Creative Spaces and Local Identity for Territorial Branding: The Case Study of the Samara Creative Industries

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Abstract

The idea of creative spaces as a tool for a new economy, a way to develop territories, and the facilitator of urban identity has also reached the Samara region, Russia. The city of Samara actively declared itself at the federal level not only as a centre for the space and aviation industry, as a resort city with one of the longest embankments along the Volga River but also as the cultural and creative centre of the region. Creative spaces in Russia have been actively developing over the past few years. Creative spaces are now perceived as an opportunity to preserve the historical centre and architectural monuments, a chance to develop the cultural code of the city, based on the relationship of historical and cultural heritage with modern creative ideas, innovations and the creative layer of the city. Moreover, creative industries build local identity by determining cultural capital and innovativeness of territories. They unit citizens and define urban communities, create festive places, and attract attention of government and business to urban local problems. One of the Samara case features is the location of creative clusters in the historical centre (rather than in industrial zones in remote areas of the city), often near or in the cultural heritage sites themselves. The case of Samara creative spaces shows what relationships, forces and rules can exist at the intersection of historical heritage and creative clusters and how citizens can fit into this relationship and influence the territorial branding, local urban identity and city code.

Keywords

creative spaces, local identity, territorial branding, creative industries, creative clusters

Introduction

Creative industries as activities that transform individual creativity and skills into innovative products or services are linked today to the potential of economic development through a knowledge-based economy, the creation of intellectual products and the relationship between information, knowledge and creativity. This interrelation, in turn, signifies the priorities change from manufacturing to services that highlight problems of unemployment, equal job opportunities and demands for new business models for the creative sector. By obtaining flexibility in production due to the smaller number of produced items and higher reflexivity to consumer demands, creative industries appreciate human capital as a specific, valuable resource and the main driving force in modern society.

Furthermore, creative industries can cooperate with city institutions in urban planning and regeneration, establish the needed policies for regulation and support of creative businesses at the administrative level and generally advocate entrepreneurship development. It also includes theoretical and practical approaches for promoting, marketing and branding goods and services and the urban environment. Modern cities in the competitive environment apply various branding strategies to ensure the association as places that create, distribute and promote different markets of goods, services and ideas (Dudek-Mańkowska & Grochowski, 2019). The more clear and attractive a city vision is produced, the more interest it obtains from consumers, investors and tourists.

This article demonstrates in the example of Samara city how creative industries are connected to the ideas of territorial branding, creation of the city image and establishment of creative spaces.

The Prospects of Creative Industries

Today, creative industries perform the interconnection between artistic and intellectual activities, technological innovations and economic profits. The variety of arts and crafts, fashion, design, architecture, audio and video production, advertisement, visual and performing arts, sociocultural activities and creative services constitute today the basis of creative industries (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, 2008). As a network of producers that use creativity, local labour markets and human intellectual resources, creative industries are considered a promising sector of the post-industrial economy (Florida, 2003; Howkins, 2002).

By developing creative inputs such as ideas, supplementary products and marketing support, creative industries apply the innovation concept and the influence of information on modern society (Garnham, 2005; Müller et al., 2009). By eliminating such cultural components as cultural creativity and products, creative industries primarily affect economic development and improve economic benefits (Galloway & Dunlop, 2007). Promoted since the 1990s as a fast-growing and highly transformative economic sector, it still requires policy and strategy planning and development in order to implement the world's best practices at the local level (Jayne, 2005).

Creative industries produce and popularise innovative ideas, products and services. The range of creativity applications varies from: (a) basic product development and (b) defining new organizational forms or business models to (c) novel combinations of existing technologies and (d) processes and innovative problem-solving (Miles & Green, 2008).

Creative local production is usually situated around large or medium-sized cities. In some cases, to revitalise territories, they are located in abandoned industrial zones and suburban areas; in other cases, they inhabit the downtown and historical buildings and facilitate urban redevelopment. Creative spaces are now perceived as an opportunity to preserve the historical centre and architectural monuments. Furthermore, it is a chance to develop a cultural code of the city based on the relationship between historical and cultural heritage with modern creative ideas, innovations and the creative layer of the city. Moreover, creative industries build local identity by determining the territories' cultural capital and innovativeness. They unite citizens and define urban communities, create festive places and attract the attention of government and businesses to local urban problems.

Creative spaces in Russia have been actively developing over the past few years. However, for Russian reality, "creative industries" is a new term that has not yet been fixed properly in the normative acts, administrative mechanisms and policies. There are still many needed steps and challenges to overcome in order to boost and promote the efficiency and profitability of the creative business.

Territorial Branding and Local Identity

Creative industries are deeply connected to spaces: location specificity can positively influence the process of creative product development (Drake, 2003). Whether in the industrial area or the downtown, in the factory hall or a historical palace, creative industries reconsider territories and revive urban spaces. For instance, artistic and cultural resources can facilitate urban development and regeneration by locating their main production areas in historical quarters and buildings. Placed in historical and cultural endowments or abandoned factory zones, creative industries tend to concentrate their business in specific urban areas to cluster in cities (Lazzeretti et al., 2008).

Local firms anchored to the territory build a cluster, a geographical concentration of interconnected economic agents that combine businesses, consumer interrelation, activities, investments and services (Chapain & Comunian, 2010; Comunian et al., 2010). Local firms share location, information sources (advertisement) and consumers that positively affect business profitability. Clusters provide networking, growing interaction between businesses and consumers, cooperation and information support. Moreover, united in clusters, creative businesses further promote creativity in various locations and establish a creative hub that fosters economic development (Foord, 2009). The support of cultural production and promotion facilitates not only cultural heritage preservation and local tourism development but also the transformation of local areas (Aubry et al., 2015).

Furthermore, both cultural and creative production attract investors' attention, offer consumers a variety of local products and services and redefine the city's image. In particular, urban redevelopment and revitalization through creative industries can improve public areas, increase the number of cultural activities, upgrade the quality of urban spaces and refine the quality of life. Additionally, by enriching the local offer of products and services for consumers, creative industries provide workplaces and new job opportunities for local producers.

Considering that urban development and growth are based primarily on economic production, it is possible to denote the idea of creative cities whose urban areas combine economic and further social, cultural, and environmental issues (Scott, 2006). Creative cities arrange built environments, social interactions and space accessibility.

Territorial branding introduces to local tourism practices additional options for urban development and promotion; supporting local cultural festivals, art fairs, creative workshops, and creative industries promotes urban regeneration and influences city promotion and branding (Stipanović et al., 2019).

In order to improve or redefine the city's image, it is possible to implement policies for urban management based on the creative industries' development (Pieczara, 2019). The variety of creative industries in one urban area is characterised by its multifunctional and easy-changing nature, using the cooperation of different specialists and product areas for efficient work and promotion. Furthermore, it is necessary to analyse the characteristics of urban location for establishing creative industries; the urban landscape quality (e.g., city density, suburban areas, potential neighbourhood, architecture), social profile (e.g., employment rate, adequate audience, availability of start-up support programs, a culture-related functionality), the strategy of market diversification (investment typology, existing enterprises' profile, available labour skills and adaptability).

The spatial distribution of creative industries in a city is relevant to the idea of territorial branding: the dense residence of creative businesses establishes a creative urban environment (Bruzzese et al., 2013). Furthermore, creative industries can be located in the urban neighbourhood with former industrial buildings or punctuated

in separate abandoned buildings. Consequently, the urban environment experiences physical and functional transformations on the way to immaterial production.

Some scholars define the following relations between cultural heritage and creative industries (Gordin & Matetskaya, 2011). Firstly, cultural heritage plays as "scenery" for creative industries, artworks, public spaces, and buildings of different architectural styles form the urban landscape and cultural environment (e.g., cultural district or cultural heritage cluster). Secondly, cultural heritage acts as "content" for creative industries; the content of cultural processes is an element of cultural heritage. Thirdly, cultural heritage works as a "brand" for creative industries, territorial, organizational, individual, or social brands that execute cultural functions. Fourthly, cultural heritage navigates as a "demand builder" in creative industries, a realization of new forms and ways of providing cultural values. By creating new forms of cultural heritage presentation and performance, attracting the attention of visitors to different problems of cultural heritage, branding specific objects of cultural heritage, protecting cultural heritage and supporting virtual communication between institutions, visitors and cultural agents, it is possible to develop creative industries and change the urban environment.

Samara as a Resort City

As the largest city and administrative centre of the region, Samara is located at the confluence of the Volga and the Samara rivers. With a population of over 1,140,000 residents, it is the eighth-largest city in Russia and a significant social, political, economic, industrial, sports and cultural centre.

Mainly, it is considered a leading industrial centre in the Volga region in terms of national income and industrial production volume. Among the key industrial activities of Samara's production, it is necessary to mention aerospace launch vehicles, satellites and various space services, engines, cables, aircraft, rolled aluminium, chemical and cryogenic products, gas-pumping units, drilling bits, automated electrical equipment and airfield equipment. Furthermore, Samara is famous for its local gastronomic highlights, such as chocolate and beer.

As an attractive social, sports and political centre, Samara city hosted the European Union — Russia Summit in May 2007 and the 2018 FIFA World Cup. Apart from the variety of professional state and independent theatres, public and private museums and art galleries, and philharmonic orchestra hall, Samara regularly offers its citizens and tourists different art and music festivals, social and cultural events and artistic competitions.

Furthermore, with its humid continental climate, a 5 km long embankment and beach area along the Volga River and historical downtown with authentic buildings of wood and stone, the city is one of the popular tourist destinations and obtains many recreation spots for citizens and visitors. Some 548 cultural heritage objects have been located downtown and protected by the regional administration. Since 2019 the city
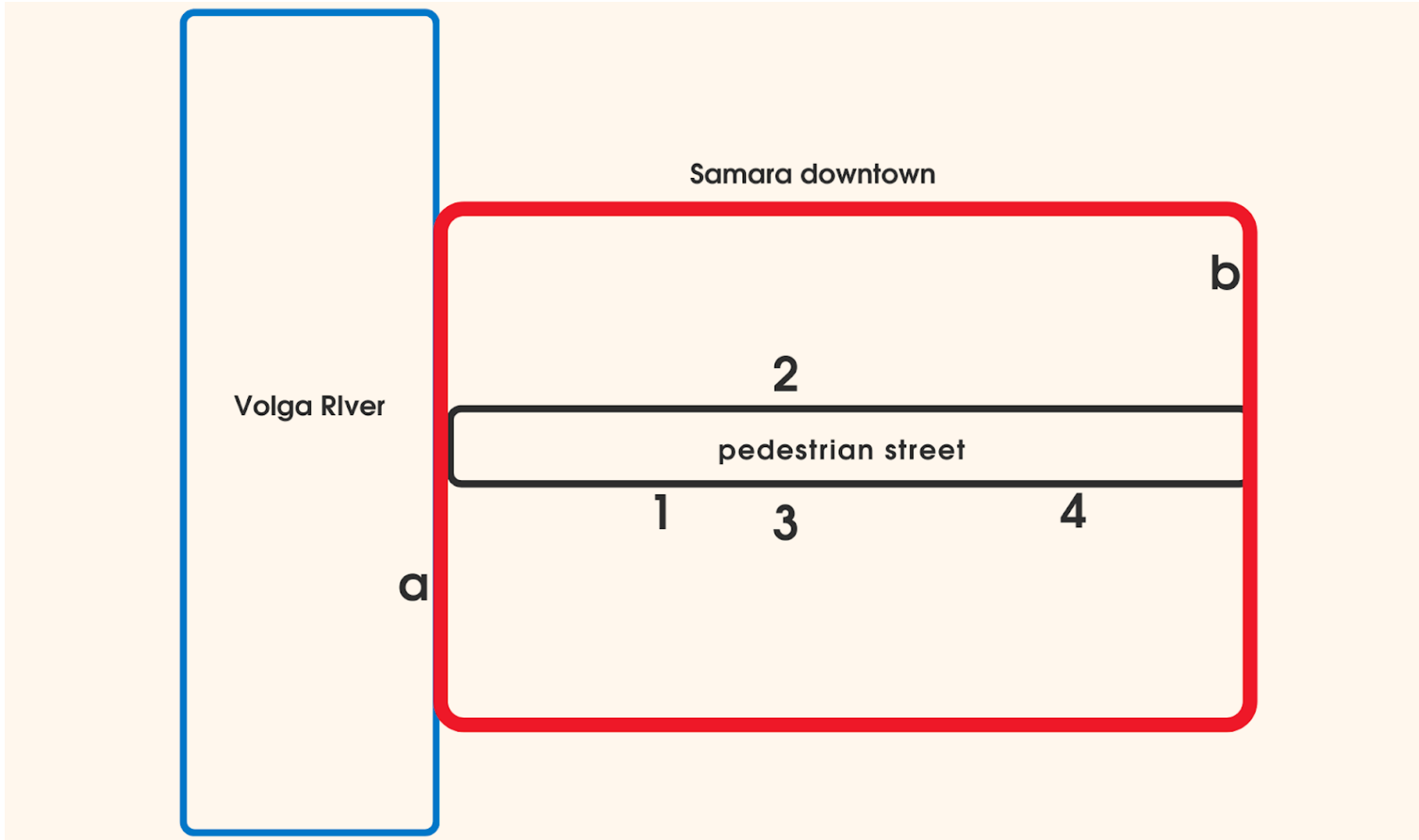
Figura 1
The area of the historical settlement of Samara.

has obtained the status of a historical settlement of regional significance; it means that the preservation of the historical and architectural environment in the defined geographical area has become one of the regional government priorities. There are a few significant moments for this research regarding the cultural heritage, historical settlement and territories: (a) there are a lot of historical buildings in the Samara downtown; some of them are renovated, others are in very poor condition; (b) in the Soviet Union time, factories and industrial companies were located in a few of historical buildings and particularly in the historical downtown; (c) today, historical downtown is represented by the manifold and expressive buildings as commercial, residential and even abandoned areas.

Creative industries in Samara are represented today by the growing number of creative clusters as a subset of business clusters (Pratt, 2004). Art crafts, visual arts, audio and video production, local fashion and jewellery designers, private theatres and museums are located close to each other downtown, marked in red as the borders of the historical settlement. Small ateliers, concept stores, manufacturers, and medium factories mainly inhabit historical buildings and areas of the downtown (Figure 1).

Creative clusters in Samara's downtown are mainly located along the pedestrian Leningradskaya street (marked as the black line). This pedestrian street is a famous attraction point for locals as well as tourists coming from the river station (marked

as "a") or the train station (marked as "b"). Creative clusters "1" (Figure 2) and "2" (Figure 3) are located in the buildings of the former fur and textile factories, respectively. The building of the fur factory used to be a hotel at the beginning of the XX century that belonged to the property of Samara notary M. V. Afanasiev.

Creative cluster "3" (Figure 4) is situated in the former house of merchant E. Shihobalov built not later than 1876; in 1927, the first in the region newsreel studio inhabited the house.

Finally, the building from the current creative cluster "4" (Figure 5) used to be an apartment building, a military prison, a watch repair factory and communal apartments at different times. As a property of a merchant, A. Shihobalov, in the 1880s, it was used for rent to local manufacturers. It was several times reconstructed and lost the original decor on the facade.

Some scholars developed the composite index of the region's creativity for all regions of the Russian Federation from 2010 to 2018, which consists of two parameters: the creative economy index and the creative environment index (Glebova et al., 2021). The first one is based on the data on economic performance, employment rate and technological innovations rate. The second one consists of the data on the creativity infrastructure, information development, consumers' financial abilities, creative finances budget and talents rate. According to this research, Samara belongs to the group of regions with a relatively low level of creativity that includes 19 regions of 85 (to compare: 13 regions belong to the group with an average level of creativity, 52 regions are characterised by extremely low territory creativity).

One of the reasons why creative industries on the local level attract more and more attention is the implementation of support programs at the federal level. Therefore, the Samara region participated in the third stage of Rurban Creative Lab, the laboratory for developing creative spaces that includes creative ideas accelerator and project session. The program was initiated by the Agency for Strategic Initiatives in partnership with DOM.RF at the beginning of 2021. The Samara region, being on the list of the top-four subjects for adopting the program, aims to implement practices to promote and popularise creative industries.

Study and Results

This research focuses on three key terms: territorial branding, the brand of the territory and a cultural code. Territorial branding is understood as the purposeful formation and advancement of the images and brands of the territory for locals, tourists and authorities (Eidelman et al., 2019). As a part of marketing strategies, territorial branding can elaborate public reputation and increase territory competitiveness. As a result, the territory can attract more tourists, improve the employment rate and investment climate and boost economic and social attractiveness.

Figura 2
Creative cluster 1/
former fur factory.
Credits. Maria Skivko.

Figura 3
Creative cluster 2/
former textile factory.
Credits. Maria Skivko.

Figura 4
Creative cluster 3/
former merchant house.
Credits. Maria Skivko.

Figura 5
Creative cluster 4/
former communal
apartments.
Credits. Maria Skivko.

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business clusters"*
Pratt, 2004

The brand of the territory is defined as a set of images, attributes and perceptions that express the list of unique material and nonmaterial characteristics (Serikov & Ovechko, 2013). It normally includes a variety of actions and initiatives, advertising messages, and the creation of a logo that all together work on the social differentiation, identification and value formation in the brand.

Finally, it is necessary to mention the notion of a cultural code as a set of relationships, forces and rules that affect the city, the citizens, and the urban environment. As Anne Mikoleit and Moritz Pürckhauer (2011) state, the life of a city consists of moments that obey patterns and relationships. The case of Samara creative clusters shows what relationships, forces and rules can exist at the intersection of historical heritage and creative clusters and how citizens can fit into this relationship and influence the territorial branding, local urban identity and city code.

The results of five expert interviews with the local representatives of Samara creative industries aim to reveal the questions: (a) an image of a city; (b) a brand of a city; (c) creative industries in a city; (d) location in the historical centre; and (e), a cultural code of a city.

The Image of Samara

As a result of territorial branding, the images of the city are connected to the typical Samara representations. On the one hand, there are more general images such as "industry" (the interviewee 1), "architecture" (the interviewee 2), "urbanism" (the interviewee 4), and "diversity" (the interviewee 3); as mentioned above, Samara is a major industrial and cultural centre in the country with significant economic and cultural objects. On the other hand, there are more precise images as "a city of warm people" (the interviewee 3), "a city with history and values" (the interviewee 2), and "a city of art nouveau" (the interviewee 5); the historical downtown with its diverse architecture of wooden houses, mansions in *art nouveau*, baroque and constructivism compose authentic atmosphere of the city. It is worthwhile to denote such images as "a resort town" that has "its atmosphere" and "a place to work and rest" (the interviewee 3); this can be explained by the location of the downtown along the Volga riverside and the very touristic and resort spirit in the summer. Finally, one of the experts specifies: "in summer, a swimsuit is always in the bag" (the interviewee 5); this confirms the idea of a resort town with a specific lifestyle and everyday practices even for locals.

The Brand of Samara

No one confirmed the brand of the city; however, several ideas connected to aerospace production, resort town, and cultural capital appear more often in public discourses. Experts mainly denote: "the brand is not the one that responds" (the interviewee 3), "the brand is aerospace, but I do not like it" (the interviewee 2), and "it should not be only one brand because Samara is too big for only one brand" (the interviewee 5; meaning only industrial, or cultural, or economic centre). The city is too big and has different spots of attraction and objects and ideas for promotion, and

creative industries can actively participate in the brand construction. At the same time, experts emphasise the role of the city brand that represents "the heart of the Volga region" (the interviewee 1; again, due to the geographical location).

Creative Industries in the City

All the experts emphasise that "there are many prospects for creative industries, but people are not interested enough" (the interviewee 1), and "there is no common base, no evident return" (the interviewee 2). In other words, there are enough creative people and businesses to become a significant part of the economic sector of the city; however, the organizational and administrative processes are still unclear to attract enough participants (the interviewee 5). Moreover, there is "a need for governmental support" (the interviewee 3), "a need for cooperation" (the interviewee 4), and "it needs more coverage" (the interviewee 2) in order "to develop personality and a brand". Therefore, the government has to develop official procedures at the local level to support, cooperate, and motivate creative businesses to make the procedure clear, transparent, and attractive. Additionally, the key constraint is "an insufficient legal framework" (the interviewee 1) that should also be established at the local level.

Furthermore, the experts define creative industries "as an events industry (something that the authorities pay attention to)" (the interviewee 2) and "as super mass production (the real impact on the economy but it is easy to screw up)" (the interviewee 2). The former aims to reconsider territories within various events, and the latter is oriented toward the production, promotion and distribution of innovative products. In addition, creative industries can work as "a point of attraction" (the interviewee 3), as an instrument "to create a local identity" (the interviewee 4), and "to bring a local note" (the interviewee 1). The main goal for creative industries development in a city is to make "Samara a comfortable sociocultural environment where you want to stay" (the interviewee 5). This goal can be based on providing job opportunities and financial benefits for local producers and attractive offers with local specificity for consumers. An important remark was given by one of the experts: "people judge a city by what is produced there" (the interviewee 3).

Location in the Historical Centre

As mentioned above, the creative clusters in Samara inhabit and revitalise the downtown. Such creative neighbours live together with regular commercial spots, restaurants, sports studios, public spaces, tourist routes and residential areas. The experts confirm this "positive neighbourhood" (the interviewee 2) of creative industries and the historical downtown; the creative businesses renovate buildings, organise the surrounding area, and establish new walking routes in the city. There is even a promise: "in the future, we will also master the industrial zones" (the interviewee 1). The main goal for the ongoing development is "to make agglomerations" (the interviewee 4). Creative clusters must grow and inhabit other city districts to give more people access to their products and services and to change the urban environment.

The downtown is normally represented as a tourist destination and tourism centre, as a magnet and "the only place where you can meet all social classes" (the interviewee 3; e.g., locals and tourists, students and businessmen, pedestrians, cyclists and car drivers). Furthermore, "such a movement does not happen in a residential area" (the interviewee 2; residential areas far from the downtown are not popular among tourists, there are no particular attractions even for locals to go there). One of the experts denotes: "the more preserved and sacred the area, the more interesting it is for the creative industries" (the interviewee 5). In other words, historical buildings with their atmosphere and historical footprints attract creative people who can reconsider and rebuild the place but preserve its historical and cultural contexts to collaborate.

The Cultural Code of Samara

The experts were asked to define the cultural code of the city within one or a few words. Apart from the definitions such as "urbanization" (the interviewee 1) and "merchants" (the interviewee 5) that again refer to the industrial and economic character of Samara, the most significant response of the whole research is the following: "when you walk in the city centre, the whole environment becomes contagious" (the interviewee 2). It perfectly explains the main idea of creative industries to transform the urban areas, create attractive business offers for goods and services and connect various creative forms in the neighbourhood environment.

Another significant idea concerns the expression, "creative industries create a flow of people on the streets" (the interviewee 3). Creative business is more than just ordinary shops or shopping centres; it regulates the citizens' and tourist flows, establishes new routes in a city and changes a city's look. In other words, as one expert denotes: "when you choose where to go in an unfamiliar city, you choose to go where it is more colourful" (the interviewee 4).

Conclusions

This research aimed to analyse the possibilities of creative industries to deal with territorial branding and local identity. In the case of Samara's creative industries, this research demonstrated the potential of creative businesses to transform urban places, particularly inhabiting the historic downtown. The research case describes the prerequisites of Samara city to develop and popularise the practices of creative industries. The existing forces and main challenges define the current situation in the Samara creative clusters.

According to the expert interview results, creative industries have a high chance of becoming significant actors in the economic development of the city. However, there is a need for stronger governmental and informational support as well as the development of policies to advocate existing creative businesses. The experts emphasise the significant role of creative industries in influencing the city's image and transforming urban spaces.

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