**ABSTRACT**

The article analyses theoretical aspects of a city brand definition, applying cases of various brands of Lithuanian cities. A brand is any sign or symbol which helps to distinguish goods or services for one person from the goods or services of another, and which may be represented graphically. The brand can be a variety of symbols, their combination, and other visual manifestations of information, such as words, names, slogans, letters, numbers, drawings, emblems; or spatial characteristics of the product itself – its image, packaging, shape, color, color combination or a combination of all these. City development usually includes an image dimension. The common ground for this is that a well-known toponym often generates events, investments, etc. Many cities are actively positioning and promoting their strategic intentions. Often times a city brand is associated with its fight for investment, tourist numbers, or successful businesses.

**Objective:** To scrutinize relevant theories applicable to city visual branding; to look through various definitions of the city branding and envisage some advantages and disadvantages they might pose; and to analyze various case studies so that we could summarize the methodologies of why and how we could better position our local products globally.

**Methodology:** The case study methods were used as part of a complex study and combined with in-depth interviews as well as benchmarking methods from various sources. In-depth interview method was used to obtain expert opinions on the subject. The in-depth interview method helped to analyze logo usage, goals, define pros and cons, and evaluate the results of logo design in urban development. This method was chosen to collect detailed and authentic material based on the attitudes and experiences of those involved in such a creative process.

**Findings:** The conclusion was reached that since a place prompts a lot of variables, in the future we need to consider more numerous components, such as population, industries, landscape, economies or history, etc. The hypothesis was confirmed about the variables of the city to be further considered for (re)branding, such as the cost, semantic complexity, societal charge, and the dynamics (changeability, or rigidity). As for the methodologies, we arrived at the conclusion that the best way to create a viable city brand is a collaboration between different stakeholders.

**Value Added:** The article adds to European experts’ suggestion of rethinking the concept of design itself, as until now a one-sided approach to design as a means of schematizing a product has prevailed. This approach, even regulated by Lithuanian law, does not cover the whole process of creating and implementing an idea. “Design is a problem-solving approach that focuses on the user during its development. It can be applied in both the public and private sectors to promote innovation in products, services, processes and even legislation,” says Dr Anna Whicher, expert on design policy and strategy of the European Commission. In other words, design has been increasingly integrated into the science, business, social and service sectors to maximize innovation.

As many as 63 percent of Lithuanian businesses do not use design solutions (product design, stylization or business strategy development) at any stage of production. This figure is below the EU average, where almost half of all businesses already integrate design solutions into their operations. Lithuania is also one of the 13 countries in Europe (out of 28) that does not have design policy documents or a community uniting organization, such as design centers in Great Britain, Denmark, Estonia or other countries. The paper invites Lithuania to re-think its design development policies at large, paying attention to urban design solutions in particular.

**Recommendations:** In further research, while selecting potential expert for city logo development, it is recommended that priority should be given to (a) responsible experts in strategic / territorial and national policy making or related activities, (b) experts with knowledge of sustainable development, (c) independent sustainable development analysts / consultants / private and academic or who have implemented specific project-based SDs both nationally and internationally. The stakeholders in this process should be representing: 1) Public Sector, 2) NGOs, 3) Private Sector, 4) Academy and 5) Independent Experts.