Conflicts between the Stakeholders of Tourist Destinations

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Tourist cities, including cultural and historical heritage areas, are not devoid of threats and problems that other cities face. However, they have additional social and organizational conditions that may cause difficulties in mutual contact between stakeholders.

tourism   heritage cities   destination management

1. Tourist Cities and Their Problems

Cities where tourism is the dominant business activity face a number of problems. Some are of a general nature, but others are closely related to tourism. Some emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic, while others have existed for many decades. A review of the literature on the subject shows that the main challenges faced by tourism cities include the following: the seasonality of tourist numbers (cf. [1]), the occurrence of factors harmful to health and environmental pollution [2][3][4], difficulties with preserving a unique climate and style [5], excessive vehicle and pedestrian traffic [6], threats resulting from the spread of diseases, including zoonoses [7]. The seasonality of tourism also makes it necessary for local operators in tourism cities to look for new business models [1].

Many tourism cities are facing population growth (sometimes a tenfold increase in population in summer compared to winter), which generates a large increase in noise levels experienced by residents and tourists trying to relax during the holiday season [2]. With the rapid development of urbanisation comes the problem of pollution affecting, for example, rivers in tourist cities [3]. The increase in traffic is another serious problem, resulting in the generation of road dust containing particles of heavy metals [4]. Yet another issue is heavy pedestrian traffic, which results in the emergence of huge crowds of people in particularly attractive locations in tourist cities [6]. Developing their infrastructure, tourism cities should simultaneously protect their unique character and climate attracting tourists [5].

Tourism has undergone tremendous changes as a result of the pandemic. Many scientific papers have been published on this topic [8][9][10][11][12]. The pandemic caused both policymakers and researchers to look at factors that could contribute to mitigating and reversing the downturn in the tourism business (cf. [11][13]). In some parts of the world, the coronavirus caused the initiation of measures aimed at activating urban tourism heritage in many destinations [14]. The term "tourism reset" emerged and large cities began to look for new ways to implement sustainability principles [15] but also to rebuild tourism after the pandemic.

Among the numerous proposals, it is necessary to increase the attractiveness and protect what is valuable, and important for the environment or cultural heritage. They recognise the problems associated with tourism, but they also see new opportunities for development. One idea is to transform tourism cities into smart tourism cities, which should have a positive impact on their competitiveness [11]. Where there is a noticeable lack of tourists and financial revenue from tourism, analyses of tourism potential are carried out (cf. [16]).

Opportunities are also recognised to increase the tourist attractiveness of cities through the construction of new leisure and sports facilities [17]. Attention is paid to solutions traffic diversion is used to improve infrastructure and traffic flows, which reduces vehicle congestion [6]. Optimisation of the spatial structure of tourist attractions is undertaken to ensure the development of regional tourism in tourism cities [18]. Regardless of the measures taken, the residents of tourist cities, as well as tourists themselves, must display a certain commitment to values in their behaviour, including respect for cultural heritage [14]. This will constitute a difficult and demanding challenge, as it raises conflicts between various users of historical space.

2. Conflicts between the Stakeholders of Tourist Destinations

For the purposes of conducting research, conflicts occurring in the tourism market are divided according to the parties participating in them. Usually, all stakeholder groups of the tourism market are taken into account, especially tourists and their mutual relationships. Conflicts result from different economic interests (including lost benefits), but also different values and power disparities [19]. The problem is that the public and private sectors are not always able to cooperate. Stakeholders are further divided by different levels of interest and support for tourism [20]. The interests of different stakeholders are conflicting due to the imbalance in cooperation between public sector decision-makers and other entities. The lack of adequate communication and transparency in decision-making further exacerbates existing disputes (cf. [21]).

One source of conflict is the differing needs and expectations of the local population regarding quality of life [22]. Disputes concern the question of "who has the right to the city" [23]. Residents and various tourism business entities have not only different needs but also different interpretations of key heritage sites (for example, how cities are to be promoted) [24]. Stakeholders may also demonstrate different understandings of the function and status of protected areas such as nature reserves [25], although this aspect goes beyond historic cities.

Various conflicts, including conflicts of interest and cultural conflicts, are not conducive to tourism development (cf. [26]). The lack of cooperation points to various negative consequences, including the lack of a shared vision or future strategy for local tourism [20]. Therefore, different decision-makers look for different ways to mitigate conflicts. If tourism activities are to mitigate conflicts of interest among local stakeholders then they need to be educated (e.g., by explaining what the change process is all about), persuaded to pursue joint management (e.g., by implementing participatory decision-making processes), and compensated for lost benefits. For example, locations in the vicinity of protected areas should be provided with alternative sources of funding for traditional crops [27]. The

introduction of protected areas can be a source of dissatisfaction for tourists, and thus the process can contribute to the loss of financial benefits [28].

Stakeholders do not find it easy to work together to maintain sustainable development [25]. However, it is believed that local stakeholders in tourist areas can jointly develop different event scenarios or development strategies [29]. This participatory approach to decision-making and management is very important, especially where changes occur in the functioning of the business model [30][31].

Resolving conflicts of interest in tourist destinations involves holding meetings based on the principle of the open table. It is important that decisions are taken democratically and that the constructive nature of such meetings dominates throughout the whole process and not just at the stage of making declarations [32].

When cities experience societal and spatial transformations, there can be the destruction of urban heritage, especially in historic urban neighbourhoods. Different understandings of the values of heritage are a source of conflicts among stakeholders. Additionally, a major factor causing stakeholders to adopt a negative attitude towards their involvement is power disparities. For this reason, it is important to mitigate and resolve conflicts of interest through the participation of NGOs and professionals throughout the organisational change planning process [19]. In order to strive for cultural sustainability, it is important to remember to ensure that all tourism stakeholders directly participate in the processes of making decisions concerning development (cf. [33]).

Despite the involvement of various stakeholders in decision-making processes, it is not always possible to prevent or mitigate conflicts completely. This is the case, for example, during the implementation of strategies aimed at adaptation to the ongoing climate change [28]. Obviously, in order to be able to talk about joint development or adaptation strategies it is necessary to have adequate analyses, including information on the general attitudes of tourism stakeholders towards sustainable and available tourism (cf. [34]). According to R. Pouwels et al. [35], it is important to improve communication among stakeholders and researchers, increase consensus among stakeholders on how conflicts should be perceived, seek solutions, and generate new knowledge to be used in the future [35].

The issue of conflicts among tourists is very poorly recognised, even when considering not so many conflicts as other conceptual categories such as disputes or arguments. The literature on the subject tends to focus on conflicts between tourists on the one side and their hosts or local residents on the other. It indicates cultural differences and the importance of the quality of interactions among people [36]. It emphasises that the coexistence of local residents and tourists in attractive neighbourhoods and the increased pressure of nightlife in the same areas often lead to conflicts [37].

Conflicts between tourists may result from inappropriate behavior that is inconsistent with accepted social norms. It can be assumed that any conflicts are also influenced by the number of tourists [38]. Few studies indicate inappropriate behavior of tourists that are harmful to the functioning of tourist groups, inappropriate behavior towards tour leaders, and inappropriate behavior towards tour participants [39]. Tourists (compared to non-tourists)

are more likely to misbehave in a given service situation because they feel less connected to the service people and perceive less likelihood of disapproval from them [40]. The described causes of inappropriate behavior can cause various conflicts—including conflicts between tourists themselves.

Research on conflicts among the stakeholders of tourist destinations has also resulted in the development of a number of measurement methods. The most popular method called the wheel of conflict has been proposed by Moore [41]. This researcher interprets the sources of such conflicts, narrowing them down to the following causes of conflict: information (stakeholders are unable to identify factual information; they have incorrect data or interpret it differently, or they rely on untrue information, e.g., on rumour), relationships (stakeholders have a negative emotional attitude towards the other side, related, for example, to stereotypical perceptions or misunderstandings; each side is set on retaliation and therefore communicates in this way), values (conflicts are the result of different structures in the hierarchy of values and the various ways of perceiving the city; one side assumes the right to tell the other side what the city should be like, and does not allow for different opinions, which gives rise to the need to defend one's own values and ideas), structural (the reason lies in the structure of the company, a specific social situation, model of culture or environment) and interests (one group of stakeholders sees themselves or another group as the stronger, more privileged party).

Conflicts occurring in tourist destinations can also be considered in the context of the opposition between the tourism business on the one side and the natural environment and the local population on the other. Sustainable tourism can be a solution to such conflicts [20][24][27].

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