

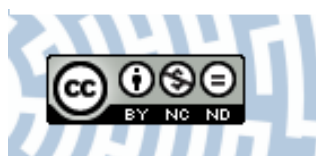


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Behind the urbanism Images of the city in modern marketing

The history of civilization can be written in terms of the history of cities.

Louis Wirth

In his book *Understanding Popular Culture* John Fiske mentions research pertaining to the perception of an everyday object: jeans. During his or her life, almost every Westerner — and not only them — owns anywhere between a few to a few dozen pairs of those trousers. This is not what the analysis is about, however. Fiske undertakes a semiotic interpretation of advertisements for the famous Levi's 501 and 505. Leaving aside the differences present in advertisements for the separate models, the British culture scholar's conclusion is worth quoting even — or maybe particularly — because it encapsulates something about how objects other than Levi's, or jeans in general, are promoted. Fiske writes:

Hence, designer jeans (or designer objects in general — BL) express market segmentation and social difference; they leave behind common values and nature, while approaching culture with all its complexities. Wearing designer jeans is supposed to make the wearer stand out, it is using a socially marked accent in the modern language; it means **an advance into a more exclusive part of society, moving into a city and acquiring its sophistication** (emphasis mine — BL), joining a group of people who follow fashion and stand out in society.

(Fiske 2010: 7)

Hence, city life turns out to be one of the synonyms of a “better life”, in opposition to staleness, monotony, being behind the times: values characteristic of the stereotypical perception of the province. Fiske sums it up in a short

list, pointing out, among others: tradition, immutability, labour, classlessness and, simply, rurality (ibid.). Sounds familiar? It is impossible here to avoid an association with what is probably the most seminal position in urban studies — Louis Wirth’s famous essay *Urbanism as a Way of Life*. To put it shortly, he found that millions of social activities make the city go round in fast, loud and intensive manner. Therefore city as a concentration of population is an opposition to small, calm, quiet and sacred countryside.

For Wirth, cities are spaces of diversity, understood not only in the social context and therein defined as heterogeneity, but also:

An industrial city will differ significantly in social respects from a commercial, mining, fishing, university and, capital city. A one industrial city will present different sets of social characteristics from a multi-industry city, as will an industrially balanced from an imbalanced city, a suburb from a satellite, a residential suburb from a satellite, a residential suburb from industrial suburb, a city within a metropolitan region from one lying outside, an old city from a new one, a southern city from a New England, a middle-western from a Pacific Coast city, a growing from a stable and from dying city.

(Wirth 1938: 6—7)

— writes Wirth vividly and even if this statement does not seem very complex today, one must focus on the issue of ideal urban types. They are what Wirth tries to write about; eighty years after the essay’s publication, they form the basis for a certain matrix of urbanity. From the American scholar’s perspective the city, the West’s cultural inevitability, is a space of — as it is fashionably described — dysfunction. Anomie, urban schizophrenic personality, alienation, weakening of relationships: those are just a few of the problems he describes. After all, the large size, density and diversity of the population and stark division of labour in the city result in, among others, disaffection, postponed marriage trends, growing proportion of singles, high crime and civilization diseases rates etc. However, Wirth’s approach seems ambivalent — on the one hand he is sceptical about modern urbanized forms, but on the other he says: “The history of civilization can be written in terms of the history of cities”. (ibid.) Furthermore, city life means cultural facilities and activities — museums, galleries, parks, cinemas, theatres, clubs, restaurants, cabarets: the big city lights. So no matter how hard city life is, Wirth also stresses that: “Metropolitan civilization is without question the best civilization that human beings have ever devised”. (ibid.)

Possibly it is in the very capacious phrase *best civilization ever* that one could find the source of the notion of a city as the *promised space*, a place embodying a range of desirable values — a notion which, simultaneously, ignores the city’s dark aspects. As the French semiotician Raymond Ledrut writes: “The city is a symbol and there is a symbolization of the city, but it is in the image

itself, apprehended through and by discourse, that what the city represents for men (sic) is revealed and expressed and that the city and its aspects are manifested in various figures [...]”. (Ledrut 1986: 223) Those various figures permeate each other and coexist — at various times some of them dominate others. They are perpetuated and communicated by diverse means: from an everyday urban to story to complicated media transmissions. In the recipients’ consciousness, then, there exists a range of visions of urbanity and urban lifestyle, and one of them — namely the one which dominates the enthusiastic, energetic, colourful advertising messages — seems particularly interesting.

In Wirth’s study — it is necessary to return to it for a moment — we see a simplified description of the city (and the country); despite its social, functional and cultural diversities urban space is something of a resultant which symbolises urbanity. As in the times of the Chicago school, now, in post-modernity, we observe the multitude of its patterns. “The city has historically been the melting-pot of races, peoples and cultures, and a most favourable breeding-ground of new biological and cultural hybrids”. (Wirth 1938: 10), notes Wirth, which could be supplemented with a statement that the city is — on the one hand — created upon this multiplicity, and on the other — acts like a magnet and a driving force for the constant growth of this same multiplicity. This neverending process makes the notion of urbanity quite precise. Characterising so-called “urbanity” turns out to be, however, simultaneously simple and complex. As Wirth points out: “The city consequently tends to resemble a mosaic of social worlds in which the transition from one to the another is abrupt”. (ibid.) Constant, unpredictable change; the varied character of urbanised areas; the coexistence within one unit of dissimilar districts, quarters, streets — all of this means that a synthetic definition of “urbanity” slips away in the urban diversity. The Swiss architect Christoph Gantenbein says in an interview:

[...] urbanity is a very nebulous idea. It would be difficult to formulate a good “definition”, to determine what urbanity is supposed to mean in modern times. In 19th century France this word had a very precise meaning — the bourgeois society, wide boulevards, very formal spaces. At various times urbanity meant various things. Today we experience a complete lack of a cohesive idea, of constructive propositions [...].

(Gantenbein: 2012)

Even if Gantenbein’s argument could be seen as postmodern grumbling, it should be emphasised that in our times the definition of urbanity is becoming more and more complex, because it encompasses such diverse spheres of life as, for instance, administration, demography, politics, cultural and social heritage, multiculturalism, but also divergent styles of life, activity, beliefs and behaviours, etc. A certain image does emerge, however, from the whole urbanised chaos. Urbanity is frequently described through lifestyle, which — in common

parlance — evokes specific, yet manifold associations. Those are present in everyday usage, and thanks to this easy to define. This is also influenced not only by the transmission of general knowledge, but by the presence of mass media messages, which increasingly make us perceive the city as a commercial object. “The product that is the city [...] is a combination of specific, tangible, but also elusive and abstract components, which, related to each other, create a kind of effect which is an “experience”, available to the consumer at a specific price”. (Glińska, Florek, Kowalewska 2009: 20) — we read in an urban marketing handbook. The point here is not only the issue of promoting a city in the way other products are promoted, but mostly about using urban symbolism when creating systemic campaigns. The experience of urbanity that they feature seems to be a sum of particular values, emphasising what may be most attractive or even exciting to the advertisement’s viewers. It is equated with specific products — the so-called urban must haves. *When you claim that you have followed the newest urban fashion trends, see if you have some of the basic fashion key items in your collection* (<http://woylaa.com/5-must-have-newest-urban-fashion-trends-of-the-season/>) — says the online edition of a fashion magazine. The conclusion is clear: to keep your head above the city’s current, you have to surround yourself with specific items. The universal idea of “the urban”, omnipresent in advertising, also appears. It is a buzzword that can be used to promote practically everything, from writing utensils (*Parker Urban ballpoint pens were designed to impress. The effect is a combination of ergonomics and art. The shape of the nib and a wide range of colours make Parker Urban memorable. If you care about having a modern image, choose this model. Urban stands for the city and this is exactly what those Parker pens are supposed to bring to mind — modernity and style.* (<http://www.parker-sklep.pl/kat57-urban-fashion.php>)) to food (*Urban Style Food is the synonym for good, healthy food in its best urban version. The flavours and style are typical for the streets of the metropolis. The appearance, method of serving and the pleasure of every bite express a modern approach to the cuisine of dynamic city streets.* (<http://www.urbanstylefood.pl>)). Thus we know that the city offers the temptation of both style and modernity. But it is tempting also, or maybe mostly because it is a dynamic structure: it represents constant change, is the reverse of permanence and irrevocability — that is, simply, boredom. According to Zygmunt Bauman:

It is the consumers who constantly desire new stimuli and get bored with every new attraction quickly. [...] The market is ready to make people dependent on itself and change its attractions with increasing speed. [...] One can live it up, enjoying everything the world has to offer, in many ways: one cannot just exclaim in the way of Goethe’s Faust “Beautiful moment, do not pass away!”. The consumer is a person of movement and must stay that way.

(Bauman 2003: 143)

The huge metropolis offers such movement, bustle, concentration of activity. And even if we assume that in fashion, as well as in human habits, everything has already been said, the city puts new elements in motion. It is said there are cities that never sleep, and they are the trendsetters. It is to describe them subliminally that one chooses from a palette of patterns what at that moment one wants to combine, unexpectedly, with something it had never been paired with before, using an easily identifiable urban background.

If in fashion and marketing the urban signifies what is chosen, what is the object of desire, it turns into a commodity, although, of course, not for everybody and not forever. “Walking amongst the shops, the consumer actualises and realises in practice a particular philosophy of life [...]”. (Douglas 2008: 342) — points out Mary Douglas in her essay *In the Defence of Shopping*. There are three key problems here: firstly, for whom, in fact, does “urban” mean “attractive”, and for whom does urbanity determine lifestyle; secondly — what character does this attractive urbanity have; and, thirdly, where does its image come from.

In relation to the first aspect we would do well to return to the theory of four cultures determining consumer choice. People adopt specific attitudes towards the material goods on offer. Those can be defined along the lines of the following cultures: individualistic, hierarchical, egalitarian or isolated. The more or less (un)conscious decision about belonging to one of those orders makes the consumer a recipient of certain advertising messages, and thereafter — of goods constituting a lifestyle. To put it very shortly, the first approach, the individualistic one, is “choosing a life of competition, open networks of communication, joy, the ability to use available modern technology, a fit and groomed body, agility, cunning, risky and extreme entertainment and the freedom of constantly changing obligations and one’s commitment” (ibid.). The second, hierarchical, is focused on tradition, institution, family values and close relationships with friends. The third (egalitarian) “prefers equality, simplicity, honesty, intimate and genuine friendships and spiritual values” (ibid.), while rejecting lavishness, artificiality and excessive formality of relationships. Finally, the fourth — isolated — negates all the others, remains beyond the sphere of influence, is a certain departure from the mainstream and the rat race (ibid.). Like every other typology, this one is not ideal, but a good starting point for further analysis. It is not hard to guess that the city or urbanity become a marketing platform for recipients ascribing to the individualistic culture; the country, small towns or the province in general will appear much more frequently in messages intended for representatives of the second culture — the hierarchical one. In spite of stark differences separating consumer attitudes, it must be emphasised that elements of the city-country and individualistic-hierarchical culture continuum are not always positioned in a binary opposition. Interestingly, in some contexts both the urban (individualistic) life model and the rural (hierarchical) one coexist in advertising. Even a cursory read-through of magazines or websites shows that

urbanity addressed to adherents of the first culture is used when promoting clothing, cosmetics or everyday accessories. But in messages related to interior design, especially in the context of kitchen spaces, there are motifs harking back to the second, rustic/ludic one, which is still, however, embedded in the landscape of an urban jungle. May the advertising campaign *Country feel in the city* be an example: it encourages consumers to complement ultramodern living spaces with folk elements. This, however, is a digression which would require a wider study, so it shall not be discussed here. In very broad terms, advertising messages using the urban formula are addressed mainly to young, resourceful members of the middle class who are attracted to the new, both unattached individuals and families.

Scholars of modern culture point out that: “Consumption is a significant part of circulation of shared and conflicted meanings we call culture. We communicate through what we consume. Consumption is perhaps the most visible way in which we stage and perform the drama of self-formation. We communicate by how we consume!” (Storey 2003: 78) Hence if, while shopping, the consumer chooses goods equated with success, self-reliance, independence, speed, variety, intensity of experiences etc. — because this is, after all, what the city is all about in the popcultural message — this means that he or she has those characteristics too. The city of the advertisement is like a screening of subsequent episodes of an urban series such as *Sex and the City*; full of freedom, glamour, good taste, lack of inhibitions, all the hedonistic pleasures on designer high heels.

Such an understanding of urbanity is based on images of the few metropolises whose character — *genius loci* — is multiplied in millions of idealised visual repetitions. It is not the urban slums or minority districts that become backgrounds for advertising campaigns of the urban type, but city centres, modern buildings, possibly spaces related to sports and leisure¹. It should be borne in mind, however, that urbanity carries diverse associations, and even adjacent denotations can be valued differently. The problem of the urban hustle and bustle can be an example: to some researchers it is a synonym of the difficulties of city life, while to others — a symbol of enthusiastically accepted urban dynamics. This could be a trap, if not for the first and most important rule of marketing — the advertising message is always directed at a particular recipient; in this case it will be a representative of the first culture, and things that may be unacceptable to others (such as the dynamics, variety, openness etc.) will be precisely the most attractive to him or her.

As an example, let us take the brand philosophy of two popular, affordable cosmetic companies: Maybelline New York (paradoxically, owned by the L’Oreal Paris concern) and Rimmel (owned by Coty Inc.).

¹ Of course there are advertising campaigns such as, for example, the Nike campaign, which depict derelict spaces as well, but they are more about sport than the urban.

Table 1

Examples of the advertising campaigns

Maybelline New York	Rimmel London
<p>With the glamour and energy of New York City, the ultimate makeup innovations, and the latest fashion looks from the catwalk to the sidewalk, Maybelline New York empowers women all over the world to express their personal “it” factor. (emphasis mine — BL) http://www.loreal.com/brands/consumer-products-division/maybelline-new-york.aspx</p>	<p>Beauty made in London is witty, edgy and streetwise. It's about setting trends, not following them. It's about experimentation and self-expression. In a word, it's about having fun. And Rimmel's affordable range of colourful, contemporary, high-quality products is designed to enable real women to do just that. Why have one identity when you can have as many as you like? With Rimmel, changing your look is as easy as hopping on the London Tube and switching from Soho to Camden, from Portobello to Notting Hill. (emphasis mine — BL) http://us.rimmellondon.com/content/about-rimmel</p>

This is how the image of beauty brands is defined online. The advertising campaigns obviously relate to cities that appear in their very names. They are linked with words such as *glamour*, *energy*, *witty* or *streetwise*. Through a chain of associations the consumers themselves, in an affinity with the cities they model themselves on, attain the *personal “it” factor*. Use our products, be like New York/London! Even be New York/London, and everything that's best about them! — is what the advertisements seem to shout. It is interesting, however, that in the above-mentioned descriptions the word “New York” could be exchanged with “London” and vice versa, and the texts would still be logical. What is more, if one removes the city names, it would be *de facto* impossible to tell which one advertises Maybelline and which — Rimmel. Hence, the advertising message is not making use of a particular city, but of urbanity in general. Although London and New York are very specific and, in many ways, different cities, this is more about the image of their potential, entrenched in the collective consciousness, than of concrete spaces. The city as a vague construct is a carrier of meanings — of characteristics stripped of a wider context, combined to create an untrue, but very popular image: the commercial urbanity with its tempo, rhythm, dynamics, fast changes, vibrancy, history, architecture, people... How far it is from Wirth's description, diagnosing practically the same reality

The highlighted mobility of the individual, which brings him [a man — BL] within the range of stimulation by great number of diverse individuals and subject him to fluctuating status in differentiated social groups that compose the social structure of the city tends toward the acceptable of instability and insecurity in the world at large as a norm.

(Wirth 1938: 16)

What for Wirth constituted a source of urban suffering has evolved into an object of desire. Creating campaign after advertising campaign marketing specialists treat cities like well-stocked larders, reaching into them every season for morsels that would tempt consumers. This trend seems to be worldwide, as in the globalised fashion world the increasingly trivialised images of various cities are reduced to the lowest common denominator — “the urban”.

The Polish company Simple CP also promotes the image of a brand who dresses **self-reliant, strong, independent city women**. The urban style of their collections is described in campaign philosophies, for instance: *Spring at Simple CP means trends from all around the world. New York minimalism, Parisian elegance, adoration of the feminine silhouette straight from Milan. Simple's spring/summer 2014 collection is, however, modern and universal: ready-to-wear at its best* (emphasis mine — BL) (<http://www.miastokobiet.pl/kolekcja-simple-cp-wiosna-lato-2014/>). The fact that New York is here a symbol of minimalism, Paris — of elegance, and Milan — of love for the silhouette seems to be not only a reference to the clichés and patterns of fashion, but more of a free interplay of epithets, which — already in the following season — Simple CP arranged thus:

The vibrant Parisian metropolis with its enchanting combination of modern architecture and sophisticated historic districts inspired designers to create a collection that is up-to-the-minute and very feminine, although it has two separate moods. In Paris tradition meets the avant-garde; in Simple's collection classics are similarly combined with modern, fashionable accents.

On the one hand, vibrant, shimmering fabrics, structural neoprene, glossy leathers, and a dark palette based on blacks and greys unsettle, while ideally melding with minimalistic, dynamic city life. On the other hand abstract, intriguing, nature-inspired prints appearing on dresses, blouses or trousers express a longing for winter gardens and urban orangeries. Long silk dresses beautifully describe the atmosphere of the coming autumn. The colours of the collection are in a wonderful harmony with this season, delighting with shades of wine, plum, heather, berry and silvery rose [...]. The brand is consistently developing its BUSINESS line. For professionally active, successful women Simple offers perfectly-cut suits, shirts, elegant skirts and stunning, classic coats in navy and camel. There are two other lines in the collection: the urban READY-TO-WEAR and the elegant EVENING. (emphasis mine — BL) (<http://www.silesiacitycenter.com.pl/wielkowiejska-podroz-simple-cp.html>)

This long quote is here for a reason. Wirth writes:

The urban world puts a premium on a visual recognition. We see the uniform which detonates a role of the functionaries and are oblivious to the personal eccentricities that are hidden behind the uniform. We tend to acquire and develop a sensitivity to a world of artifacts and become progressively farther removed from the world of nature.

(Wirth 1938: 14)

From the American researcher's perspective, the urban uniform — just like other lifestyle elements: place of residence, place and character of employment, income and interests — determines one's place in a structure; it is, however, the actual place, not only a facade or a costume. Hence in the interwar period Upton Sinclair's white and blue collars designated precisely what they were supposed to designate: office workers and manual labourers, respectively. To a large extent, it was possible to determine which group one belonged to on the basis of his or her dress. Today's urban uniform is no longer correlated with work, it is a product of advertising campaigns which depends on one's needs, modelled after that of a labourer, sportsperson or working woman, to mention only a few examples. Identity expressed through dress, make-up and accessories determines not only the wearer's social position, but equally — mainly amongst representatives of the middle class, it seems — his or her aspirations. Wearing a costume brings us closer to the desired social aim. This phenomenon is not a new thing in fashion: Georg Simmel, Thorstein Veblen and many other culture analysts wrote about a certain duplication of patterns, mimicry and the need to adopt trends other than those typical for one's group. It seems, however, that self-expression through dress has been gathering even more momentum recently. Surrounding oneself with particular objects is not an utilitarian issue, but a life philosophy specified by marketing strategies, for which urbanity is one of the lodestars — urbanity understood, of course, as the resultant of the city's most desirable characteristics. This is perfectly illustrated by the above-mentioned example of the Simple CP brand, which builds an image of the *professionally active, successful woman* — a city woman: *ultramodern, avant-garde, but also with a marvellous past, elegant, somewhat sentimental (longing for winter gardens and urban orangeries)*. This personality is within reach: one only needs to put on the correct dress, suit or shirt to become a real, aware, independent city dweller. A woman with the metropolis at her feet.

The urban lifestyle expressed through fashion associations is desirable mostly for city dwellers themselves. Be more urban: this is the dream of a considerable group of consumers. The case of Simple CP's successful woman is, of course, only one of many in the range of urban models. Urbanity can be expressed equally well with casual street style, hipster fashion, the hip-hop trend, urban-eco, urban-ethnic and so on. The popularity of the real urban look (in whichever guise) is confirmed by innumerable blog posts — as a matter of fact, not only those directly related to fashion. For urbanity is something more: not only cloth-

ing, but a state of mind, which is only emphasised by the former. The internet is teeming with advice on how to be more urban, for example:

In order to correctly embrace the urban fashion look, one needs to understand what exactly makes a look “urban”. [...]:

- *The look should be “edgy”.*
- *It should be slightly ethnic.*
- *The look should be bold, but functional.* (http://womens-fashion.love-toknow.com/Urban_Fashion_for_Ladies)

Or:

1. *If you have long hair, either keep it straight and put on a beanie or you can wave/crimp it and make it look messy but still fashionable.*
2. *For T-shirts and Tops, you can wear almost any colour and style.*
3. *Wear hot pants or high waist shorts.*
4. *Wear sports shoes or vans.*
5. *Remember about accesorises.*
6. *Try not to wear too much colour.* (<http://www.wikihow.com/Have-Urban-Style>)

There are countless examples. It should be noted, however, that it is not only amateur blog posts or professional advertising campaigns that describe “how to be urban”, but also other media. A few years ago one of the British newspapers presented a list of urban behaviours which would enable the interested party to be perceived as ultra-urban. Among those were: having a small dog (pugs or French bulldogs are best); driving a micro-car (a Toyota IQ, Fiat 500 or Mini); eating at organic restaurants specialising in molecular cuisine and choosing ice-cream in a cone made of natural ingredients only; and probably most importantly — never, ever wearing sunglasses on top of your head. All this advice is in no way permanent. The ever-changing trends will not wait until the next season, when it may transpire that it is not *hot pants or sports shoes* that are the height of fashion, but loose trousers and patent leather shoes. In any case, both are possible at the same time in urban diversity — after all, there is not just one urban look or style.

Regardless of which style we are talking about, trends in the wide category of urban fashion are upheld by multi-level messages from innumerable sources. As previously stated, the prototype for those styles is urban diversity, but not pertaining to any and all cities, but to a few chosen ones, seen from the angle of some particular characteristics of the urban. Wirth writes: “The dominance of the city over the surrounding hinterland becomes explicable in terms of the division of labour which urban life occasions and promotes”. (Wirth 1938: 13)

When it comes to setting international trends, however, it seems that only a few most recognisable metropolises have this potential. Centres of New York, Paris, London, and increasingly Tokyo are the spaces with the biggest impact. Those, of course, are global cities, not direct representatives of the countries they are in. “As a capital city, London was always an exception to the blanket condemnation of things urban within Englishness. After all it was the central place around which the “Season” unfolded every summer”. (Morley, Robins 2001: 140). This is equally true of the other centres. The visions of urbanity related to those cities are, in a sense, illusory: the New York, Paris and London of the promotional slogans exist only to a certain extent. There is, however, a constructed idea of them in the collective consciousness and it is this idea that the media industry harks back to. As Wirth says:

[...] masses of men in the city are subjects to manipulation by symbols and stereotypes managed by individuals working from afar or operating invisibly behind the scenes through their control of instruments of communication. [...] Self-government either in the economic, the political, or the cultural realm is under these circumstances reduced to mere figure of speech or, at best is subject to the unstable equilibrium of pressure groups

(Wirth 1938: 23)

but his words acquire a new meaning in the media-based modernity. It seems that the influence that commercial messages exert on the perception of urbanity is unquestionable. On the other hand, media did not create the city from scratch: the images which immortalise urban areas had their roots in real spaces. Hence, we are dealing with a synergic process of producing images in the likeness of reality, which then proceeds to imitate them. Those are Baudrillardian simulacra and simulations in their pure form. The media create an idea of urban style (modelled on the real — only a bit corrected, souped-up, embellished), for the style to become increasingly popular and to bring its proponents closer to the characteristics it represents. Hence, the need to adopt appropriate masks: to buy specific dresses or domestic appliances, own a particular breed of dog. The unique construct of urbanity is the background for this facade.

In spite of all the marketing admiration of urbanity and the city as such, one needs to return to the issues outlined by Wirth. His city is in opposition to the enthusiasm of the advertising executives. The multiplicity, specification and professionalisation of the roles that city dwellers must play every day disturb the natural order of direct, repetitive, open relationships known from country life. The schizoid urban personality is a necessary consequence of living in the big-city social jungle, where “The contacts [...] may indeed be face to face, but they are nevertheless impersonal, superficial, transitory, and segmental”. (Wirth 1938: 12) It has been obvious since Darwin’s times that it is in the nature of living organisms to adapt to their environment. Human nature also adapts to

its habitat, which representatives of the Chicago school were fascinated in as well. One of the results of functioning in a hostile urban environment is: “The reserve, the indifference, and the blasé outlook which urbanites manifest in their relationships, which may thus be regarded as devices for immunizing themselves against the personal claims and expectations”. (ibid.) In those difficult conditions of relationships, positions, roles, as well as the expectations and duties pertaining to them, the city creates a certain type of flexible personality which adapts to changeable situations. It seems pointless to pass judgment on it here. We would do better to shift our attention to the frequently-mentioned diversity. Let us reiterate: it is difficult to characterise one dominating urban type of identity, attitude, behaviour, visual manifestation (including fashion); multiplicity is, after all, a synonym for the metropolis. Wirth points out that “Whenever large numbers of differently constituted individuals congregate, the process of depersonalization also enters”. (ibid.) From today’s perspective, this problem needs to be approached somewhat differently. In the urban space we observe two apparently contradictory phenomena — **universalisation** and **individualisation**. Let us try to analyse this issue in the context of urban style. I do not want to refer to fashion theory here, but only point out that clothing which is, to a large extent, to emphasise a person’s individualism through its own mass aspect, being multiplied in millions, transfers the wearer from the world of personal identity to the order of commonness. One more woman in a well-cut glamorous outfit — alluding to the reality of success — will look elegant, at the same time not differing from hundreds of others who, thanks to the clothes they put on in the morning, will *combine urban classics with modernity*. In a classic text, Simmel writes about this phenomenon too: “[...] fashion is simply one of many life forms with which we try to combine the tendency towards social homogeneity and the wish for individual difference and change in a uniform sphere of activity”. (Simmel 1975: 182) The feelings of insecurity, alienation and depersonalisation caused by the presence of a huge number of people in an urbanised space translate into a desperate need to belong.

The close living together and working together of individuals who have no sentimental and emotional ties foster a spirit of competition, aggrandizement and mutual exploration. To counteract irresponsibility and potential disorder, formal controls tend to be resorted to. Without rigid adherence to predictable routines a large compact society would scarcely be able to maintain itself. The clock and the traffic signal are symbolic of basis of our social order in the urban world. Frequent close physical contact, coupled with great social distance, accentuates the reserve of unattached individuals toward one another and, unless compensated for by other opportunities for response, gives rise to loneliness. The necessary frequent movement of great numbers of individuals in congested habitat gives occasion to friction and irritation. Nervous tensions which derive from such personal frustrations are accentuated by the rapid

tempo and the complicated technology under which life in dense areas must be lived.

(Wirth 1938: 16)

In the world of the city, which is so difficult to control, there appears a natural desire for separation — for isolating oneself from the hostile environment, as well as a need for togetherness, for building a collective identity. This will not, of course, follow one pattern (the city is too complex for that), but a few, maybe a dozen trends. By choosing a particular type an urbanite creates his or her own/not-own, collective/individual identity. It becomes a compass in the unstable urban reality, referring to patterns which position the individual within a structure. It becomes a collective point of reference and of belonging. And it is the urban style that may be an example of an answer to this problem.

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Miejskość

Wizerunki miasta we współczesnym marketingu

Streszczenie

Artykuł jest próbą odpowiedzi na współczesne pytanie dotyczące wizerunku miasta. W rozumieniu Louisa Wirtha stanowiło ono synonim przepelnienia, alienacji, zdepersonalizowanych interakcji. Dziś jednak, w wielu środowiskach, miasto postrzegane jest inaczej — jako przestrzeń, której wizerunkowy potencjał wykorzystać można chociażby w marketingu. W artykule przedstawiono przykłady zastosowania skojarzeń z pojęciem *miejski (urban)* w celu zbudowania wyobrażeń o stylu życia jaki zapewniać ma nabywanie prezentowanych w kampaniach reklamowych produktów.

Słowa klucze: miejskość, reklama, kultura współczesna, styl życia