

Sylvia KACZMAREK*

TOURISM AND URBAN REVITALISATION

In many European cities the economic changes after the Second World War resulted in deep functional and spatial changes (Ravetz, 1988). In particular they referred to internal areas of industrial cities where dominating industry was in crisis. The decline of traditional, though no more profitable, sectors (such as shipbuilding, textile industry or the liquidation of cargo terminals in ports) led to increased unemployment, poverty and crime among the urban communities. Unfavourable changes included also material assets/substance of the city. Housing areas and social infrastructure gradually degraded. Considerable outflow of the population was due to poor employment perspectives, lack of initiatives to stimulate enterprise spirit and only a few investment projects complete the picture of dying urban areas. The above description of degraded space reflects the process which was true for numerous not only European but also American cities. Many cities in the United Kingdom suffered from it (e.g. London, Glasgow, Manchester, Bradford, Liverpool and others) also Irish cities (Dublin) and German (cities in Ruhra) or French ones (Lille, St. Etienne).

The sequence of actions with a view to achieve economic recovery and the change of the spatial structure of degraded urban areas is called **revitalisation**. The process consists in the introduction of new functions, different from traditional for the area in question with simultaneous transformation of existing spatial form by building new premises, modernisation and adaptation of the remains of buildings for new purposes (Kaczmarek, 1998). The parts of the city subject to these actions have acquired new, different aesthetic expression of the urban space as a result of modern city planning composition.

The scale of revitalisation varies and to a large extent depends on financial resources. In the UK and Irish cities the process was supported by substantial

*Sylvia KACZMAREK, Department of Urban Geography and Tourism, University of Łódź, 90-418 Łódź, al. Kościuszki 21.

contributions of the State budget which were allocated and monitored by specially set up organisations (UDC – Urban Development Corporations) and the necessary actions took many years (Keating, 1988; Kidd, 1993; Ogden, 1992).

Revitalisation was not only about the introduction of new functions and giving modern shape to industrial areas but mostly about the creation of new image and the change in perception of these urban areas. Usually functional changes meant the introduction of services (administration, education, banks, insurance, culture and art) into the industrial areas and, to a limited extent, some very modern industries (the so called ‘clean technologies’, such as electronics). High quality housing areas, original in their architecture and spatial arrangement also played an important role in the revitalisation. Individual location of the housing areas in post-industrial areas, usually attractively centrally located, attracted new, better off inhabitants representing higher levels of social hierarchy. That changed the image of these areas. In their new form they have become islands in the urban area, attractive and wanted both as a place where people can work and live. New quality of revitalised urban space increased its attractiveness not only for the city population but also for the newcomers.

Traditional scope of the term ‘tourism’ has substantially enlarged today. Everybody travelling voluntarily, with a purpose different from earning is called a ‘tourist’ without stating whether the trip is for leisure purposes or family holidays. Some people tend to regard as tourists those who have to travel frequently, in the country or abroad, on business and those who travel for religious reasons (pilgrimage) or for health (stays in health resorts). Contrasting the terms ‘tourist’ and ‘vagabond’ is also the main, basic concept of division of the postmodernism society (Bauman, 1996) where the first one is associated with perfection, organisation and ramifications of choices concerning the lifestyle and place of stay while the other one means absolute freedom in this respect. The hierarchy of postmodernism society reflects the possibility to make independent choices, without any limits. The more freedom of choice one has, the higher is his or her rank in the post-modern social hierarchy.

Thus uniform and strict definition stating who is a modern tourist is not easy. The presently applied definition states that the notion of ‘tourism’ is deemed to include any activity concerned with the temporary, short-term movement of people to destinations outside the places where they normally live and work and their activities during the stay at these destinations.

In the case of a large city it is very difficult to give a precise definition of a ‘tourist’ because people who come to a city are motivated in many different ways, including business, education, leisure and pleasure. We can assume that a ‘tourist’ in a large city is somebody wishing to spend here some of her/his time

and take advantage of the social infrastructure (broadly understood). Such a definition of participants of tourism in a large city justifies calling them 'newcomers', the term of wider scope of meaning (Kaczmarek, 1995).

These 'newcomers' undoubtedly constitute the element which stimulates the development of the city. New service facilities emerging in the revitalised urban area are usually of 'open' nature and they should be easily accessible and available. This is where the retail outlets, shopping centres, museums, exhibition halls, cultural organisations (cinemas, theatres, concert halls), sports facilities (swimming pools, gyms, etc.) are located. New infrastructure changes the destination of mono-functional space (industry) into a multi-functional one enlarging the group to whom the offer is addressed as it is no more directed towards local inhabitants but also to the newcomers – living in other areas of the city and visitors. New jobs are also created, new companies and organisations support economic recovery. A wide range of proposals relating to new functions gives a new economic, social, cultural and spatial dimension to old industrial areas.

The preservation of spatial identity, treated as historical heritage, constituted an important aspect of the revitalisation of post-industrial areas. The most valuable and the best preserved parts of revitalised industrial areas have been left in their original form (characteristic for the time when they were built and flourished) and made available to visitors as tourist attractions representing the history of the development of modern civilisation. The adaptation of former industrial areas for the needs of visitors takes various forms. Exhibited premises are sometimes buildings – production halls in their original functions (manufacturing) – as well as technical and transportation equipment (railways, bridges, pumping stations, channels, locks, etc.). Sometimes the industrial heritage is adapted, i.e. used for new functions, attractive for the visitors. Previous factories house museums, exhibition halls, entertainment parks, organisations of culture, sports facilities, hotels and restaurants. This is how new functions addressed to new groups are introduced into the historical urban tissue. Post-industrial area becomes the place where people spend their leisure time, place which is attractive and wanted, which changes its image and the way people perceive it. The new image of an industrial city, the image of tourist attraction, is identified by more and more people which is excellently confirmed by the UK examples (Kaczmarek, 1997).

The last decade coincided with the increase in interest in the so called 'urban tourism' (Law, 1994). Stays in large cities are usually short, the so called 'short breaks', they last 2–3 days and their programme, besides sightseeing, includes also important activities, such as shopping and entertainment. The reasons for spending a weekend in the city are often related to having fun and enjoying oneself. In order to meet the needs connected with doing shopping

(frequently shopping for luxury goods), entertaining oneself (theatres, cinemas, concerts, clubs) people do not need any particular natural environment or landscape but rather a well organised and interestingly arranged urban space located in the central area. Revitalised post-industrial areas in large cities seem to represent the characteristics most appropriate to achieve these aims. Both their location, accessibility, urban composition offering various services and their attractive and original architecture distinguish them in the city.

Numerous examples of revitalised 19th-century post-industrial areas, in particular in the UK (London, Manchester, Birmingham, Glasgow), confirm the thesis that tourism may represent an important element of economic recovery of urban areas. For these cities the tourism sector has become important for their growth. The promotion of the image of industrial urban areas as the destination for short-term trips is the reality of the 1990s. Tourism statistics (such as the hotel occupancy rate, number of visitors to museums) and indirect economic ratios such as the turnover in retailing and services in these cities show constant, dynamic growth due to the presence of 'newcomers'. Some of them come to improve their knowledge on the so-called 'industrial archaeology', to go to museums and see exhibitions, to go to the theatre or a concert, to show the elements of industrial civilisation history to their children. Others want to have a good time, enjoy themselves, spend money to please themselves and their families. There is also a group of visitors who want to see 'what it looks like now' – a former port, textile factory, warehouses and wholesale facilities or a 19th century railway station housing a museum. Based on the information in the media they wish to see these places. Media widely comment on new forms of architecture (often controversial in their modern style) and new functions of the areas commonly associated with industrial production, warehouses or transport of raw materials and goods. People want to have their own opinion and it frequently motivates them to have a tourist trip to meet their need to acquire knowledge and educate themselves. These are the groups coming to urban areas in which the revitalisation of post-industrial areas covered relatively large parts of the city and where the new spatial form is controversial. The flagship example of such a tendency in tourism is the inclusion of revitalised former London Docklands into the standard sightseeing of the city.

Services relating to tourism and addressed to both visitors and local population (the affluent one and the one living here before) in their leisure time play more and more important economic role developed as a result of revitalisation. The quality of life of the Dockland population, people who work here and the visitors is one of the main aspects of the regenerated area (Calvocoressi, 1990).

Between 1981–1989 the investment projects of London Docklands Development Corporation in leisure facilities focused mainly on: parks and

sports facilities, water sports centre, piers for yachts, walking paths along former quays presenting the elements of industrial history and the so-called urban farms, i.e. green areas, accessible to everybody, where plants and animals were grown for educational purposes. An important investment project, the construction of London Arena, a huge hall for cultural events, was also subsidised. The second stage was connected with the development of leisure facilities and included private investment projects such as shopping centres, galleries and exhibitions, pubs, restaurants, night clubs, etc. The campaign to encourage private business people involved in tourism to invest in hotels in the Docklands constituted an important element of the process. The campaign was successful and at present there are three huge hotel complexes: Tower Hotel (300 rooms), Britannia (420 rooms) and Scandic Crown (390 rooms). The process of functional – spatial regeneration not only has turned the Docklands into a new place for people who work and live there but also has made it attractive for visitors. Tourists who visit London more and more frequently, besides traditional places to see, want to see the Docklands as an example of new urban tissue with modern architecture implanted in former industrial area. Newcomers to London want to see the Docklands as an original example of modern architecture in revitalised environment, they participate in cultural events organised in modern London 'Arena'. Thus, indirectly, revitalisation reinforced tourist attractiveness of London by adding another spatial arrangement which is worth seeing.

Interest in industrial cities as the destinations for tourist trips for many reasons is an extremely positive phenomenon. The newcomers – tourists stimulate the development of services: specialised and differentiated, which undoubtedly favours economic development. New jobs are created, investment dynamics increases, the space and buildings change. Industrial cities acquire new image, they are perceived as attractive, interesting, worth visiting, places where one can have a good time. New destination for tourism more evenly distributes the intensity of tourism in cities. For many travellers and visitors the reasons for coming to a city or town are not necessarily connected with the interest in the Middle Ages or Renaissance and the monuments of architecture characteristic for these times. People go to see the places because they know that other people go there and visiting them constitutes an element of a certain 'model' which should be complied with as the one characteristic for a country or region. At the same time they use the attractions available in any city (hotels, restaurants, stores) just to have fun in their leisure time. Appropriately developed offer presented by an industrial city may become a very attractive product in urban tourism. The thesis is excellently confirmed by the examples of the UK cities, such as Glasgow, Bradford or Manchester, in which within the

last decade considerable increase in the number of visitors coming here for pleasure, tourism and to improve their knowledge has been registered.

Revitalised, different, new space of former industrial areas with still clear original space arrangement and preserved historic monuments characteristic for its primary function offers valuable tourist potential. If it turns into an appropriately developed tourism product, well promoted and attractively offered, then it becomes a genuine tourist attraction for visitors. Each city and town is unique, specific and differs from the rest and what we need is just to believe in it and make others believe that. Perfect, professional development of the product offered to customers, high quality of service, respect and care for customer and, first of all, attractive, interesting and not misleading image of the place are preconditions for successful strategy.

Industrial cities, in particular their revitalised parts, are really interesting and that is why in the near future they may stabilise their image as the destination for short-term stays in the mass tourism in the world.

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