.5 The *visitBerlin* initiative

The *visitBerlin* initiative has a longer history than the *Be Berlin* city brand, because the former was created in 1993 under the name of *Berlin Tourismus Marketing GmbH* (BTM). Therefore, after the fall of the Wall it had begun a marketing campaign in order to attract tourists and visitors from all over Europe and all over the world. A strong and solid collaboration with the “Hotel Industry Support Group” – which is the company's largest shareholder with a 40 percent share today – was the key aspect that allowed both

organisations to grow together. The *Berlin Welcome Card* was immediately launched and it became a huge sales success (visitberlin.de). It is the official touristic ticket in Berlin and more than 180 attractions and places of interest are included in the initiative, the urban transport is free with the *Welcome Card*, the access to the Museum Island has a discount and numerous combinations can be done in order to get the best option for every single tourist. At the turn of the millennium, Berlin became the first German city to exceed the ten million overnight stay and visitors came mostly from the United States of America, which was incredible and unexpected (visitberlin.de).

On 1st January 2011 the BTM changed its name and it introduced a new logo and word-image brand (illustrated in Figure 7), which will accompany the worldwide communication.



Figure 7: *visitBerlin* brand in 2011 (visitBerlin.de)

On the one hand, the initiative was international-oriented, as the aspiration for the future was the realisation of a project which imagines Berlin as the most important economic city in Europe, since Germany has always been famous for its industries and its solid economic system and a glorious return was needed. On the other hand, a particular attention was given to the German population and in particular to Berliners. In addition to the *Be Berlin* campaign and the demanded narratives which arouse Berliners' pride and place identity, they were pushed into visiting and exploring the city where they live. The idea was that they should become tourists of their own city. Even though it could sound strange and completely meaningless, it had an incredible positive impact on Berliners, who began to visit the city with a different perspective and were encouraged to appreciate its history and culture. They were invited to take a short vacation in their own town under the motto "Experience your city" and a multitude of events were free or low-cost for Berliners (visitberlin.de).

With regard to technology and the rapid digital evolution of social networks, smartphone applications, websites and so forth, it was necessary to improve the online initiatives and marketing performances in order to keep up with the times. In 2017, both the corporate website about *visitBerlin* and the new “ABOUT BERLIN” app had been online. In recent years, the Corona pandemic has hit Berlin's tourism industry hard and had a negative impact on its economy as well as in other countries. However, a new starting point was presented with the attention on urban compatibility and sustainability, which are future-oriented and the main focus was particularly on the sustainable development of the tourism industry.

To conclude, this chapter began by describing the Berlin situation after the Cold War and the fall of the Wall, analysing the phases of the city's reconstruction, then arguing that the city needed a new urban identity which should be focused on people, who are an essential part of the city. It went on to suggest the importance of the *Be Berlin* campaign and it examined deeply its components, starting from the objectives, passing through the narrative instrument, the graphic elements and the logo design, concluding with a broad overview of the *visitBerlin* brand which is specifically for the tourism industry. The following chapter presents the rebranding of the city image and thoroughly explores the current city brand.

Chapter 3. Rebranding of the city: *WeAreOneBerlin*

This chapter provides a detailed analysis of the Berlin rebranding campaign, with particular interest in the city's change and development. The new city brand incorporates a multitude of current and topical themes, which will be fully discussed below. From now on, every detail and information presented and elaborated comes from the official website of the city or from the official social media channels. This reflects the changeability, immediacy, rapid conversations and frenetic system of social networks.

3.1 The last campaign before the rebranding

After having thoroughly analysed the *Be Berlin* campaign in the previous chapter, considering every aspect, such as the project, its aim, the graphic details, the idea of narratives, and the touristic initiatives with the brand *visitBerlin*, it is now necessary to go further and examine the recent progress of the brand.

First of all, a short introduction and a brief overview of the historical period are needed in order to collocate the events on a well organised timeline. In 2020 the last *Be Berlin* campaign, #BerlinGegenCorona, was launched and within a few months the new city brand replaced the older one. The last *Be Berlin* campaign was made during a period of great uncertainty, with an enormous increase in infection rates due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The campaign was informative and simultaneously encouraged active solidarity in the city, as it was an extremely difficult period for everyone. The population was scared and worried about their future, hospitals and doctors were uncertain about effective treatments and risked their lives every day, and the government and politicians did not know what to do or say to remedy the situation and maintain positivity.

The official website disseminated information and effective actions that needed to be taken during that challenging period. The campaign's slogan was "Saving lives in two steps – Step 1: Roll up your sleeves, Step 2: Get vaccinated – done!". The slogan urged citizens to collaborate, stay safe, and get vaccinated. As a result, the short message and its efficacy yielded a positive result. The official website of Berlin is perfectly organised and in the section dedicated to COVID-19 there is a document from the Senate Department for Science, Health and Care with the official guidelines that the population had to follow in order to limit the spread of the virus. In a period of big uncertainty and continual change of the official laws and decrees, people needed a reliable source which

comes from the government and the State in order to be reassured. Berlin's website not only disseminated accurate information, but it also proposed creative and enjoyable activities to the population.

As it was forbidden to go outside if there were trivial reasons and the protective mask must be always worn, people found it difficult to relax and do leisure pursuits as they always did. For this reason, the official website suggested recreations and some examples of new activities against boredom which may include the "mental fitness: from the sofa", "give a tip: 100% help" and "stay fit in the living room".

The first one was focused on the cultural aspect and suggested that "Berlin's cultural life was diverse – even when you are stuck at home", since there was the possibility to listen to private concerts of all type, from classical music to children's programming, which were recorded by the famous Berliner Philharmonie and the Konzerthaus Berlin. Moreover, a wide variety of museum's visit tours and collections were available online and finally, theatres offered a varied digital selection of live events and archived videos from its media library.

The second activity, called "give a tip: 100% help", was oriented to restaurants, bars, pubs and grocery shops which had a dramatic decrease during the COVID-19 pandemic because of the restrictions and they were in urgent need of help. Berliners could buy a voucher for their favourite restaurant or pub and as soon as these places were allowed to re-open, the purchased vouchers could be redeemed. Thanks to these actions, Berliners could offer their support and avoid the definitive closure of their favourite bars.

The third activity, called "stay fit in the living room", spurred people on to do physical activities so as to stay fit and healthy. The living room could become a sports field and with virtual home workouts there was the possibility of choosing whichever sport for every age group. In cities where lock-down orders have been put in place, people could no longer do sports, but it was essential to stay healthy in that period and these government's initiatives had a big impact on people's mental health too.

In conclusion, in a period full of uncertainty, scaring feelings and distrust of the future, recreational activities had been suggested and they had a positive impact. Additionally, people had the opportunity to try new online tools which turned out to be useful in everyday life, for instance watching digital contents, answering video calls, attending online lessons, etc.

3.2 The *WeAreOneBerlin* new brand

Immediately after the #BerlinGegenCorona campaign and during the COVID-19 pandemic, the *Be Berlin* brand was replaced. The capital's marketing activities – and consequently the wir.berlin website, its social media channels, and the advertising campaigns – have been implemented by Berlin Partners for Business and Technology (*Berlin Partner für Wirtschaft und Technologie GmbH*) on behalf of the state of Berlin.

With regard to advertising campaigns for the city rebranding, they had already been conducted and Berliners were curious and thrilled to see the new brand of their city. On 12th September 2020, the new Berlin brand was launched. The day before the brand's release, the official Instagram channel (called wirberlin) delivered a message and the catch words were “*Morgen geben wir den Bären an Berlin zurück*” which literally means “Tomorrow we will give the bears back to Berlin”. In other words, the new brand would include a bear representation – which first appeared in the city's coat of arms in 1280 and has always been the symbol of the city – and the toponym of Berlin (as illustrated below in Figure 8).



Figure 8: new brand of the city (*wir.berlin*)

The logo project has been made by a famous creative company called Jung von Matt Spree. It is an independent global creative company from Europe, founded in Hamburg in 1991, and currently has thirty-nine agencies in ten different countries. They strongly believe in the power of creativity and in the extraordinary impact it can have on brands, both culturally and commercially (*jvm.com*). The inspiration comes from the symbol of the city – the Berlin bear – which is in the foreground. They also created a new font for the logo and for brand communication activities, which is inspired by the landscape of Berlin's subway stations and street signs (*wir.berlin*). It echoes the geometric style of the fonts from the 1920s. Accuracy and geometry were the basis of this new font so as to underline its clear and functional aspects; indeed, the new font has rounded corners, it is harmonious and it is easy to recognise. However, the interactive aspect could

not be ignored. For this reason, the new font can be downloaded from the official website so that everyone can write on their devices with the font of Berlin's current brand. It was an innovative idea and people were glad to use it. In terms of aesthetic design, the main colours remain white and red as in the previous logo, with the addition of black for the bear and the framework. This logo is currently used in every communication, campaign, advertisement or event, both nationally and internationally.

The bear plays a key role in the making of the logo and it is the most interesting and interactive part of the campaign, as Berliners themselves were encouraged to create the best bear representation to be displayed on the *Oberbaumbrücke* during the Festival of Lights. This innovative idea was a success and a huge number of people created their own bear image. Thanks to the positive reaction of the population, there is still the possibility to create your own colourful Berlin Bear on the "Be a part" section of the website and share it through the social media channels so as to give a subjective vision of the city and let Berliners feel part of a big entity. The aim of this initiative is to have countless variants of the Berlin logo, as it is no longer possible to have just one representation and it should be as diverse and open as the people in the capital city.

In addition, the #WirSindEinBerlin campaign allows Berliners to actively participate with another self-designable campaign element which becomes a catchy slogan (illustrated in Figure 9). It strengthens the feeling of community with a touch of irony and a knowing smile, which are typical of Berlin.



Figure 9: the ironic and catchy slogan (*wir.berlin*)

The casual slogans resemble dialogues between two people concerning the many contradictions of the capital city – with the formula *du so, ich so* – and then merge them together in a common understanding, which is usually a positive thought about Berlin. In this way, Jung von Matt Spree and the city of Berlin focused on the residents and promoted a stronger sense of community. The slogan can be seen in every part of the city and people have become accustomed to reading it along the streets, familiarising themselves with it. By becoming part of their city and part of their daily lives, the sense of community has sharply increased, and its aim was successfully fulfilled.

Having considered the graphic design and the interactive aspects of this new branding campaign, the following section moves on to consider the values hidden behind it that should be transmitted and spread throughout the entire world.

3.3 Tolerance, diversity, uniqueness

Before proceeding to discuss the values and the social improvements of the city rebranding, it is important to establish and understand the long-term aim of the campaign. Whereas the *Be Berlin* slogan emphasised individuality, the overall aim of the new brand is to promote a new sense of community and union. In other words, the new brand identity should highlight not only individual diversity, but also the diversity of the entire population of Berlin. Thus, the innovative idea is to move from the “I” to the “We” so as to create a stronger sense of community.

Through numerous national and international events and campaigns, the brand should convey the endless diversity of the dynamic metropolis with the central idea that everybody in Berlin can experience freedom every day and in every corner. Citing a sentence written on the official website, the German capital city is “a mosaic of people, emotions and experiences that come together to form a living work of art”. The new campaign focuses on unique moments and emotions which come from the neighbourhoods and all people living there can fully understand and feel it. The campaign tries to capture this uniqueness and define Berlin for everyone, from different points of view. Hence, the pride Berliners have in their city and the sense of community rapidly increase, highlighting the special and unique side of the city.

On the official website Berlin is described as “*Die Stadt der Freiheit*” – which means “the city of freedom” in English – where everybody can fearlessly express their personality, thoughts, emotions and uniqueness. The key aspect of the *WeAreOneBerlin*

campaign is the plural form of the personal pronoun which perfectly represents the values that needed to be spread by the slogan. As indicated in the title of the paragraph, tolerance, diversity and uniqueness are the most important aspects of the city rebranding and the popular belief is that “every individual in Berlin makes the city what it is: tolerant, diverse and colourful”. Berlin is made up of contrasts and the campaign motifs try to depict the different but complementary beliefs. The presentation video (on the section dedicated to the new brand on the website) is full of images and catchy phrases with the pattern “we are...” and it describes the uniqueness and the beauty of the city. Some themes are going to be briefly exposed below, with the emphasis on the more current ones.

We are a small footprint, referencing the environment and sustainability to raise people’s awareness; *We are smart*, both in terms of technology and artificial intelligence and in terms of efficiency that characterises a smart city; *We are art*, emphasising the most creative aspects of people; *We are colourful*, meaning not only colourful as a flower’s bouquet, but also colourful like the rainbow flag; *We are history* and *We are vision*, as complementary things that coexist in Berlin; and lastly *We are unique* and *We are united*, which are two of the most important attributes of the campaign. All these adjectives and characteristics are fundamental in Berlin’s depiction and without these emotions and these authentic people, the city will not be the same.

Having presented the new brand and the most significant cultural values it wants to transmit to the population; the following section presents the various campaigns and projects that the city promotes with the *WeAreOneBerlin* logo.

3.4 Current projects and topics

The previous paragraph has introduced and exemplified the cultural values and social aims hidden behind the slogan of the brand. Nevertheless, the strategic aim of a campaign is always to promote something, whether it is a product, a company, a voluntary organisation or a city. For this reason, the Berlin brand is promoting current topics and projects which are future-oriented and focus on sustainable sources, the environment and productivity.

The first project is titled “Berlin’s industry is pulsating” and it is fairly self-explanatory. The central theme is innovation, and this project is carried out together with sixteen leading industry partners, which are briefly presented below in order to provide a

clearer idea of the project. They are developing sustainable and safe technology, forward-looking medicine and green energy supply solutions.

Some examples of the partnership are the BMW Group; BTB, which develops innovative and sustainable energy supply solutions; and CleanTech, whose Business Park in Berlin-Marzahn (CBP) is the most extensive area for manufacturing companies in Berlin, providing perfect opportunities for forward-thinking businesses and start-ups seeking a location to expand using eco-friendly technologies and sustainable products. Another example is Pfizer, known for the COVID-19 vaccine, which is one of the world's leading research-based pharmaceutical companies. High quality, safety and benefit for patients are the standard of the company, which is headquartered in New York, USA, and in three German cities: Berlin, Freiburg and Karlsruhe. The last company that deserves to be mentioned is Siemens, a German multinational corporation set up in 1847. Nowadays, Siemens is the largest industrial manufacturing company in Europe and it is the leader in industrial automation and software on a global scale. These companies offer young employees attractive career prospects, which are completely future-oriented and are surely involved in the 5.0 transition – the companies' digital and energetic transformation process.

The second project is called “sports metropolis”, as Berlin is the sports metropolis of Germany in terms of both participation and experiences. The multitude of sports reflects their importance in the cultural life of the city. Sport, whether individual or team, acts as a catalyst for people and the social sense of community, embodying sharing and participation. Moreover, the values of the city itself – such as diversity, inclusion and respect – are reflected in sport as well. The aim of this campaign is to strengthen sport and its relevance in the city – so that it could become a significant element for the Berlin brand – and to communicate the values underlying it. A statistic shows that more than 720,000 Berliners are members of a sports club (wir.berlin), which is a great number considering that it is about one-fifth of the city's population. Another statistical datum indicates that 31,000 people from 116 different nations took part in the 2021 Berlin Marathon, which confirms the internationality of the event. Every year the BMW Berlin Marathon takes place and in addition to the common marathon, there is also an inline skating one. The BMW Berlin Marathon's athletes run across the Berlin streets and the atmosphere is cheerful and festive.

The third campaign is an unusual one and it is a collaboration titled “Veja x Berlin”. Veja was founded in Paris in 2005 and its mission is to combine social projects, economic justice and ecological materials in the manufacturing of their products. Therefore, attention to innovative materials is fundamental and they use raw materials obtained from recycled plastic bottles or recycled polyester to reduce the negative impact on the environment. Thus, their aim was to raise awareness among Berliners and the German population in general, because fast fashion and throwaway commodities are increasingly spreading. Fashion and dress culture has always been important for Berliners and now it is time to sustainably change the fashion world. In 2022, the collaboration with Veja produced a Berlin sneaker that combines both elements – style and sustainability. The sneaker was minimalist with the typical Berlin red colouring for the retro-futuristic Berlin lettering (illustrated in Figure 10). Moreover, for the Capital City limited edition, they designed the iconic Berlin bear. Thanks to this initiative, Berlin has become a location for fair and ecological fashion too.



Figure 10: Berlin sustainable sneaker (veja-store.com)

The last project made with the brand collaboration is a podcast called “Kiez & Schnauze” which shows Berlin in all its facets. The colourful contrasts of the city, the diversity and traditions, the appearance of a metropolis but the spirit of a village are attributes given to the capital city that reflect its essence. The current season of the podcast is presented by Jana Heinisch – who states that “Berlin and I are insanely similar: always searching, always evolving, restless, diverse and hungry for more” – and by Joab Nist – who comments that “Berlin inspires me anew every day. The colourful mix of people and

different lifestyles makes the city incredibly vibrant”. They cover various topics, such as sustainable mobility, digitalisation, integration, creativity, youth generation, sport and special World Games, fashion, clubs and subculture, neighbourhoods, social networks and influencers, homelessness, and future-oriented projects.

In summary, this section has attempted to provide a brief overview of the current city projects which involve environmental sustainability, industrial innovation, the importance of sports in the cultural life, fashion and design with a special care for recycled materials and fair working conditions, and finally digitalisation and information with the Berlin innovative podcast.

Conclusion

This study has thoroughly analysed place marketing and place branding campaigns with a strong focus on cities and in particular on the German capital city: Berlin. The analysis of its recent and dramatic history has been fundamental to a deep understanding of a city branding campaign focused on union, tolerance and acceptance of cultural diversity. The Berliners' open-minded attitude, their willingness to get involved in the project and their active participation in the city campaigns have been crucial elements contributing to its success.

The starting point of the citizens' union process was the "Berlin reconstruction" after the Cold War. A series of opportunities, new perspectives and hope for a better future led Berliners to believe that a great period was imminent and popular expectations positively increased. Through comprehensive analysis, it has been found that the *Be Berlin* brand – publicly launched in 2008 – has fostered Berliners' pride and created a transparent city image. The involvement of residents through narratives, personal storytelling and unique contributions aroused the interest of both citizens and external stakeholders. Thanks also to the *Be Berlin* brand, which attracted investors, shareholders and tourists, the economic system has improved and Germany has once again become Europe's leading economic power. These findings are significant because they demonstrate that marketing and branding activities have a profound impact on different aspects of the city, such as economic and financial growth, social and popular cohesion, tourism, and visitor attractions. For this reason, it follows that cities should invest in branding and marketing activities so as to improve and evolve over time.

The aim of the rebranding project was to introduce a modern and future-oriented vision of the city which could keep up with the times. The sudden change of the logo and slogan made the marketing activities more effective. Berliners were glad and delighted to see the bear again as a symbol of their city and the interactive design tool, which can be consulted on the official website, enabled people to express their ideas and visions creatively.

While this study provides valuable insights, it is important to acknowledge that it is a recent project, which started in 2020 and therefore has endless possibilities to evolve and modify. Moreover, the literature on the rebranding of the city is limited as it is a too

recent and topical theme. The information found on the website reflects immediacy and changeability, which are typical of online sources; thus, they should be filtered and analysed with meticulous attention because positive news and results are exalted, while negative or worrying aspects are perhaps hidden.

Future research should focus on the real effects of the rebranding project and demonstrate whether it was a good or bad communicative strategy. The attention towards sustainability – both economic, social and environmental – is rapidly growing, and in a few years, it may be possible to observe its significant effects. In conclusion, this research underscores the importance of city branding strategies in the creation of a cohesive population, a harmonious government and a collaborative industrial sector. All these achievements can be clearly seen in the city of Berlin; therefore, the objective of this thesis is conclusively attained.

Riassunto

Questo progetto di tesi presenta uno studio dettagliato delle campagne di branding, ossia delle strategie mirate alla formazione di un nuovo brand, che possano innalzare la percezione di un prodotto da parte dei consumatori. Tuttavia, in questo caso specifico, il prodotto da valorizzare risulta essere piuttosto particolare: una città. Il caso di studio della ricerca è la città di Berlino, capitale della Germania, la quale ospita una popolazione di 3.755.251 abitanti (dato aggiornato al 2022), conferendole il titolo di città più popolosa dell'Unione Europea. È attualmente considerata una metropoli multietnica, ricca di diversità culturali e di storia. Il cuore di questa ricerca è la campagna di rebranding, vale a dire lo sviluppo e la creazione di un nuovo brand per la città. Essendo un progetto recente e in pieno sviluppo, grazie alle nuove tecnologie che apportano straordinari miglioramenti in tempi ristretti, la dissertazione lascia spazio a future interpretazioni e considerazioni sull'evoluzione del brand della città di Berlino.

L'obiettivo ultimo della ricerca è considerare e determinare gli sviluppi positivi e i benefici apportati dalle strategie di branding attuate nella città, in modo da poter individuare una possibile relazione tra brand e benessere. Dalla ricerca si evince che il brand aiuta ad aumentare il senso di unione e di collettività tra i residenti, le persone si sentono rappresentate da esso e sono orgogliose di vivere nella città di Berlino. Il contributo richiesto ai cittadini è stato fondamentale per rendere originale il brand, per rafforzare il sentimento di attaccamento al luogo e per mettere in evidenza l'unicità della città. Inoltre, il marchio supporta temi attuali e i nuovi progetti della città di Berlino presentati nel terzo ed ultimo capitolo ne sono la testimonianza. Il progetto di tesi si articola in tre capitoli, strutturati in modo tale da iniziare presentando una panoramica generale dell'argomento, per poi approfondirne progressivamente gli aspetti specifici.

Il primo capitolo funge da cornice per l'intera ricerca e definisce alcuni termini fondamentali per poter comprendere al meglio lo sviluppo della tesi. Si parte da un'analisi dettagliata del termine *place marketing*, che consiste in attività mirate alla promozione del luogo, esaltandone le attrazioni locali, le tradizioni e le peculiarità. Il *place marketing* si concentra sugli aspetti positivi e sulle potenzialità del territorio e ha due obiettivi principali: aumentare il valore percepito del luogo per attirare stakeholders o turisti, e accrescere il sentimento di orgoglio nei residenti.

Successivamente, lo studio analizza le strategie di marketing e di branding mirate ad una città e non più ad un luogo generico. La creazione di un marchio – definito come strumento volto a identificare e differenziare un bene o servizio – è un processo fondamentale anche per una città che mira a distinguersi ed essere riconosciuta come unica. Vengono presentati in questo studio i brand efficaci di New York, Amsterdam e ovviamente Berlino. L'ultimo aspetto da considerare prima di poter focalizzare l'attenzione sul caso di studio specifico è l'utilizzo della narrazione nel progetto. Noi umani siamo intrinsecamente attratti dalle storie e dai racconti, di conseguenza le narrazioni sui luoghi (definite *place storytelling*) possono avere un ruolo fondamentale sulla comunicazione e sulle attività di marketing poiché riescono ad accrescere il senso di identificazione e di appartenenza alla città.

Il secondo capitolo presenta un approfondimento dettagliato sulla città di Berlino, partendo dalla sua storia fino ad arrivare alla creazione del marchio nel 2008. La capitale tedesca venne profondamente colpita dal secondo conflitto mondiale e successivamente dalla Guerra Fredda. Nel 1989, anno della caduta del Muro di Berlino, la zona a est della città risultò estremamente arretrata sia dal punto di vista sociale che urbano. Iniziò così il processo di ricostruzione che contrappose numerosi progetti: alcuni miravano alla completa eliminazione della traccia sovietica e comunista, altri volevano procedere ricostruendo la città emulando gli edifici presenti nella Repubblica di Weimar, considerata il periodo di massimo splendore, mentre altri ancora sollecitavano la creazione di una nuova identità urbana, legata alla tradizione e alle peculiarità della città. Quest'ultimo progetto venne ritenuto ambizioso ma concreto, si comprese che la vera forza di Berlino stesse nel cambiamento, nella capacità di adattarsi e risollevarsi. Eliminare il Muro, emblema della Guerra Fredda e della storia della città, avrebbe comportato la perdita di autenticità e identità urbana. Ad oggi, le narrazioni riguardanti il Muro offrono le immagini più impressionanti e autentiche della storia di Berlino.

La ricostruzione dei luoghi iconici della città per realizzare una nuova identità coinvolse direttamente i cittadini che vennero incoraggiati ad immaginare la “nuova” Berlino e il suo nuovo progetto di branding. Ogni luogo trasmetteva un messaggio: *Potsdamer Platz*, con il suo progetto di trasformazione ed evoluzione, aiutò i cittadini ad immaginare il futuro della città; l'edificio del *Reichstag* e la sua cupola in vetro simboleggiavano la trasparenza e la lealtà del governo; i quartieri ad est della città furono

trasformati in spazi dedicati ad artisti, creativi o turisti, come dimostra il quartiere di *Hackesche Höfe*.

Nel 2005, anno di rigenerazione e grande inventiva, si comprese che la città di Berlino avesse bisogno di un'immagine che la identificasse come città creativa e innovativa. Il coinvolgimento dei residenti, attraverso i loro racconti e le loro storie, fu essenziale per la creazione del brand *Be Berlin*, ufficialmente nato nel 2008. L'obiettivo principale fu esaltare l'unicità della città, per promuoverla come destinazione turistica, come città perfetta da vivere e come luogo di affari, e per creare un'immagine chiara e trasparente di essa. Per poter fare ciò, fu necessario coinvolgere i cittadini e raccogliere storie autentiche e vicine alla popolazione. “La vostra storia deve essere autentica e originale, [...] deve rappresentare il vostro successo, non solo economico ma anche scientifico, culturale o proveniente da attività non profit”, queste furono le linee guida ufficiali per raccogliere le narrazioni. Per la prima volta, venne richiesta una partecipazione attiva dei residenti per poter creare collettivamente qualcosa di unico.

Venne diffuso anche un nuovo pattern per la creazione di uno slogan efficace: “be..., be..., be Berlin”. L'idea di una diciassettenne, che scrisse “*be unique, be diverse, be Berlin*”, stimolò la diffusione dei valori di tolleranza e diversità. È proprio questa la chiave di lettura della nuova strategia di branding: esaltare la diversità e la varietà della città per renderla attraente e all'avanguardia.

L'aspetto grafico e i dettagli del logo vengono descritti e presentati visivamente attraverso alcune immagini nel corpo centrale della tesi. Gli elementi grafici, come il logo e la cornice rossa (chiamata *red frame*) aggiunta agli annunci pubblicitari, alle comunicazioni ufficiali e ai gadget della città, contribuirono alla formazione di un'immagine unica e concreta.

In aggiunta, la tesi presenta l'iniziativa *visitBerlin* che si occupa delle numerose iniziative e attività turistiche della città. Pur avendo un orientamento internazionale, mirato ad attirare turisti stranieri verso la capitale tedesca per visitarne le meraviglie, non viene perso il carattere nazionale e soprattutto cittadino. I berlinesi dovevano diventare turisti della loro città, per viverla e osservarla con occhi diversi e più interessati. Questa strategia avvicinò molto i residenti alla città e il senso di unione e di attaccamento al luogo aumentò.

Il terzo e ultimo capitolo presenta il recente cambiamento e la nuova campagna di rebranding della città. Nel 2020, in un momento di grande incertezza globale dovuto alla pandemia di Covid-19, le autorità e le società partner di Berlino lanciano un nuovo brand. Dal nome *WeAreOneBerlin* (in italiano: Noi siamo una Berlino), si comprende che viene abbandonato l'individualismo del precedente slogan e si accentuano la collettività e la forza di unione.

Come raffigurano le immagini presenti nella sezione dedicata, il logo minimalista presenta il profilo di un orso, da sempre simbolo di Berlino, e il toponimo della città. Il progetto del logo fu sviluppato dalla compagnia chiamata Jung von Matt Spree, un'associazione europea creativa e indipendente, che crede profondamente nel potere della creatività, sia a livello culturale che commerciale.

L'elemento chiave e innovativo della campagna risiede nella possibilità di rappresentare l'orso ufficiale del logo in maniera libera e interattiva. Si dovevano avere infinite varianti del logo di Berlino, poiché una sola rappresentazione non sarebbe stata sufficiente. Berlino doveva essere diversa, tollerante, unica e aperta proprio come le sue persone. La capitale tedesca acquisisce inoltre il titolo di "città della libertà", promotrice delle diversità culturali e luogo in cui ognuno è libero di esprimere la sua personalità, i suoi pensieri e la sua unicità. Si conclude citando una frase pubblicata nel sito web ufficiale della città di Berlino: "la capitale tedesca è un mosaico di persone, emozioni ed esperienze che si uniscono per formare un'opera d'arte vivente". La suggestiva frase rimanda alla collettività, cardine della campagna di rebranding e valore fondante della nuova identità berlinese. Si sottolinea il contributo indispensabile delle persone, senza le quali la città non esisterebbe.

Per concludere, questa tesi osserva i nuovi progetti promossi dal brand ufficiale orientati al futuro, attenti alla sostenibilità ambientale e alla produzione sostenibile. Nel paragrafo dedicato, vengono approfonditi quattro grandi temi: l'innovazione nel mondo industriale, lo sport e il benessere collettivo, la produzione sostenibile e infine la digitalizzazione.

Da ultimo, l'obiettivo della tesi si può considerare raggiunto poiché si è dimostrato che la strategia di branding di una città contribuisce alla creazione di una popolazione coesa, fornendo benefici per i cittadini, per l'economia, per la ricerca e lo sviluppo di nuove iniziative orientate al futuro, per il turismo e la vita culturale e per il settore

quaternario basato sul lavoro intellettuale e sull'innovazione tecnologica. Tuttavia, essendo un progetto recente, iniziato nel 2020, ci sono ancora molte possibilità di sviluppo e di cambiamento. Pertanto, gli effetti reali del rebranding della città potranno essere analizzati solamente da studi futuri, che saranno in grado di dimostrare la buona riuscita o il fallimento della strategia comunicativa presentata in questo studio.

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