

ISSN 2081-4461  
e-ISSN 2449-9781

NR 19  
(2019)

# BIBLIOTEKA REGIONALISTY REGIONAL JOURNAL

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## **OPENNESS IN CREATING A DEVELOPMENT PATH OF A TOURISM-FOCUSED CITY**

### **OTWARTOŚĆ W KREOWANIU ŚCIEŻKI ROZWOJU MIASTA UKIERUNKOWANEGO NA TURYSTYKĘ**

DOI: 10.15611/br.2019.1.16

**Summary:** The wealth of societies, a well-developed infrastructure of domestic tourism and global accessibility, surplus of free time determine the increased flow of tourists in the world economy. Attractive locations are not prepared to accommodate such a large number of people. Hence, the continued application of the existing strategies in these places is becoming a problem. The need arises to change the strategy from a quantitative to a qualitative one based on customer segmentation. At the moment, the most popular tourist destinations must use a system of tools limiting access to the settlement unit in order to implement the idea of sustainable tourism. The aim of the paper is to indicate the multifaceted consequences of opening up the city in conditions of the changing economy. The following research methods were used: studies of domestic and foreign literature, benchmarking and simple statistical methods. The analysis concerns the contemporary conditions, in which cities strive to implement the idea of sustainable tourism.

**Keywords:** City openness, overtourism, city tourist strategy, city development.

**Streszczenie:** Współcześnie turystyka szybko się rozwija i jest jedną z najdynamiczniejszych gałęzi gospodarki, co przekłada się na wzrost zamożności ludzi. Bogacenie się społeczeństw, zaspokajanie ich podstawowych potrzeb, dobrze rozwijająca się infrastruktura turystyki krajowej, globalna dostępność lokalizacji, ciekawość świata i innych kultur oraz nadwyżki czasu wolnego determinują zwiększony przepływ turystów w gospodarce światowej. Oznacza to zyski, szczególnie dla atrakcyjnych lokalizacji. Przestrzenie te nie są jednak przygotowane na przyjmowanie tak dużej liczby osób. Stosowanie dotychczasowych strategii na tych obszarach staje się problemem ich stałych mieszkańców, osób odwiedzających i systemu ekologicznego tych przestrzeni. Należy zatem zmienić strategię z ilościowych

na jakościowe, oparte na segmentacji odbiorców. Najpopularniejsze turystycznie lokalizacje muszą stosować system narzędzi ograniczających dostęp do jednostki osadniczej, aby realizować ideę zrównoważonej turystyki. Celem artykułu jest wskazanie konsekwencji otwierania miasta w trudnych warunkach zmieniającej się gospodarki. Zastosowano metody badawcze, takie jak: studia literatury krajowej i zagranicznej, benchmarking i proste metody statystyczne. Analiza dotyczy współczesnych uwarunkowań gospodarki światowej i krajowej, w których miasta dążą do realizacji idei zrównoważonej turystyki.

**Słowa kluczowe:** otwartość miasta, *overtourism*, strategia turystyczna miasta, rozwój miasta.

## 1. Introduction

Contemporary socio-economic development is shaped by new conditions resulting from rapid changes and technical, technological and communication progress. These conditions cause uncertainty about the future situation and the need for flexible and far-sighted strategic planning of city development. The city is a specific unit that develops primarily through outward, inward and internal relations which often translate into obtaining new opportunities for the social and economic development of a settlement unit and determine the paths of this orientation. Therefore, openness is increasingly becoming a priority for urban centres. This, in turn, makes the strategic planning of cities include elements related to creating openness in different sections and at different levels. The path of creating city openness depends on many factors and objectives of individual locations. In cities whose development is based on tourism, the planning of their openness is of particular importance due to the diversified implications of this process.

The aim of the study is to indicate the multifaceted consequences of opening up the city in difficult conditions of the changing economy. The applied research methods focused on studies of national and foreign literature, benchmarking and simple statistical methods. The analysis concerns contemporary conditions of the world and national economy, in which the cities have to build a rational strategy of social and economic development which can react to quick changes. In urban centres dedicated to tourism development, it is particularly important to change the approach to defining the subject and the object of the action and to the strategic selection of the tools to be used.

## 2. Theoretical basis of city openness

The openness of a city can be understood in different ways and may concern different areas, such as: metadata; transparency of the city authorities' actions; business-friendliness, openness to new residents and the culture and traditions they bring; communication; ecology; participation; innovations; tourism. City openness creates many opportunities with both positive and negative effects. Openness should

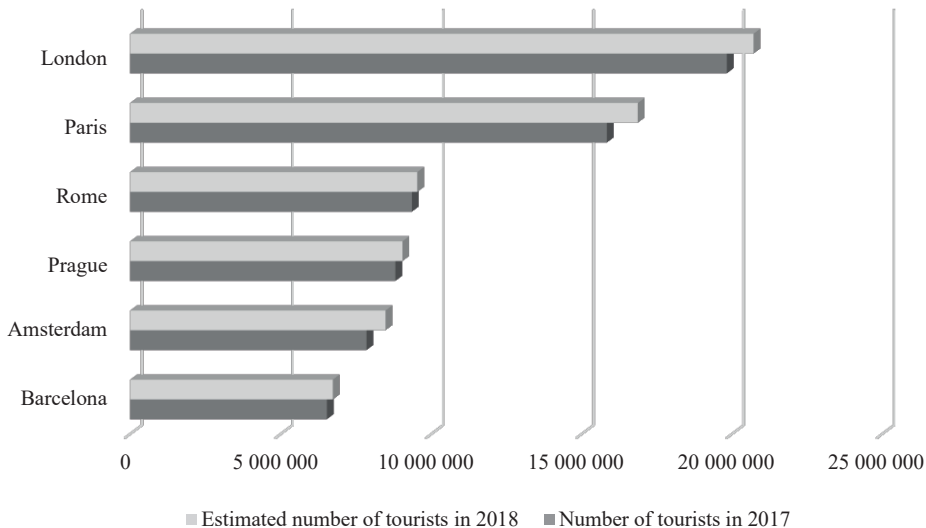
primarily create a positive image of the city and influence its recognition; at the same time it is supposed to serve the introduction of new investors, increase interest in attracting innovations, and innovative and creative departments, which will also affect the growth of GDP *per capita*. When creating city openness, cooperation between its authorities and residents is established whose objective is to preserve the city for the future in at least unchanged environmental conditions. The introduction of city openness aims to achieve a higher quality of life for its inhabitants and to improve the economic conditions of the spatial unit. In this way, the city also gains increased cohesion and compactness, while the space is more efficiently developed; the focus is on achieving a smart, green and zero-emission settlement centre. The openness of an urban centre determines the need to ensure its accessibility in a broad sense.

The broadly understood city openness may also result in dissatisfaction on the part of the public due to the delayed effects of the involvement, which means that the project activities bring effects only after a few months or even years. Residents are not willing to wait so long for results and are discouraged from taking up cooperation and activation. The situation develops similarly when the effects of openness do appear but they are difficult to see due to their limited progress in short periods of time, although they yield the expected results in the long-term perspective. Such an imperceptible improvement does not guarantee the survival of established alliances between the authorities and active population groups. There are also concerns about the possibility of involving the public, given the quality of the human capital. Its insufficient quality causes the need for education and additional outlays on it, in order to provide the society with basic skills to use openness and to be able to create needs that make use of the effects of the city's openness. Not every city is able to spend sufficient funds to educate its residents in this respect. Moreover, creating city openness without disseminating knowledge about the process and educating the inhabitants will result in their insufficient interest in the benefits of openness. Negative consequences of openness of a spatial unit are also perceived when the conditions in which the process is carried out have not been sufficiently examined, wrong conclusions have been drawn, or no preliminary research has been carried out at all.

Nowadays, a city's openness in various areas has become the basis for its functioning and determines the possibilities of its social and economic development. This process is characterized by establishing relations: urban entity – urban entity, city – external areas (city surroundings). In this way, the city uses endogenous resources for social and economic development, supporting itself with exogenous resources. This allows to achieve increased effects, fast growth and innovativeness. By its very definition, openness brings new solutions, products and diversity of entities to cities, at the same time it poses threats in many areas, therefore settlement units should plan the opening path taking into account their own goals and priorities.

### 3. The process of opening up a tourist city – a change in approach

Tourism is increasingly becoming the basic or one of the main sources of livelihood for cities. Every year, many territories experience a growing “invasion” of tourists. Research on tourism behaviour is carried out by various entities (Figure 1).



**Figure 1.** List of world cities (number of international tourists per year) based on Annual Report of Euromonitor International (data for 2018)

Source: own study based on [Internet 1].

A forecast for the analysed cities shows that the new policy leads to a slowdown in the growth trend (which is happening in Barcelona, Prague and Rome), but it does not stop the growth completely. Amsterdam, London and Paris are still on the rise in the number of visiting tourists. London and Paris scored highly in the annual Euromonitor International ranking by an international product and service market research company, with the highest number of visitors (Table 1) 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place respectively. At the same time, they are cities that attract visitors for a relatively long stays and have high average visitor spend.

Among Polish cities, the only one classified in the Mastercard ranking of 2018 is Warsaw. In 2017 the city was visited by: “1.4 million foreign tourists, which placed it in 105<sup>th</sup> place. [...] The first edition of the ranking (2009) showed that Warsaw was visited by 0.8 million people, so the average annual increase in the number of visitors is 8.5%” [Internet 20]. Many of these entities follow the path of maximizing profits from this area, regardless of the costs and consequences. The strategy of tourism development in cities with an infrastructural, historical and cultural background is

**Table 1.** Ranking Global Destination Cities Index (Annual Report by Mastercard)

The 10 most visited cities around the world				
Cities	number of visiting tourists staying for a night in 2017 (mln)	forecasted increase in 2018 (%)	average stay	average daily expenses (USD)
Bangkok	20.05	9.6	4.7 nights	173
London	19.83	3.0	5.8 nights	153
Paris	17.44	2.9	2.5 nights	301
Dubai	15.79	5.5	3.5 nights	537
Singapore	13.91	4.0	4.3 nights	286
New York	13.13	4.1	8,3 nights	147
Kuala Lumpur	12.58	7.5	5.5 nights	124
Tokyo	11,93	1.6	6.5 nights	154
Istanbul	10.70	19.7	5.8 nights	108
Seoul	9.54	6.1	4.2 nights	181

Source: [Internet 20].

often based on the creation of a city product offer available for a wide range of recipients. Such a procedure aims at building the image of an open and accessible city and, on this basis, creating a competitive position. This strategy often leads to rapid success, which is an increase in the number of visitors to the city. Tourists are starting to flow in great numbers and the strategy is being implemented beyond measure, but such success is not free of negative consequences. This situation is often described by municipalities as “we were victims of our own success” [Novy, Colomb 2017]. In fact, we are dealing with overtourism. The phenomenon of overtourism affects spaces where either residents or tourists or both groups see that there are too many visitors which causes a negative impact on the territory, the quality of life of the population and the willingness to be present in the place [Kowalczyk-Anioł, Zmysłony 2017]. Overtourism changes the market balance, particularly on the labour and housing markets. The purchase and rental prices of flats in the space affected by overtourism are continuously rising, which affects the ability of permanent residents to purchase and rent flats. Investors, because of expected profits, are able to pay more, however the local community cannot afford to pay high prices for buying or renting a flat. As a result, the number of permanent residents is shrinking while still more tourists are arriving. There is a problem with the provision of tourist services, caused by the decreasing number of permanent residents. Prices for other services soar for the same reason. Excess of people coming to the city also leads to littering, ‘trampling’ on historic monuments and nature, increasing noise, crowd, air pollution and rising crime statistics in a given area. Environmentally valuable zones do not have the

possibility of regeneration due to the excessive number of visitors, therefore, in the long run, the natural environment is impoverished.

Local entrepreneurship is disappearing due to the high purchase and rental prices of real estate and competition from large corporations; network services and poor-quality street trading are expanding. The local customs, traditions and cuisine decline, and the evolution towards unification, shoddiness and simplification takes place. Permanent residents are being pushed out of still more areas, i.e. not only from the living space in the city centre, but also from their favourite places, shops, entertainment, which are slowly being taken over by an excessive number of incoming tourists.

Faced with the ineffective tourism strategy of city opening aimed at maximizing the number of tourists and profit, successive cities are creating new development plans in the field of tourism. Overtourism determines the use of tools that, directly or indirectly, limit the influx of tourists to a given location, disperse tourists by making the surrounding areas attractive, address the tourist product offer to appropriate recipients or seek to limit the recognition of a given area (Table 2).

**Table 2.** Implemented or planned overtourism tools (selected examples)

Tools/city	Barcelona	Berlin	Bruges	Dubrovnik	Venice	Rome
Quantity limitations of tourists (daily)				X	X	
Limitations for one day tourists (tickets, taxes)	X				X	
Restrictions on short-term rentals of flats	X	X				
Fees for entering the city. Early visit reservations					X	
Restrictions on the entry of large ferries/vessels to the local port			X	X	X	
Creating an offer of new places of tourist interest that will divert visitors from the existing concentration point	X	X			X	
Decisions to cease advertising or promoting trips to historical city centres on a local and regional scale			X			
Walking without a top or in a bathing suit in public places are prohibited					X	X
Eating in the street in the historical centre of the city, or swimming in fountains are prohibited					X	X

Source: own study based on [Internet 2; Internet 3; Internet 4; Internet 5; Internet 6; Internet 7; Internet 8; Internet 9; Internet 10; Internet 11; Internet 12; Internet 13; Internet 14; Internet 19; Internet 21; Internet 22].

Overtourism tools focus on restrictions or prohibitions. The restrictions involve financial, quantitative and other tools. This means that cities introducing financial limitations establish e.g. fees for entering the city, additional taxation, a system of penalties and fines, increased (often seasonally) prices (including fees for sightseeing monuments and places of natural beauty). Examples of quantitative tools used by cities to achieve sustainable tourism include: daily quota on tourist arrivals and on entrances to individual historic buildings, restrictions on short-term rentals of flats and on the entry of large ferries/vessels to the local port. Other tools used in overtourism include creating a product offer of new places of tourist interest that will divert visitors from the existing concentration points; decisions to cease advertising or promoting trips to historical city centres on a local and regional scale, so as not to increase the number of visitors.

In Venice, many restrictions were introduced in respect of the influx of tourists. One of the tools used concerns one-day tourists – a proposal was adopted to charge an entrance fee to the city, which will come in force from January 2020 and will be between 2.50 and 10 euros, depending on the season. Numerous bans were also introduced, such as walking without a top or in a bathing suit in public places, eating in the street in the historical centre of the city, or swimming in fountains. Similar prohibitions are in force in Rome. The authorities want to fight against littering, eating and picnicking in the vicinity of monuments. A ban on eating and drinking alcohol at the most popular attractions of the Eternal City was introduced. For a serious offense even a ban on entering the city may be imposed, which can last from a few to several dozen hours (a long ban applies in case of repeated violation of the rules). There are also restrictions on the letting of flats or rooms by platforms such as Airbnb, as they allowed for the rental of entire flats or rooms for short periods at high prices in such locations as Madrid, Barcelona, Palma di Majorca, Berlin, Amsterdam, Paris and Reykjavik. The operations of such platforms have a direct impact on curbing the possibility of renting flats by permanent residents who cannot afford to pay exorbitant prices.

One of the instruments frequently used by cities are limits on the number of overnight stays, aimed at limiting short-stay and unregistered rentals. Majorca and Ibiza have introduced an obligation to hold a licence for renting, and set a threshold of 623,000 beds. Barcelona and Paris have implemented housing registration. In Berlin it is forbidden to rent entire apartments to tourists who plan to stay only for a few days [Internet 3]. Some cities have introduced limits on the number of tourists visiting the city, as in Dubrovnik, the limit changes and in the following years it will be 6-10 thousand people. This is to protect the monuments and residents from the excess of tourists [Internet 3]. An interesting instrument of overtourism is an app for a mobile phone which will enable tourists to plan a trip along the least congested route. The app is designed to indicate the most crowded streets and also to display proposals for interesting, less known places, which should help to reduce the overcrowding. Dubrovnik authorities believe that such an app is a good tool,

and additionally they intend to complement the offer with a city car-sharing system to expand the tourist exploration area. In Barcelona, the focus has been on using a marketing plan to promote the whole region, not just the city itself [Internet 4].

Cities are beginning to use a wide range of tools to limit the influx of visitors when they over succeed in attracting tourists. This is because, as the Mayor of Dubrovnik Mato Frankovic pointed out, “Overcrowded cities have achieved success, but between success and failure there is a very fine line” [Internet 4]. Therefore, it is important to choose the right tools to ensure further financial success of the city, and at the same time to influence the quality of tourists and the motives for coming to the place. For this reason, the strategy for developing urban tourism is in a new state of flux; it should be borne in mind that the new strategy should not be too repressive or oppressive, as the results achieved may lead to a backward trend in the tourism of a given area.

#### 4. Strategic approach to openness of selected cities in Poland

Kraków, Warsaw, Gdańsk and Wrocław are some of the most visited cities in Poland and at the same time places either threatened by overtourism or entering its initial phase [Internet 16]. The prerequisites for this process include the unfettered movement of tourists, attractiveness of the location, access by low-cost airlines, unregulated short-term rentals, a strategy aimed at budget tourists – a low price strategy. City openness in the area of tourism in all four cities is an important issue in the strategy of the socio-economic development of these areas.

In Kraków, the development strategy provides for five key values: responsibility, openness, social dialogue, building competitiveness, flexible reacting and equal opportunities. Kraków’s openness is presented in four dimensions:

- “Readiness to accept a new or different person, idea, concept.
- Readiness to compromise on the vision and priorities for the development of Kraków.
- Openness to new proposals for solving social issues.
- Openness to those coming to Kraków, also openness to the neighbouring municipalities” [Tu chcę żyć... 2018].

This matches the tourism development trend, which is connected with the idea of free movement and the influx of visitors.

In the *Warsaw 2030 Strategy* openness was included in the vision. The vision is based on three pillars: active inhabitants, friendly places and open metropolis [#Warszawa2030...]. In this aspect “Warsaw is a city open to the world, boldly facing challenges and inspiring others. Thanks to its diversity and focus on cooperation, it is a unique place to create and develop ideas. It is an important node of the network of European metropolises” [#Warszawa2030...]. The vision directly refers to the idea



of openness understood in a broad sense. Tourism openness is defined in a network approach of a global range.

In the *Gdańsk 2030 Plus City Development Strategy* document, openness is one of the values on which the future of the city is built; this category also includes such values as residents, education, cooperation and mobility [Gdańsk 2030...]. Due to the port character of the city, openness, free movement of people, goods and thoughts have been the genotype of this space for centuries, along with the characteristic hospitality and positive attitude towards changes, challenges and new potentials. Such an approach of the city to visitors has a positive influence on the tourist attractiveness of this space.

Wrocław, in turn, presents itself in its new strategy as “a city of open minds and open doors. We’re curious to see what’s happening in the world. We also produce a lot ourselves – and we are happy to share it. We want to cooperate. We don’t close ourselves to the outside. We intend to share our rich culture. At the same time, we hope that everyone will feel good and safe with us – including visitors, regardless of where they come from!” [Strategia Wrocław ...]. In the new strategy, Wrocław continues the city mission from the first two strategies (1998 and 2006): “Wrocław is a city of meeting – a city that unites” [Internet 17] assuming that openness is already inscribed in the image of the city and sustaining this image.

The most frequently visited cities in Poland develop tourism openness strategies and attract tourists from all over the world. These strategies are often based on a quantitative approach rather than a qualitative one. As a result, these cities are starting to be ‘trampled on’ by visitors, which is negatively perceived (not so intensely yet, due to the initial stage) by their permanent residents. The expectations of the inhabitants are evolving, the quality of human resources is increasing and the citizens are becoming more active, which affects the new look at the tourism strategy focused on the segmentation of the tourist market and reaching selected recipients of the city product offer. This means that a qualitative tourism strategy must be put in operation.

## 5. Conclusion

The necessity of changes in the tourist strategies of cities results from a mixture of premise, such as improving the quality of life, increased tourist traffic, globalization of the world economy, improved recognition of a given location, freedom of movement of people, capital, goods and services. The evolution of the urban development strategy is determined by the consequences of opening urban centres in the difficult conditions of a changing economy. Opening the city brings about positive effects, although the negative consequences of this process also have to be taken into account. Many urban centres have adopted a low price strategy in order to improve their competitive position and attract tourists. A budget tourist leaves little money

in the city, and the negative consequences of their stay are notable. Therefore, the strategy of the cities is changing into a repressive and oppressive one. Overtourism introduces a wide range of tools to limit the influx of tourists. Tourism development strategies are evolving towards a qualitative selection of visitors. A segment of people is defined for whom the tourist product offer in the city is created, at the same time appropriate infrastructural adjustments are made, also high-level interesting projects are prepared that will attract tourist customers who are well-off and generate creative needs. According to Gloria Guevara (President and CEO of the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC)), the task of the most popular cities is long-term planning together with setting and implementing infrastructural objectives, so that the planned tourist traffic stimulates the local economy: “[...] tourism creates jobs and reduces poverty. But its benefits should be mutual” [Internet 18].

Creating openness is the appropriate direction and the priority of social and economic development. This measure brings many benefits and, in this respect, should be an objective for cities in their long-term development planning. With due caution, restrictions and appropriate incentives for residents and the segment of potential tourists, the cities will achieve a very good result based on the undertaken actions. It is also necessary to select openness management instruments in such a way that the effects achieved are predictable and planned, and the segment of tourists visiting the city is prepared, both financially and ‘mentally’.

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