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Crises in the Functioning of Urban Tourism Destinations

Abstract. Cities are among the most common tourist destinations as they are not only interesting in their own right but also, to a large extent, determine the transit tourist traffic. The article addresses issues related to crisis phenomena in urban tourism destinations. Crisis phenomena are classified into exogenous, endogenous and mixed. Special emphasis is placed on endogenous phenomena, which result from intensive tourist traffic in cities, i.e. overtourism and the environmental impact on urban spaces, particularly regarding air quality. The purpose of the article is to present critical threats to the contemporary tourist market in the functioning of urban tourist destinations. The theoretical study is supplemented by results of a pilot survey of potential tourists concerning the role of information on air pollution when making decisions about tourism trips to cities. The study has a diagnostic and conceptual motivation. The following methods were used: review of the literature, logical operations, quantitative methods, heuristic methods. The results can be used to inform tourism policy in cities with well developed tourism.

Keywords: city, tourist destination, crisis phenomena, overtourism

1. Introduction

Urban tourism is one of the most frequently chosen forms of tourism driven by various kinds of motivations. As a result, the modern tourism market is afflicted by numerous crisis phenomena, which have a strong impact on urban tourist destinations. Cities are popular with tourists are characterized by a high concentration of tourist traffic, which is why crisis phenomena are more likely to affect

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urban tourism spaces; on the other hand, a higher level of tourism in cities can also contribute to the emergence of crisis situations. The article presents issues related to crisis phenomena in urban tourism destinations. Crisis phenomena can be divided into exogenous, endogenous and mixed ones. Particular attention was paid to phenomena generated by intensive tourist traffic in cities, i.e. overtourism and the environmental impact on urban spaces. The aim of the study is to present critical threats faced by the contemporary tourist market in the functioning of urban tourist destinations with special emphasis on issues arising from the intensity of tourist traffic in cities. This theoretical article is supplemented by results of a pilot survey of potential tourists about the role of information on air pollution when making decisions about tourism trips to cities. The study has a diagnostic and conceptual motivation. The following methods were used: critical review of the literature on the subject, logical operations, quantitative methods, heuristic methods. The results can be used to inform tourism policy in cities with developed tourism.

2. The city as a tourist destination

Cities are one of the most common tourist destinations as they are not only interesting in their own right but also, to a large extent, determine the transit tourist traffic [Bramwell 1998: 35-47]. City tourism is one of the most dynamically developing forms of tourism [Ashworth, Page 2011: 1-15; Maitland, Ritchie 2010], and, in many cases, one of the most important drivers of economic growth [Postma, Buda, Gugerell 2017: 95-101], and the basis for socio-economic development [Karski 1990: 15-17] thanks to its impact on tourism entrepreneurship in cities [Bednarczyk 2010; Douglas, Derrett 2001], labor market [Ladkin 2011: 1135-1155] and the standard of living of the inhabitants [Kim, Uysal, Sirgy 2013: 527-540; Andreck, Jurowski 2006]. It is difficult to interpret urban tourism unequivocally due to a wide spectrum of motives behind tourist arrivals, which are shaped by tourist behavior and consumption in cities [Edwards, Griffin, Hayllar 2008: 1032-1052, Gospodini 2001: 925-934; Pawlicz 2008]. Urban or metropolitan tourism [Hall 2002: 235-248] is associated with destinations which attract tourist traffic. These destinations are urban areas or, more broadly, metropolitan areas, with extensive urban infrastructure, including transportation, residence (accommodation and catering), cultural, sport and recreation, entertainment, commercial, communal and other facilities serving both the needs of tourists and permanent residents [Panasiuk 2007: 212-215; Rani 2017: 1-4]. Typical goals that draw tourists to cities include: sightseeing, culture, business, sports, family and social interaction or shopping. An important element responsible for gen-

erating urban tourist traffic is the organization of events, which are particularly impressive in large metropolitan areas and can cause short periods of very intensive tourist traffic. These can be sports, cultural, entertainment, commercial or conference events, and in some cities events related to holiday, health (including spa) or religious activities.

There are many definitions of a tourist destination that highlight different aspects [Borzyszkowski 2012: 19]. From the point of view of demand, a tourist destination is understood as a place (city, region, country) associated with its specific functions and properties [Leiper 2004: 128]. For the purpose of considerations presented in this article, a tourist destination is defined as a single entity (institution) or a group of tourist market entities operating in a tourist area and engaged in creating conditions for tourism and developing, disseminating and promoting the tourism offering in this area. It is a basic unit of the modern tourist market that can meet market requirements thanks to its uniqueness and individual ability to create new and diversified tourism offering based on its specific features [Kesić, Pawlić 2011: 7-25]. According to this definition, a destination is therefore not merely a place. It is a system of institutions managing the tourism offering of a given place (an area-specific tourism product) which is the responsibility of competent entities [Page, Connell 1993].

An urban tourist destination is a market entity which in a specific area of the city, or more broadly, in an agglomeration or in a metropolitan area offers an urban tourism product that is currently or potentially available on the tourist market [Meler 1998: 173-186]. An urban tourist destination, understood as an entity of supplying services on the tourist market, is responsible for providing and supporting the city's tourism offering and fostering cooperation with other suppliers of tourism services in order to create a comprehensive urban tourism product. However, the city as a tourist area is a physical place where an urban tourist destination operates and is a space for tourist market processes.

The urban tourist destination carries out tasks through institutional entities that enable it to function as an economic entity and create conditions for tourism enterprises to operate in the tourist area and deliver their offering to tourist consumers. Institutional entities that create an urban tourist destination include the city's local government, local tourist organizations, tourist self-regulatory organizations operating in the city, destination marketing organizations (DMO) and other tourism organizations cooperating with the previously mentioned entities. Tourism enterprises operating in a given urban tourism area create the destination's tourism offering. The city council and the local tourist organization are co-creators of the city's tourism offering to the extent enabled by their the local government functions for the purpose of promoting the local (urban) tourism product of the area [Panasiuk 2019: 91-103].

3. Crisis phenomena in urban tourism

The dynamic development of the global tourism market is largely shaped by crisis phenomena, which comprise a set of circumstances, mainly exogenous ones, that affect the market and cause periodic or permanent changes in its functioning. These situations may result in quantitative or qualitative changes in the structure of the tourism market. Crisis phenomena can directly affect local and regional tourist areas. However, it should be pointed out that the highest levels of tourist traffic can be observed in cities, especially the largest ones. Therefore, crisis phenomena occurring in the global tourism market are mainly associated with cities, where they are likely to be more intensely felt than in peripheral areas. Hence, interest in crisis phenomena should mainly concern urban destinations, especially large metropolises.

As regards their impact on the functioning of the tourism market, the most typical forms of crisis phenomena in urban tourist destinations include:

1. Exogenous phenomena, i.e. independent of the functioning of urban tourism:
 - adverse and unexpected changes in the economic situation, with mega-, macro- and meso-economic effects (i.e. on the tourist market or on its sub-markets, e.g. tour operator market),
 - natural disasters in cities and neighboring areas,
 - climate change, especially for cities located near sea basins,
 - prolonged adverse weather conditions, mainly in cities with recreational functions,
 - industrial disasters in cities and surrounding areas, including transport disasters,
 - social (internal) conflicts not related to overtourism,
 - military and political conflicts (external – bilateral and multilateral),
 - terrorist activities,
 - migration crises,
 - epidemics and pandemics [Panasiuk 2013: 26-27],
 - threats related to the use of information technologies, concerning the purchase of tourism products, as well as threats to tourists' security resulting from the direct use of information technologies at a tourist destination [Zhiyang et al. 2012: 138-143].
2. Mixed, exo-/endogenous phenomena, crisis processes occurring in urban tourist destinations coincide with processes depend on the intensity of tourist traffic:
 - excessive transport congestion [Wilk, Pawlak 2014: 11117-11122] which makes it difficult to reach urban tourist destinations [Riganti, Nijkamp 2008: 25-44],

– condition of the natural environment, including air and water quality [Łapko, Panasiuk 2019: 290-299], and resulting from the functioning of the urban transport system and the state of municipal waste management.

3. Endogenous phenomena, related to the volume and structure of tourism in the city – i.e. overtourism.

The above phenomena can have natural, social, economic and political causes. They can affect consumers' interest in the tourism offering of urban tourist destinations to a varying degree. All of these phenomena, have direct social and economic effects on the processes occurring in the tourist market.

Crisis phenomena directly limit the number of tourist arrivals registered in affected cities and their surroundings, but they can indirectly influence people's decisions regarding tourist trips to neighboring urban destinations, tourist regions, countries or even to the entire continent. These phenomena lead to changes in the structure of demand, and therefore trigger changes in tourism supply, limiting revenues of tourism enterprises and those leading to a deterioration of the economic situation of cities and their residents, mainly those employed in the tourism sector.

The need to study crisis phenomena that affect the functioning of the urban tourist market is most clearly justified by broadly understood issues related to the security of entities of the tourism industry and, above all, by the necessity to secure the safety of tourists and residents in urban tourist destinations.

4. Overtourism as a crisis phenomenon of urban tourist destinations

Overtourism is being recognized as a growing problem of many smaller and larger urban tourist destinations, which should, in fact, be also treated as an endogenous crisis phenomenon. It is also referred to as the Venetian syndrome [Seraphin, Sheeran, Pilato 2018: 374-376], after the place where the effects of overtourism became most apparent and received global media coverage. Overtourism, which is the situation when the place's tourism carrying capacity is exceeded, has a negative effect on the natural and socio-cultural environment.

The concept of overtourism is applied to destinations where residents of tourist areas (locations) and/or guests (tourists) believe that there are too many tourists in the area (locations), which negatively affects the quality of life for local residents, and/or the quality of tourist experiences for visitors, either as a result of their significant deterioration or due to the impossibility of obtaining them [Goodwin 2017]. Because the carrying capacity of tourist destinations is exceed-

ed, residents and visitors who experience a deterioration in the quality of life and stay start taking steps to counteract this situation. This leads to protests in which residents call on authorities of tourist destinations and visitors to limit tourist traffic or designate areas within tourist destinations that would be accessible to residents only.

The phenomenon of overtourism is becoming an increasingly acute problem in the 21st century. More and more cities with an established tourist image are witnessing protests against mass tourism, which are a clear and indispensable element of attempts to limit the incoming tourist traffic. Cities in which the phenomenon of overtourism is visible are very often major or even the most important destinations in a given country [Borzyszkowski 2018: 19-30]. Excessive influx of visitors, i.e. mass tourism, leads to conflicts in which four groups of entities are involved:

- residents, who want to make sure that crowds of tourists do not to limit the quality of their daily life,
- tourists, who want to make the most of their free time and take full advantage of the tourism offering in a given destination,
- tourism enterprises, whose purpose is to increase profits and develop the tourism offering [Kruczek in: Borzyszkowski 2018: 134-136],
- tourist destinations, whose task is to adapt the carrying capacities of tourist areas they manage to meet the needs of residents and visitors, and which suffer the consequences of dissatisfaction and protests of residents, tourists and tourist enterprises.

No effective adaptation measures or anti-overtourism tools have been developed so far. It should also be noted that in many tourist destinations profits from tourism are often achieved only by a limited number of entities, e.g. global tourist corporations, while the costs and negative effects are borne by entire destinations and their residents. On a microeconomic level, pricing is the most effective tool. Entities of the local tourism sector, e.g. restaurants, tourist attractions, raise prices to limit the number of customers. In the case of tourist destinations, the pricing policy applies to tourist taxes. In order to limit overtourism, long-term measures (investment, promotion) are necessary, not only in the most popular tourist destinations, but also in completely new ones, often not yet discovered by mass tourism and in alternative places as well. In this regard, activities should be carried out not only by individual tourist destinations. They should also be part of a broad tourism policy of states, economic groups (the European Union) and international tourism organizations. The fact that the carrying capacity of some tourist destinations is exceeded as a result of overtourism is an opportunity for the development of tourism offerings in other destinations [Panasiuk 2019: 343-345].

5. The degradation of the natural environment as a problem of the functioning of urban tourist destinations

The degradation of the natural environment does not seem to be primarily associated with urban tourism. Only limited parts of tourism offerings in cities rather involve natural tourist attractions. However, given the growing levels of air and water pollution in many cities, this issue may affect the purchasing decisions of tourists interested in coming to urban destinations.

With regard to the endogenous aspect, it should be noted that tourism causes strong anthropopressure on the environment resulting from the fact that the urban tourist destination can be reached by various means of transport (especially by air and sea) [Page 2005; Bieger, Wittmer 2006: 40-46] and from the stay of visitors in the destination. There is no doubt that urban tourism, owing to population density resulting from permanent residents and tourists arriving for temporary stay, dynamically developing transport, trade and other services supporting tourist traffic significantly affects the socio-natural environment in urban tourist areas. The development of tourism in urban areas causes a deterioration in the quality of the natural environment through increased emissions of exhaust gases and waste. However, endogenous issues are usually secondary to exogenous aspects, i.e. the quality of the natural environment, affected primarily by industrial activities, services, transport and everyday life of inhabitants of large urban agglomerations that are attractive tourist destinations. The state of the natural environment in the urban tourist space is determined by assessing the quality of air and water as well as waste management [Schianetz, Kavanagh 2008: 601-628]. It also involves the assessment of environmental protection tasks carried out by municipal authorities themselves and in cooperation with entities offering services to tourists. The state of the environment can also be determined by monitoring indicator trends (e.g. emission of pollutants – improvement or deterioration) [Panasiuk (ed.) 2011: 236-237]. Based on individual assessments of the quality of the overall tourism offering and its individual elements, tourists make collective assessments that inform their purchasing decisions [Decrop 1999].

Air quality is one of the escalating problems in urban tourist destinations of Central and Eastern European countries, including Poland and cities that are tourist destinations in the Far East. The state of air quality should be treated as part of a comprehensive tourist attractiveness assessment [Hu, Ritchie 1993: 25-34; Cracolici, Nijkamp 2008: 336-344], which determines the tourist competitiveness of an urban destination [Crouch, Ritchie 1999: 137-152]. Information about air

quality in the city that is the destination of a tourist trip may directly influence visitors' travel plans and the length of stay. Air quality is analyzed by the emission of solid and gaseous pollutants (dusts and chemical compounds) [Anaman, Looi 2000: 133-143]. These issues are regulated by Directive 2008/50/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 May, 2008 on air quality and clean air for Europe [Directive] and take into account activities that should be implemented by Member States on their territory, taking into account area types and indicating agglomeration areas as well. It is the responsibility of EU Member States to assess air quality and to ensure that information on air quality is made available to the public [*Europe's urban air quality...* 2018; *Air quality in Europe* 2018]. This also includes tourists travelling to urban destinations. For this purpose, air quality standards have been set that specify the so-called critical levels, limit values and alert thresholds related to the protection of human health. Air quality management issues are also regulated through guidelines regarding pollution reduction objectives.

Air quality and related information affects not only travel decisions and the structure of elements that make up the tourism offering consumed by visitors, but also determine the overall tourist image of a destination [Echtner, Ritchie 1991: 2-12; Nawrocka 2008: 128-129; Cooper, et al. 1993: 25; Muhoho-Minni, Lubbe 2017: 58-79], also for potential tourists, i.e. those who compare destinations (cities) that could visit in the near or more distant future. These issues may be subject to long-term assessment combined with the observation of activities undertaken by government authorities, including individual tourist cities, to control air quality in a certain time perspective [Avgoustis, Achana 2003: 65-71].

The perception of air quality by tourists directly influences their assessment of urban tourist destinations and is a factor in their decision to visit particular cities, which is confirmed by studies conducted in Europe [Arbulú, Lozano, Rey-Maqueira 2015: 628-636; Katircioglu, Feridun, Kilinc 2014: 634-640], China [Dong, Xu, Wong 2019; Zhang et al. 2015: 2397-2414; Xu, Reed 2019: 601-614; Ahmad et al. 2018] and in other countries as well [Ng, Lye, Lim 2015: 1-12]. Thus, lower air quality can influence tourists' plans to visit particular cities, and at the same time requires action from public authorities to limit the negative impact of smog on the functioning of the urban tourism industry through measures to improve air quality in the short and long term. At the same time, it should be emphasized that especially in European cities, including Poland, low air quality can be observed mostly in the autumn and winter period when, in addition to industrial and transport emissions occurring with varying intensity throughout the year, there is a significant rise in pollution resulting from heating houses, flats and facilities operated by enterprises and institutions. Actions taken in cities and aimed at reducing emissions help to influence city development, including urban tourism, increase the level of the city's competitiveness, including the level of

tourist attractiveness, as well as conduct an active promotional policy of cities on the tourist market, and in particular to shape a positive tourist image.

Consumer awareness of tourists and their purchasing decisions related to domestic and foreign trips only to a small extent indicate that air quality is actually taken into account when planning tourist trips. Based on the results of a survey conducted by the author as a member of a research team, one can identify trends in the extent to which Polish tourists take into account information about air quality when planning tourist trips. The survey was conducted in 2019 on a group of almost 500 people living in various regions of the country. Only less than 4% of respondents said that they were always interested in information about air quality before travelling to cities, while about 17% indicated that they found such information relevant only sometimes. This information is sought a bit more often for private than for business trips. Regarding trips to Polish cities, about 5% of respondents said they looked for such information, 18.5% did so sometimes; about 2.5% of respondents always sought such information when travelling abroad, while 15.5% did so sometimes. Almost 55% of respondents had never looked it up, and about 25% had not even thought about it. When it comes to travelling with children, the interest in air quality before travelling to Polish cities rose to 7%, but in the case of foreign cities only 1% of respondents checked such information. Much more interest (13%) in air quality in urban tourist destinations was reported by tourists taking long-term private trips (lasting over 1 month).

It is difficult to draw certain conclusions from the preliminary results of the survey. Apart from noting that the growing environmental problem observed in many Polish cities so far has not significantly affected purchasing decisions related to urban tourism. On the other hand, it should be noted that the problem is recognised by consumers. While the survey results do not support this, conversations with employees of travel agencies selling tourist packages to cities in China or suggest that customers do make inquiries about smog in cities that are potential tourist destinations. Some customers, after being informed that air quality in a particular city is poor, choose not to travel that destination and keep looking for another offer.

6. Summary

After analysing issues related to crisis phenomena in urban tourist destinations, the root causes of these phenomena were identified and a distinction was made between exogenous and endogenous phenomena as well as those of a mixed nature. One of the most important problems of modern tourism, especially in urban destinations, is overtourism, which was characterised in more detail. Another

er problem that receives less attention in the context of the functioning of urban tourist destinations is the condition of the natural environment, for example air quality. Polish tourists pay relatively little attention to the problem of smog when choosing urban destinations, as evidenced by the results of a survey. However, this is a problem that significantly affects the overall tourist attractiveness of the city. From the point of view of Polish tourists, living in urban agglomerations, negative experiences regarding poor air quality in their cities of residence should encourage them to choose tourist destinations where there is no smog. Despite the low interest in air pollution indicators exhibited by Polish tourists travelling to cities in Poland and abroad, it is necessary to emphasize the need to be interested in these problems at city and macroeconomic level. In this regard, appropriate measures should be taken by entities involved in general socio-economic policy and as part of sectoral policies, i.e. industrial policy, environmental protection policy and tourism policy.

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Zjawiska kryzysowe w funkcjonowaniu miejskich destynacji turystycznych

Streszczenie. Miasta stanowią jeden z najczęstszych celów podróży turystycznych, są miejscem docelowym i odgrywają istotną rolę w zakresie obsługi turystycznego ruchu tranzytowego. W opracowaniu przedstawiono zagadnienia dotyczące problematyki przejawiania się zjawisk kryzysowych w miejskich destynacjach turystycznych. Dokonano klasyfikacji zjawisk kryzysowych, wyodrębniając zjawiska egzo- i endogeniczne oraz mieszane. Szczególną uwagę zwrócono na zjawiska endogeniczne, które generowane są przez intensywny ruch turystyczny w miastach, tj. *overtourism*, oraz oddziaływanie na stan środowiska przyrodniczego w przestrzeni miejskiej, zwłaszcza na jakość powietrza. Celem pracy jest prezentacja zagrożeń mających charakter kryzysowy na współczesnym rynku turystycznym w funkcjonowaniu miejskich destynacji turystycznych. Praca ma charakter teoretyczny, uzupełniony pilotażowymi wynikami badań empirycznych z zakresu percepcji przez potencjalnych turystów informacji dotyczących zanieczyszczeń powietrza przy podejmowaniu decyzji wyjazdów turystycznych do miast. Zaprezentowane zagadnienia mają charakter diagnostyczny i koncepcyjny. Wykorzystano metody: krytycznej analizy literatury przedmiotu, operacji logicznych, metody ilościowe, metody heurystyczne. Przedstawione wyniki mogą być wykorzystane w kształtowaniu polityki turystycznej w miastach o rozwiniętej funkcji turystycznej.

Słowa kluczowe: miasto, destynacja turystyczna, zjawiska kryzysowe, *overtourism*