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INVITED ARTICLES

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URBAN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM – REALITY OR UTOPIA?

Abstract. The essence of the city's existence is its function of exchange, the subjects of which are products and goods, knowledge, information, capital, impressions, experience, and the participants of this process are residents and newcomers. Tourists in the city's exchange space are part of the newcomer community, interact with residents, share city amenities, but have different needs and expectations than residents, leading to conflict. Based on research conducted in several cities, the article presents critical considerations regarding the concept of sustainable development and sustainable urban tourism, and then proposes a new formula for its planning and implementation focused on education as a trigger for positive action.

Key words: city, space of exchange, urban tourism, sustainable urban tourism.

1. INTRODUCTION

From its very onset, cities as a spatial formation have been a meeting place of different groups of people (residents and newcomers) who engage in the exchange of products and goods, knowledge, information, capital, impressions, emotions, and experience.

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The space of exchange as an essence of urban life is culture-bound, its visibility within the structure of different cities across the world is linked with the distribution of architectural objects representing specific functions, existing institutions, urban planning composition, form and arrangement of public space, as well as people's conduct. The history of urban planning explicitly suggests that anything that is urban (space development and organisation, objects, institutions, services and leisure activities, and the possibilities to satisfy various needs) has for ages been attracting newcomers to cities. The latter become integral components of a given urban population even though they often stay in the city for a short period of time and only some of them settle there for longer or decide to live there permanently. An urban community is thus a group made of different people dominated usually by permanent residents (inhabitants), yet other temporary users (newcomers of diverse extraction) play a significant role. The number of both the above-mentioned groups comprising urban communities in different centres across the world and their mutual relations directly impact space organisation, institutional infrastructure, capabilities to meet numerous needs, and the comfort of those who use these spaces. At the same time, we need to note that expectations vis-a-vis resources and the arrangement of the space for exchange, as well as the ways in which both groups (residents and visitors) typically use it, are not always conducive to harmonious coexistence and may generate conflicts.

The global cultural legacy of urban communities represents an unusually rich resource which is tangible and intangible. The presence of original cultural heritage in cities and its cognitive potential are a vital stimulant for urban growth. The future of cities is linked primarily to a gradual intensification of the role played by highly specialised services rendered by the tertiary and quaternary sectors in economic and social urban life. Today, these services dictate the rate of progress, contribute to growth, and improve the space of exchange which, as we have already stated, is the essence of urbanity. In the approach to the growth of cities applied to-date globally, tourism excellently fits into the realm of services typical of the tertiary and quaternary sectors since from the late 20th century the scope of the notion has got significantly expanded. The term *tourist* covers all those who travel voluntarily for diverse cognitive reasons without stating precisely whether their trips are motivated by leisure or family purposes. Some see people whose profession entails frequent domestic or international travels as tourists, others use the term to describe those who travel for religious (pilgrimage) or health-related purposes (stays at spas). According to Bauman (1996) the principal division in the postmodern society occurs through the distinguishing of two opposite notions: a *tourist* and a *vagabond*. The former can be described by the following attributes: perfection, being well-organised, detailed planning of subsequent stages of travel but, at the same time, restricted choices of lifestyle and the place of living while the latter is a synonym of complete freedom in this regard. Both above-mentioned categories can be seen among those who visit cities. In addition, behaviour patterns specific of them in the space of exchange differ substantially. In the postmodern society, the hierarchy reflects the

possibility to make independent, unrestricted choices. Thus an unequivocal and precise designation of a modern tourist is far from easy. Hence, the currently applied definition assumes that the notion of *tourism* covers all types of travels linked to temporary short-term displacement of people to specific destinations outside of their domicile or workplace, as well as activities conducted in these destinations. People involved in such displacements generate tourist movement which emerges in geographic space equipped with diverse natural and anthropogenic attractions.

The goal of studies discussed in this work was to identify and examine relationships between the equipment, organisation and functioning of urban space of exchange and the ways in which it is used by tourists (in a broad meaning of the word) and residents striving to arrive at a harmonious coexistence of both groups within a given area. Thus, the research problem can be reduced to the following question: Can we achieve sustainable urban tourism today? What conditions must be met for the formulated planning ideas concerning a rational use of the resources of urban space of exchange to favour harmonious coexistence in it of residents and tourists and bring the expected benefits to both of these groups? The principal aspect of the analysis is: to what extent the organisation/arrangement of the space of exchange, cultural values, and territorial management condition their sustainable use and, by the same token, help minimise conflicts in this space.

Although the concept of sustainable tourism development has been used in science and practice for many years (Kowalczyk, 2010; Zawistowska *et al.*, 2014), many issues remain to be clarified. Relevant comments were formulated in the study *Premises and determinants of sustainability of local tourism development* (Mika, 2014):

[...] Factors and developmental mechanisms presented in the study only indicate a *path* to better understanding of structural processes occurring in tourism. The interweaving of economic, social and cultural phenomena and the involvement of tourist activities in various forms of conflict situations, create a reality I which it is difficult to reach clear solutions and generalizations. Such a situation cannot remain without influence on the scope and direction on geographical studies in tourism, including the formulation of new research of problem and solutions. The functional approach, created and anchored in the theory of geography, based on subject-object relationship between a tourism and geographical space, is no longer a sufficient plane for analyses. The dynamic socio-economic reality in the sphere of tourism calls for the development of theoretical foundations for a *new* functional concept in tourism geography, in which the basic considerations focused around the relationship tourist – tourist space in the context of its utilization will be enriched with content relevant to structures and system interactions, such as: integration (actors, cooperation, partnership networks), interdependence (competition, rooting, global context), or added value (synergy, creative reality) (Mika, 2014, p. 227).

Similar conclusions appear in many publications written by different authors. Saarinen, Rogerson, Hall (2017) have noticed:

[...] Development and planning issues have a long and chequered research history in tourism geographies. Nevertheless, there are transforming research needs and evolving dimensions in geographical studies on tourism development and planning. These new frontiers call for

deeper social and economic theorization with a focus on a broad spectrum of socio-spatial development and planning situations and contexts from peripheries and amenity-rich landscapes to urban and metropolitan environments.” (Saarinen *et al.*, 2017, p. 313).

Returning to the past in this context one can recall Butler’s work from 1999, which features the following statement:

[...] The key problem, in my mind, is the current inability to define to the satisfaction of all, or even most, of the stakeholders in tourism, exactly what is meant by ‘sustainable tourism’. As noted above, this remains a major problem and, because ambiguity exists, almost any form of tourism can, and often is, termed sustainable. Related to this fundamental issue is the question of how sustainability might be monitored and measured if and when a satisfactory definition of sustainable tourism is established and accepted. It is clear that current research in all disciplines involved with tourism has not really tackled the problem of monitoring the effects of tourism in any context. (Butler, 1999, p. 19).

Detailed analyses also searched for appropriate theoretical concepts. In many countries, e.g. France, researchers have tried to show the sense of sustainable development for different places (D’Hautesserre, 1999, 2005). In the analysed examples, the sustainable development of tourism was never a priority. Therefore, consistency was sought between the social, economic and natural spheres in the difficult conditions of a development conflict. Case studies are an extremely popular and fruitful research method for many areas and issues, e.g. social problems in small spaces (Leśniewska-Napierała *et al.*, 2019). After many years of academic discussions and economic activities, the discussion about the foundations of sustainable development continues. There are studies that summarise the last decades of the struggle with sustainable tourism. An interesting study devoted to this issue includes an initial argument:

[...] A conceptual paper published twenty years ago concluded that sustainable tourism development is an unviable objective. Specifically, it argued that environmentally sound tourism development (sustainable tourism) is essential; sustainable development through tourism, however, is unachievable. Despite continuing alignment between tourism and sustainable development in both academic and policy circles, not only have the intervening two decades proved this argument in practice to be correct, but also there is little evidence of a more sustainable tourism sector. This paper, therefore, returns to the theoretical relationship between tourism and sustainable development, considering more recent transformations in understandings of the concept of development as well as contemporary approaches to sustainable development. Highlighting the controversy surrounding the continuing adherence to economic growth in development policy in general and tourism development in particular, it discusses sustainable de-growth as an alternative approach to development and, in the context of increasing concerns over climate change, the specific implications for tourism.” (Sharpley, 2020, p. 1932).

Recently published studies also do not bring any innovative solutions or significant terminological and theoretical solutions. The considerations primarily mention the importance and complexity of sustainable tourism development. Richardson has underlined:

[...] The role of tourism in sustainable development has been studied extensively, and with a variety of perspectives, including the conceptualization of alternative or responsible forms of tourism and the examination of economic, environmental, and social impacts of tourism development. The research has generally concluded that tourism development has contributed to sustainable development in some cases where it is demonstrated to have provided support for biodiversity conservation initiatives and livelihood development strategies. As an economic sector, tourism is considered to be labor intensive, providing opportunities for poor households to enhance their livelihood through the sale of goods and services to foreign tourists.” (Richardson, 2021).

Therefore, we engage in a discussion on social and educational issues related to sustainable development in tourism also regarding the concept of sustainable urban tourism, and then propose a new formula for its planning and implementation.

2. DATA SOURCES AND METHODOLOGY

The research during which the empirical material was collected was conducted in two ways. The first consisted in conducting a critical review of the available Polish and foreign literature (published in English and French) on sustainable development, the essence of sustainable urban tourism, as well as presenting ideas with a view to control the number of tourists and plan their behaviour in urban areas. The second part of the data consists of empirical studies focused on the identification of regularities typical of the exchange space and ways in which tourists use this space. The basic data set used comprised *in situ* observations made during the authors’ stay in various places around the world between 2014 and 2019. The visits were conducted as part of the fulfilment of research grants devoted to urban regeneration, ruining and demolition of cities or while on vacation. During the authors’ visits to the cities given as examples in the article, a basic urban inventory of the visited sections of exchange spaces was made, identifying the features of the existing architecture and urban layout, institutional equipment, and the behaviour of people staying in these areas. Photographic documentation of the analysed sections of urban exchange space was also successively developed, and autoethnographic notes were taken. Thus gathered material formed the basis for an analysis of the relationship between how urban space is arranged and how it is used by tourists in the context of the rational use of the existing resources, which brings benefits to both groups of users: residents and visitors. The layout of the text reflects the stages of the analytical procedure. It begins with a discussion of the basic notions of sustainable development and a sustainable city, followed by a description of tourism in urban areas in general and selected examples of cities illustrating the identified types of spatial and social relations. In the conclusion, critical reflections on the concept of sustainable urban tourism are presented, followed by a new formula for its planning and implementation in modern cities.

3. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

As a concept, sustainable urban tourism makes direct references to the concept of sustainable development, i.e., such an approach to the use of existing resources which, while meeting the needs of contemporary societies, will not limit the development possibilities of future generations. It assumes a parallel development of the economy, society and environment. The term *sustainable development* was first defined in 1987 in the report of the World Commission on Environment and Development entitled *Our Common Future*. The concept of sustainable development in legislative and declarative terms has been specified in two documents adopted in 1992 at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro: Declaration on Environment and Development and Agenda 21 (Earth Summit Conference). Reference to the above-mentioned documents can be found in the following paragraph: "According to the World Commission on Environment and Development, which popularized the term in its 1987 report, sustainable development is the *development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.*" (The Dictionary of Human Geography, 1994, p. 611).

In the term 'sustainable development', we see two equivalent concepts. The first one is development. The second one comes from the word sustainability and entails an aspect of balance. Although this observation may seem banal, a careful analysis reveals an internal inconsistency in the commonly used notion. Development is sometimes the effect of an impulse, which introduces instability, disturbs the equilibrium. Stability leads to stagnation rather than development. What lies at the heart of the 'marriage' of *development* and *balance*? Undoubtedly, we can assume, on the one hand, that development involves qualitative changes (transition from simpler to more complex forms, more refined in a given respect) leading to a harmonious arrangement of the internal and external space of a place (city, region or territory). In the context of internal space, the living conditions of the inhabitants and the spatial order should be considered. The organisation of the external space of a place is determined by its exogenous functions. The concept of balance, on the other, focuses on the harmony of relationships between elements that have come together to form a given single unit. On this basis we should consider that an equilibrium is a periodic state between destabilisations of the system. This instability is usually an impulse to reach a state of harmonious relations again, but at a higher level of organisation of the space of a place. In this context, the occurring imbalances should be considered a necessary condition for the development of any place. The task of space managers should be to strive to curb the emerging states of unstable relations between the elements that form the spatial whole. On the basis of the considerations presented above, we have come to the conclusion that the core of the concept of sustainable development is the

periodically appearing imbalance. Overcoming instabilities, in turn, should lead to successively higher levels of complexity in organisational territorial systems. Researchers could unravel the mechanisms of these processes by constructing the foundations of ‘spatial civic science’. Their essence would be to engage dynamic social systems to actively respond to periodic instabilities. Recurring periods of equilibrium constitute a time of reproduction, i.e., continuous transformation (renewal) of relations between the elements of a given whole. The state of disequilibrium may be called the time of creation, i.e., the time of constructing a new quality in the organisation of spatial, social, economic, and natural relations in the city. Of course, the instability of spatial systems should not occur too often. Obviously, recurring instability is a developmental impulse and there is no doubt about that, but permanent instability inevitably leads to degradation of a given place. It is worth underlining here that in the hitherto achievements in understanding the meaning of sustainable development, researchers’ attention was usually drawn to the category of balance or sustainability. However, it seems that in urban studies and strategic planning, instability, which generates the need for change, is of key importance. Therefore, we propose to introduce the term ‘creative imbalance’, which covers the phase(s) between ‘relational stability’ or the already-mentioned definitional state of equilibrium. The measure of the efficiency of territorial systems is their ability to regain equilibrium. It is a transitory state, and the goal of development processes is sometimes to overcome growing conflicts and oscillate around some hypothetical stability. Hence the ‘creative imbalance’, which brings the necessary and needed changes. The essence of ‘sustainability’ thus becomes, in the presented approach, ‘imbalance’, which requires intervention in the process of exchange space management and planning of its organisation.

4. SUSTAINABLE CITY

A sustainable city in a global approach is defined as a settlement unit that is planned and managed considering the social, economic, and environmental contexts for the well-being of the existing population without endangering the ability of future generations to experience the same. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, adopted by all United Nations Member States in 2015, provides a shared blueprint for peace and prosperity for people and the planet, now and into the future. At its heart there are the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are an urgent call for action by all countries – developed and developing – in a global partnership. They recognise that ending poverty and other deprivations must go hand-in-hand with strategies that improve health and education, reduce inequality, and spur economic growth – all while tackling climate change

and working to preserve our oceans and forests. The United Nations' Sustainable Goal 11, which official mission is to "Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable", recognises the fact that an action in one area affects the outcomes in other areas, and that development must balance social, economic and environmental sustainability.¹ The New Urban Agenda was adopted at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) in Quito, Ecuador, on 20 October 2016. It was endorsed by the United Nations General Assembly at its sixty-eighth plenary meeting of the seventy-first session on 23 December 2016. The New Urban Agenda represents a shared vision for a better and more sustainable future. If well-planned and well-managed, urbanisation can be a powerful tool for sustainable development for both developing and developed countries.²

The above discussed global documents provide a framework for drafting national sustainable development programmes for urban areas anywhere across the world. This aspect is of special relevance to Europe, in particular to EU Member States where over two-thirds of the population live in cities and generate up to 85% of the EU's GDP. In the European Union, cities play a major role in developing innovation and creativity that is later reflected in the Cohesion Policy. The 2014–2020 period put the urban dimension at the very heart of the Cohesion Policy. More than EUR 115 billion of ERDF resources have been invested in urban areas and around EUR 17 billion from the ERDF were directly allocated to integrated strategies for sustainable urban development. More than 900 cities were empowered to implement these integrated strategies for sustainable urban development. Cohesion Policy in the 2021–2027 period will continue investing in all regions and the European Commission has put forward a simpler and more flexible framework to better reflect the reality on the ground.³ The URBACT programme that has been existed for over 15 years is dedicated to the effective implementation of the assumptions of sustainable urban development in the EU. URBACT is a European exchange and learning programme promoting sustainable urban development, which integrates economic, social, and environmental dimensions. It enables cities to work together to develop new, pragmatic, and sustainable solutions to major urban challenges, reaffirming the key role they play in facing increasingly complex societal changes. URBACT will continue enabling European cities to work together in 2021–2027 through transnational networks, capacity building, and knowledge sharing activities.⁴ In 2016 the European Union launched the International Urban Cooperation Programme (IUC) programme to promote international urban cooperation, and decided to launch a second phase in 2021 to extend the programme

¹ <https://sdgs.un.org/goals> [accessed on: 01.05.2022].

² <https://habitat3.org/the-new-urban-agenda/> [accessed on: 01.05.2022].

³ https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/policy/themes/urban-development/ [accessed on: 01.05.2022].

⁴ <https://urbact.eu/> [accessed on: 01.05.2022].

to regional authorities and to additional countries. The International Urban and Regional Cooperation Programme entails cooperation on common urban and territorial challenges, with particular attention to green and digital transitions and the inclusive post-pandemic recovery, namely by pairing up EU with non-EU partner cities or regions in order to share knowledge and best practices. Cities and regions will cooperate in three thematic networks: the ecological transition and green deal; urban and regional renewal and social cohesion; and innovative sustainable and carbon-neutral ecosystems and strategic sectors.

In view of the above-mentioned global documents and programmes, sustainable urban development is an extremely capacious term, combining many elements describing the well-being of inhabitants, respect for and protection of the existing anthropogenic and natural resources and considering actions leading to environmental protection and the minimisation of unfavourable phenomena in the field of climate and environmental protection. It should be noted, however, that there are no more precise indications in the available materials concerning the parameters describing the city in the stage of sustainable development and indications as to how this state can be achieved in practice. The general nature of the statements formulated in the discussed documents and programmes undoubtedly causes many difficulties in their practical implementation. The reason for that may be a rather trivial conclusion that each city is different due to its location, history, population, economic performance, cultural context in which it operates, and other factors identifying it. Despite the fact that in many cases we group cities according to accepted criteria, it is difficult to formulate a universal procedure enabling efficient and most of all effective delivery of sustainable development policy goals and, above all, setting concrete parameters that this policy is supposed to achieve.

5. TOURISM AND SUSTAINABILITY IN URBAN AREAS

Cities are nowadays becoming an increasingly important destination in world tourism. Some, such as Paris, Rome or London, have always attracted differently motivated groups of visitors, but in others tourism was not treated as an important economic activity (Law, 1993). Visiting cities is a complex, multi-faceted manifestation of tourism that changes rapidly over time. Classical, traditional urban tourism activities of visiting historical sites, viewing monuments or participating in religious and cultural events occurred only in those few centres with adequate resource potential, while other cities remained virtually uninteresting to large numbers of visitors. Travelling to cities was in the past also integrally connected with the class division of society. A particular manifestation of the tourist use of cities in the nineteenth century was the custom at that time for the wealthy inhabitants

of northern and western Europe to spend winters on the Mediterranean coast. Aristocrats and representatives of the English or Russian bourgeoisie would move for a few months to cities such as Nice, Cannes or Menton. Their presence stimulated the development of service, housing and communication infrastructures appropriate to the needs of this social group and shaped the organisation of urban space in a way that was not always fully controlled. Until the emergence of mass tourism in Europe and other industrialised and economically developed regions of the world after the Second World War, the proportion of visitors to permanent residents in cities was rather fairly balanced, with only some locations experiencing imbalances due to the number of visitors. Contemporary urban tourism, as one of the most dynamically developing fields of economy since the mid-1980s, is above all changing rapidly, becoming an important component of the functional structure of cities and is commonly perceived as a new opportunity for their development. The rapidly growing mobility of people, development of communication, and facilitation of movement intensify tourist use of cities with diversification of forms. Stays in cities are usually short (the so-called 'short breaks'), lasting 2–3 days, up to a week, and their programme includes, apart from cognitive (sightseeing) or educational elements, an equally important group of behaviours, such as shopping and entertainment. Motivations for spending a weekend in a city are, therefore, very often of a primarily entertainment and pleasure nature. To satisfy such needs, e.g. shopping (often of luxury goods), participation in entertainment events (theatre performances, cinemas, concerts, clubs), it does not require particular natural or landscape values, resources of historically or architectonically valuable objects, but rather a well-organised and interestingly designed urban space located mainly in the centre, but not only, also in other parts of cities. In the highly developed countries of the world, for several decades we have witnessed a consistent relocation of the industry outside the inner-city area with simultaneous stimulation of the development of services, which nowadays provide new jobs in cities. The development of inner-city post-industrial areas takes place through revitalisation, i.e., a sequence of planned actions aiming at the economic recovery and transformation of the spatial structure of degraded areas by locating broadly understood services there (administration, science, banks, insurance agencies, culture, art, education, and leisure). New service facilities emerging in the revitalised urban space are to a large extent 'open', and their purpose is universal access and ease of use. This group includes shops, shopping complexes, museums, exhibition halls, cultural centres (cinemas, theatres, concert halls), and sports facilities (swimming pools, gyms, etc.). An important element in the revitalisation of post-industrial areas is the preservation of their spatial identity treated as historical heritage. The adaptation of former industrial sites to the needs of visitors takes a variety of forms. The object of exhibition – visiting may be both buildings – factory halls preserving their original function (manufacturing), and technical and communication equipment (railway lines, viaducts, pumping stations, canals, sluices, etc.).

Another way of presenting industrial heritage is through adaptation, i.e., using factory buildings for new functions, attractive to visitors. A post-industrial area becomes a place for leisure activities, attractive and desirable, which definitely changes its image and perception. The new image of the city with post-industrial areas treated as a tourist attraction is identified by an increasingly large group of recipients, which is perfectly confirmed by British examples (London, Manchester, Glasgow and others). At this point it is important to address the aspect of cities as tourist attractions. A city is a concentration of humans within a compact, better or worse organised spatial structure. It is characterised above all by a considerable concentration of services in a relatively limited, easily accessible (by public transport) space. This gives the people arriving and living there the opportunity to relatively easily satisfy their higher order needs in the field of culture, entertainment, science or the widely understood cognition. The element of interest can be not only the ‘equipment’ of the city, but its material substance itself (buildings, streets, squares, and urban composition) and its history, as well as the events that took place there or the history of the people connected with it. Thus the motivations which bring ‘visitors’ to cities differ, as does the way in which they spend their time there. This diversity depends above all on the size of the city and its geographical location and thus the cultural heritage of which it is a product. The great diversity of urban exchange spaces and their ambiguity attracts groups of visitors who are guided by many kinds of motivations. We can, therefore, assume that contemporary urban tourism is made of a set of relations between the local community (the natives) living permanently and the group of newcomers using them temporarily. Although the former is permanently integrated with the city, while the latter visit it only temporarily, both groups exert significant impact on the image of the city.

Contemporary urban tourism is a series of very diverse activities including: getting to know objects, gaining knowledge, entertainment, shopping, cultural activities, artistic events, and visiting places commemorating important local, regional or even global events or persons. Cities with a well-developed, rich programme of services become attractive tourist destinations for different groups of people visiting them for what are assumed to be short stays of a few days. Too many tourists travelling and visiting cities are not really motivated by any special interest in particular historical epochs and characteristic architectural monuments. People come to these places because they know that this is what others do, because seeing them is part of a certain ‘pattern’, an item that must be ‘ticked off’ because it is typical of the country or region. At the same time they use the attractions that are available in each city (hotels, restaurants, shops) just to nicely spend some of their free time. Tourist stays in cities are usually perceived as a positive economic factor, increasing the income of entrepreneurs and stimulating development of the local economy. The analyses emphasise the financial inflows generated directly by participants of tourist traffic, consolidation of a favourable

image – of the destination city recognised by visitors. A positive image among tourists also influences the interest of investors who are willing to locate their new undertakings in places frequented and recognised by numerous potential and actual receivers and products. However, is intensive tourist traffic always a benefit for the city in which it occurs? Research on the spatial and social consequences of tourism have shown repeatedly the negative effects of intensive tourist use of historical places, sometimes even threatening further existence of valuable objects, leading to gradual degradation of existing cultural heritage resources. Venice or Acropolis in Athens, urban sites visited every year by millions of tourists, are excellent examples of the degradation of valuable historic urban tissue. Another aspect of the constant presence of a large group of tourists in the urban exchange space is the existing conflicts between visitors and residents. The latter regard the numerous visitors as intruders who disturb their rhythm of life. Negative elements such as congestion, noise, pollution, undesirable behaviour such as alcohol abuse or acts of violence and crime, increased the prices of goods and services due to increased demand as a consequence of the presence of a large group of visitors, often with relatively large financial resources, are particularly indicated here. These negative consequences of the presence of a large number of visitors often lead to conflicts with local residents, which generate among them resentment or even aggression towards tourists, an excellent example of which is Barcelona, a city repeatedly cited in the literature as an example of degradation of material resources and social conflicts caused by mass tourism (Koens *et al.*, 2018, 2019; Ashworth and Page, 2011; Lane, 2008; Maxim, 2015; Sustainability, 2014, Special Issue: 'Reframing Sustainable Tourism'; Sustainability, 2014, Special Issue: 'Planning, Development and Management of Sustainable City'; Sustainability, 2019, Special Issue: 'Sustainable Urban Tourism').

Sustainable tourism is defined by the UN Environment Program and the UN World Tourism Organization as “tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities.”⁵ The generality of the definition is clearly visible when we try to use it in relation to urban tourism in order to formulate precise guidelines for a practical urban management policy on its basis. Therefore, when analysing documents and scientific publications approaching the discussed issue both from the theoretical and practical points of view, we can find above all references to the issue of rubbish and other pollution, rational energy management, and actions aimed at limiting climate changes, as well as a postulate to create urban tourism that would be inclusive, sustainable, ensuring the well-being of inhabitants and protecting the existing cultural resources. Unfortunately, the proposed guidance for (desirable) conduct lacks not only practical indications as to how it is to be implemented but also contains no concrete measures

⁵ <https://www.unep.org/>, <https://www.unwto.org/> [accessed on: 01.05.2022].

that would make it possible to decide whether the desired status has been achieved in a given settlement unit. This approach is excellently illustrated by the Porto Declaration signed on 9 July 2021. The representatives of the cities of Athens, Braga, Brussels, Bruges, Budapest, Dubrovnik, Florence, Ouagadougou, Podgorica, Porto, Prague, Rome, Samarkand, São Vicente, Skiathos, Tirana and Venice; of the Ministry of State, Economy and Digital Transition of Portugal, UN-Habitat, the European Committee of the Regions, the Unión Ciudades Capitales Iberoamericanas, Expedia, CLIA Europe, Must Travel & Tech and Airbnb met in Porto, Portugal, on 9 July 2021 on the occasion of the UNWTO Mayors Forum for Sustainable Urban Tourism.⁶ The main mission of the document mentioned above is “to establish target goals on the umbrella objective of attaining a sustainable urban tourism. The world representatives of local government committed to work towards the establishment of an inclusive and more sustainable tourism sector in the cities’ agendas, while fostering job and wealth creation, social inclusion and cultural preservation. Moreover, the Mayors that gathered in Porto also committed to ensure that urban tourism policies are aligned with the New Urban Agenda and the 2030 Agenda, especially as regards the objective of making cities more resilient, inclusive, safe and sustainable.”⁷

6. EXAMPLES OF CONTEXTS IN STRIVING TO ACHIEVE GLOBAL SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

As it has been shown, sustainable urban tourism is a desirable condition which has not been precisely defined. In this part of our deliberations we will present cases of selected cities analysed *in situ*, where we can observe positive effects, which, however, not always resulted from planned activities and occurred due to local conditions and cultural traditions. The examples chosen are the European city of Porto (Portugal), the North American city of Toronto (Canada) and the Caribbean city of Havana (Cuba). Each of them has a different geographical location, history, size, urban layout, functional structure, and population; they also find themselves in different political, social, and cultural contexts and have different resources that are their tourist assets. Detailed *in situ* studies were conducted in selected cities in the following periods: in Havana during two week-long holiday stays (2014, 2015), in Porto during a week-long study stay (2017) under a research grant from the National Science Centre allocated for studies on urban regeneration

⁶ <https://www.porto.pt/en/news/world-mayors-sign-the-porto-declaration-on-tourism-and-the-future-of-cities> [accessed on: 02.05.2022].

⁷ <https://www.porto.pt/en/news/world-mayors-sign-the-porto-declaration-on-tourism-and-the-future-of-cities> [accessed on: 02.05.2022].

and demolition in European cities, and in Toronto (2018) where the authors spent a week of their holiday trip to Canada. The aforementioned research resulted in articles, published in Polish and English in scientific journals and in a book (Kaczmarek, S., 2018, 2019, 2020; Kaczmarek, J., 2020; Kaczmarek and Kaczmarek, 2015, 2021), to which references are made in this paper. The selected publications deal with the issue of urban regeneration and demolition in the studied cities, varieties of urban tourism occurring there, however, they do not directly address the problem of sustainable tourism, which is why we refer again to these three examples. They illustrate the complexity of planning and implementing sustainable urban tourism, especially at the social level.

6.1. Havana (Cuba)

The capital city of Cuba, Havana, like many Caribbean cities, is visited by large numbers of tourists, who started arriving here in the 1920s. The main advantages of the Caribbean region, and, therefore, of the island in question, are the following: an intermediate climate between tropical and subtropical, with minor differences in temperature throughout the year (the highest average recorded in August approx. 28.7°C and the lowest approx. 21°C in January) and a lot of sunshine, lush vegetation, vast sandy beaches, but also interesting architecture (especially in the capital city) from different periods (colonial times and later). In the city we can also find many entertainment facilities (casinos, music and dance clubs, discos, theatres, and concert halls), which since the 1930s have been the main motivation attracting people to Havana, mainly American and Canadian tourists. The significant number of North American tourists was the reason why new Vedado district was constructed in Havana designed on a grid plan structure typical of American cities and intended to host facilities targeting tourists (hotels, restaurants, and entertainment venues). The prestigious character of this zone was emphasised by numerous elegant villas and multi-storey apartment buildings erected in the Art Déco style, for the wealthy representatives of Cuban society (Kaczmarek, 2018).

Urban tourism in Havana has gone through different phases, above all as a consequence of the political and social changes that occurred after the Second World War. After the outbreak of the Cuban Revolution in 1958 under the leadership of Fidel Castro, which introduced a communist regime in the country, the economy (industry, agriculture, and services) got under the control of the government. Those who opposed the new rule gradually left the island. As a result of the government policy striving to build a system of social justice in the meaning of the communist ideology, the influx of visitors to Cuba was stopped practically leading to the elimination of any tourist traffic, which, in turn, produced a gradual degradation of the existing structures. The stagnation of the tourist function in Cuba and especially in the city lasted until 1994, i.e., over 35 years (Henthorne, 2018). An

important moment for bringing Havana's urban space back to tourist use came in 1982 when the zone of the old colonial city, which was built in the 16th century (Habana Vieja), was included in the UNESCO World Heritage List. At that time, a new socio-economic policy was introduced, which viewed tourism as a source of additional income to the national budget. The measures adopted at this stage (financed by the state budget and foreign funds) resulted in the creation of a zone in the centre of the capital city almost entirely devoid of permanent residents (they were resettled to other areas of the city), whose users became tourists (Reynolds and Wolfe, 2000).

In the case of Havana, we can observe a particular interest of tourists in its demolished quarters, which are seen as a peculiarity and a kind of tourist asset, an original feature of the substance of the city, consistently perpetuated in the popular, widespread perception also thanks to nostalgic feature films and documentaries. Thus, in Havana we can observe clearly 'two worlds' using the urban space of exchange: the inhabitants, who struggle with the still annoying lack of products and services necessary for everyday life, and the tourists, who move along completely different trajectories, live in good or even luxurious hotels, eat in expensive restaurants, visit different parts of the city looking for entertainment and unusual experiences, especially willing to penetrate degraded sites, which they consider to be a special and unique value of this city. In addition, both groups are linked through economic relations, as the inhabitants often run private enterprises (brought back to life several years ago) providing tourist services (food, accommodation, transport, and production of souvenirs). Nevertheless, there are still some ethical doubts, especially in the social context of sustainable tourism: is it moral to consider a degraded city and the very poor living conditions of its inhabitants the elements of a tourist asset? (Kaczmarek, J., 2020; Kaczmarek, S., 2018). An attempt to solve this undoubtedly difficult issue was made in the new policy designed to transform areas adapted for tourists that was launched at the end of the first decade of the 21st century by city and national authorities. Revitalisation projects conducted in Havana since 2008 have targeted equally residents and tourists, as evidenced by the programme for the new use of the former port waterfront and the active involvement of local communities in its implementation. This balanced approach is also confirmed by the way in which the urban public space in this zone has been arranged, with a very clear emphasis on the historical heritage of the post-industrial area as a fraction of the history of the city and its inhabitants. Thus we can assume that the presented new approach to the shaping of the urban exchange space bears the signs of sustainable tourism at the social level, above all because it assumes the harmonious coexistence of both groups of users where previously we could observe a clear domination of visitors as the zones of the city which they visited (especially their development and service facilities) were subordinated to the needs and requirements of tourists.

6.2. Toronto (Canada)

Situated in the province of Ontario, Toronto was founded in 1793 by the British, on the site of the French defensive settlement of Fort Rouille (which existed between 1750 and 1759) and as a result of the Franco-British War abandoned by the founders. The British are, therefore, the authors of the spatial and functional concept of the city, which developed as a dynamic economic centre using a regular, rectangular grid layout of streets, where similar-sized quarters were filled in the 19th century with brick buildings of several storeys. It was not until 1834 that the name Toronto (derived from the aboriginal language of the region) became the official name of the city. In the 19th century, the city grew rapidly by dint of the presence of a port, a railway line connecting different areas of the country, and many industrial plants of various industries employing a large number of immigrants from Europe. Today, it is the strongest economic centre of the country, with the largest population in Canada. In 2016, 2.732 million residents were registered there (National Census of Canada, 2016) while the metropolitan area was inhabited by 6.472 million people. The population is made up of more than 200 ethnic groups speaking around 140 languages, making the place unique globally, for which reason the United Nations awarded Toronto the title of *World's Most Multicultural City* in 2001. The economic potential fuels a vibrant cultural life, which in turn stimulates the influx of visitors. In 2018, Toronto reported a total of over 27.5 million visitors of whom 9.5 million stayed overnight in the city while the remaining approximately 18.1 million were one-day visitors. Urban tourism resources in Toronto are typical of the offerings that modern, dynamic, large cities offer to tourists (theatre performances, music shows, festivals, museum exhibitions, art galleries, shopping, restaurants, entertainment, etc.) An important category of resources is the extremely diverse and original modern architecture of public buildings designed by outstanding, famous, internationally recognised architects of the 20th and 21st centuries, including Mies van der Rohe, Daniel Liebeskind, Frank Gehry, and Will Asop. A separate category of tourist resources in Toronto are post-industrial areas of the former port on Lake Ontario, where the revitalisation process has been conducted successfully (Distillery District area). As a result, this area underwent a spectacular functional and spatial transformation, one of the deepest in the city. It became a European-style walking district full of restaurants, cafes, boutiques, and galleries, which offers many attractions to residents and visitors. The city welcomed approx. 27.5 million tourists in 2018, which means more than 10 visitors per a permanent resident, making Toronto the leading destination in Canada (Kaczmarek, S., 2020). Inevitably, residents and visitors simultaneously use the same institutions and facilities that make up the exchange space in this city, but, notably, it all happens without generating conflicts. The explanation to this smooth coexistence should be sought in the behavioural pattern of the Canadian society and the peculiarities of the spatial structure of the

city. The population of contemporary Canada is predominantly of immigrant origin. The indigenous inhabitants of these areas constitute today only about 4.9% of the country's total population. Thus, Canadians are newcomers, often first generation. According to data for the period 2000–2019, about 390,000 migrants from all over the world settled here each year. The migration policy of the country has been in place for many decades and the main characteristics of the Canadian society is multi-ethnicity and multiculturalism. Thus, there is a general acceptance of diversity among people and a lack of negative attitudes towards newcomers. Tourists as temporary strangers are treated with sympathy not only by those who manage space but also in everyday contacts with the representatives of local communities who are hospitable and open to interpersonal relations. It is, therefore, possible to conclude, in the light of the presented findings, that a set of specific characteristics such as: social approval for diversity and the presence of newcomers, a rational urban tourism policy and the characteristics of the organisation of the urban exchange space in Toronto result in the harmonious coexistence of newcomers and inhabitants, which is the most essential attribute of sustainable tourism.

6.3. Porto (Portugal)

The city of Porto with approx. 240,000 inhabitants located on 41 sq km is situated on the hills of the north bank of the estuary of the Duoro River, which flows into the Atlantic here. Its valley stretching east-west hosts an important agricultural region of the Iberian peninsula, where the tradition of wine production dates back to the Roman times. On the south bank of the river, facing Porto, lies the city of Villa Nova de Gaia with about 320,000 inhabitants living in an area of about 170 square kilometres, widely known as the location of the cellars producing, collecting and selling port wine, a beverage characteristic of the region and unique in the world. According to 2019 figures, Portugal was visited by some 27.9 million foreign tourists, of which more than 3 million came to the northern region, visiting the cities of Porto and Villa Nova de Gaia during their stay. The central area of Porto, with the bridge over the Duoro and the monastery of Serra do Pilar, was included in the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1996 as a unique urban landscape with a 2000-year history, where we find architectural monuments from different eras. A particularly picturesque part of this protected urban landscape is the waterfront development zone, the Ribeira district, whose unrestricted, irregular spatial layout dates back to the Middle Ages. Situated on a fairly steep slope marking the river valley, it is a unique element in the urban space due to its narrow, winding streets, many of which take the form of stairs, and the multi-storey, structurally fragmented buildings, often centuries old, located on narrow, irregular plots. The architectural, urban and social specificity of the historic centre of Porto and the legal restrictions that were in place in Portugal for several decades, freezing rents

in order to protect tenants' rights, favoured degradation and destruction that can commonly be observed in this housing substance. In order to counteract the demolition of inner-city zones, a problem which is common in Portugal, the central authorities (government and the parliament) decided unanimously in the early 21st century to adopt a programme for their regeneration as one of the priorities of state policy. The Urban Revitalisation Association created in Porto in 2004 was called Porto Vivo, the area of its jurisdiction corresponds to the areas that needed remedial action, amounts to 1,000 ha, and is thus the largest urban revitalised area in the country. It is also worth remembering that among the users of Porto's central zone, besides the city's inhabitants, visitors, especially tourists are a very large group (Kaczmarek, S., 2019).

The extensive demolition zone in Oporto, which undergoes regeneration as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is a very important tourist asset. Thus, another aspect that requires detailed consideration is the relationship between the cultural value that the demolished area represents currently and the impact on it of the proposed transformation. The demolished area is now commonly perceived as authentic material evidence of cultural heritage, documenting the passage of time and the history of the place. It is, therefore, necessary to consider the following complex issue: to what extent is it acceptable to transform what has been recognised as an asset common to all mankind? Will a modern, revitalised spatial and functional structure, filled with new or significantly modernised buildings which will provide better conditions for the people living in it, also be as important as before as a tourist attraction for visitors to the city? This aspect, too, cannot be ignored in assessing the relationship between regeneration and demolition in Porto, since tourism-related income is a very important component of its budget (Kaczmarek, S., 2019). For we are dealing here, as has been shown, with a paradox consisting of the following sequence of links: demolition triggers revitalisation, which in turn should be conducted in such a way that the demolished substance subjected to it does not lose its originality and uniqueness, resulting from the fact that it is dilapidated ('picturesque ruins', inhabited and used) which at the same time constitutes its unique qualities for tourists visiting the city. This raises very difficult questions: is it at all possible to conducted such a revitalisation? What will a sustainable approach to tourism entail in this particular situation at the social level? The solution to this situation for space managers and decision-makers is neither easy nor clear-cut. The identified paradox of demolition and revitalisation taking place in the most interesting and valuable historical and landscape parts of this city viewed in the context of tourism does not make the situation any easier. Understanding sustainability in this location only as rational energy consumption, reduction of pollution, etc. fails to eliminate the potential of social conflicts between residents and visitors.

These examples confirm the complexity of planning and delivering sustainable tourism in cities. The effectiveness of its programming depends on many

tangible and intangible factors. Each city is different due to its location, origins, history, urban layout and architecture, spatial and functional structure, and, above all, the composition and characteristics of its population. The examples discussed above show that planning and effective delivery of sustainable urban tourism is an exceptionally contextual process, and that sometimes it is impossible to achieve the desired situation where the well-being of residents and the satisfaction of tourists coexist harmoniously.

7. COCLUSION: EDUCATION AS THE NEW APPROACH TO URBAN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

The approach presented here sees planning as a form of managing the future of an area. In light of this argument, can we conclude that planning and implementing sustainable urban tourism patterns are indeed possible – or is it utopia, which seems to be a perfect yet unachievable state? The history of cities around the world clearly shows that in an exchange space the dynamics of change is more important than the stability achieved. Sustainability is desirable, but not sufficient to create development challenges. Tourists can also be agents of destabilisation, but in certain situations and stages of development tourists also help to achieve sustainability. They become significant agents in bringing order to the organisation of the space of the visited places. This is the reason why we need ‘social understanding’ instead of proliferating ‘greedy egoism.’ Perhaps the concept of ‘citizen science’ rooted in the reworking of previous debates on sustainable development is worth incorporating into spatial thinking. No doubt we seek to achieve a kind of *equilibrium* between economy, society and nature. Typically, the debates raise issues of pollution, waste management, cities filled with concrete structures, carbon footprint, excessive economic growth, etc. However, issues concerning internal relations in the social environment that are linked to economic development programmes and guidelines are discussed to a much smaller extent. Typically, living conditions and social discrimination come first. In this approach it is commonly assumed that sustainable development should minimise social differentiation. In the last few decades, however, it has been difficult to observe significant progress in equalising living standards around the world. St Matthew’s Syndrome is still going strong, i.e., the rich are getting richer and the poor have fewer and fewer resources at their disposal. Under these circumstances, the paradigm of sustainable development should be reconsidered, but from the perspective of social relations and *asset* management policies. A return to the ‘geography of morality’ left on the margins of scientific research (Smith, 2000; Kaczmarek and Kaczmarek, 2011) would not be out of place. Morality treated as a social relation should be

a significant thread in research and concrete practical solutions for social aspects of sustainable development. Special attention should be paid to social inequality in cities. Urban spaces like a lens focus the problems of the quality of the life of modern humans in urban areas. However, social relations of goodness are marginalised. Better spaces are occupied by economically and politically privileged groups. However, the concept of social justice in urban areas is still a fiction. So, it is worth the effort to make sure that recommendations for the segregation of waste are balanced by a dialogue about social segregation and its effects. The 'social waste' that should be eliminated includes hatred, greed, selfishness, terrorism, etc. There is, therefore, an urgent need to find ways to bring about a state of social equilibrium based on relationships of goodness. In formulating the problem of our deliberations, we posed the question: is it likely that the principles of sustainable development will be respected in contemporary urban tourism? Let us take a closer look at the relationship between city dwellers and tourists. In recent years the ghost of *overtourism* has circulated around the world. Overtourism is crushing many destinations. Successful territorial marketing is becoming a curse for tourist space managers around the world. Residents of tourist towns look around for quiet, idyllic places to live. But let us look with the cool eye of the researcher at the disruption of the social balance in urban tourist spaces. It will be necessary at this point to recall the definition of tourism commonly used in social sciences proposed by K. Przeclawski - "... all spatial mobility phenomena associated with voluntary, and temporary, change of place of residence, rhythm and environment of individual life, and entering into a personal encounter with the visited environment (be it natural, cultural or social)" (Kowalczyk, 2014, p. 10). In the definition, the concept of encounter plays a key role. For we are dealing with the encounter of two cultures, i.e., the culture of the visitors and the culture of the residents. In this aspect, the problem of balance in tourist spaces manifests itself. Bearing in mind Przeclawski's suggestions, we should analyse the number and quality of this "entry into personal contact."

We can, however, turn towards a more revolutionary thinking. Abundance should be of secondary importance. The 'quality' of incoming tourists and the value of the relationship between visitors and residents should come first. The problems of sustainable tourism in cities should not be attributed to excessive numbers of incoming tourists. First of all, we need to improve the behaviour patterns and attitudes of not only the visitors, but also the hosts. We should not administratively restrict the volume of tourist traffic. It is a human right to be able to travel freely around the world. Thanks to modern communication and transport technologies, we are overcoming the barriers of time and space. The world has become accessible, and travelling is also an authentic source of knowledge; it enriches us, refines our perception of the world. Thanks to travelling, contemporary humans better understand the culture of the visited places. The encounter of cultures mentioned by Przeclawski undoubtedly carries educational values. The one who gains is the

local community. Not only does it receive income for the tourist services provided but it also enriches its understanding of the world embodied by the visitors. In turn, tourists may experience a different everyday life and may acquire a valuable perspective on the surrounding reality. The presented features of a tourist encounter of cultures are conditioned by the quality of personal and social capital, which shapes mutual relations of both parties. A lack of adequate educational resources shallows and trivialises the sense of meetings in tourist spaces of cities. Tourists are often treated as not very smart individuals with fat wallets. They are a source of above-standard income from the tourist services. The quality of these services is of marginal importance. Similar behaviour can be observed among tourists who exhibit neo-colonial attitudes and feel like conquerors rather than partners of the communities they visit. According to the authors, the attitudes presented above result from the lack of appropriate preparation for travelling.

In order for the meeting in urban and non-urban spaces to have a deeper meaning and be treated as sustainable tourism we need a well thought out and well-conducted education aimed at tourists as well as inhabitants. Both sides should learn the principles of a partnership meeting taking place in a shared space. Then there is hope that sustainable urban tourism is possible and not just a pipe dream. The pre-condition for the meeting of cultures is the presence of well-educated and well prepared newcomers and residents of the visited places. The meeting of cultures becomes real in hospitable spaces, the creation of which depends on the hosts and the visitors. Both groups should consequently learn tolerance, acceptance of differences, showing empathy, and at the same time patience. This is not an easy process, but rather a challenge for both city managers and tourism organisers, the media, schools, and universities. Education aimed at different age groups, properly prepared and delivered, is a way to mitigate imbalances, and it can make planning and implementing sustainable urban tourism feasible in any location.

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