VITAL CITIES. SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT, NETWORKING, CREATIVITY

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Abstract: The paper presents the concept of vital cities in the context of mechanisms of sustainable development, networking and creativity. The vital city was presented as:
- a city belonging to the inhabitants – a city managed and developed with advanced processes of participation,
- a city of reasonable management – a city that uses and at the same time protects its key potentials,
- a city of creation – a city of creating and implementing new ideas,
- a city of opportunities – a city that creates the conditions for the use of energy and creativity residents,
- a city in the surround – a city with a strong position in the environment.

Keywords: Activity and participation of the local community, creativity, networking, sustainable development, urban viability, urban vitality.

JEL codes: R11, R58, O35, O44

Introduction

In the last years, Polish cities have made intensive efforts to restore the vitality of space, communities, economy, or environment. The term *revitalisation* has been used in a very broad sense adjusted to the context of the problems considered most important in a given centre. At the same time, however, one may be under the impression that in many cases the attempted measures focus on rather superficial image-related matters, or merely on removing visible symptoms of those problems. Thus the primary challenge is to redefine the mechanism of operation of the cities, the mechanism under which various processes are combined, measures taken by local entities are synergetic, competition for resources is rationalised, and the

operation of the whole system is marked by original and creative directions of development that integrate local entities and include the city in the network of its relations with the surrounding environment.

City vitality is mainly the vitality of entities that function within it, their creativity and the relations between them. Urban vitality is also a set of various types of potentials and facilities that have an impact on the possibility to function for such entities. Lastly, vitality is related to the possibility to ensure sustainability of positive development processes. Such defined vitality forms a contradiction of local policy which could be, for various reasons, monopolised by a narrow group of local users, which focuses on selective aspects of development, and which aims at generating short-term benefits. Cities developing in such a way cannot be considered vital even if the observed processes lead to a short-term improvement of economic, social or environmental indicators. Moreover, in cities undergoing transformation, very often a loss of balance between various functions can be noted. It is usually due to gradual fading of the previously predominant functions, including the city-forming functions, with simultaneous weak development of new functions that could generate new energy for the city.

In this study, city vitality is described in the context of three mechanisms: sustainable development, creativity, and networking. Under each of those mechanisms, urban vitality has been presented in terms of the values whose building might contribute to innovative/creative local development.

1. Urban vitality and mechanisms of vitality

The notion of *urban vitality* is connected with many other terms resulting from different attempts to describe modern cities. Urban vitality may be considered equal to such notions as *creative city* (Florida 2005; Landry 2013), *smart city* (Mitchell 2007; Komninos 2008), or *happy city* (Montgomery 2015). In each of those cases, definitions are complex, referring to many different attributes, to become even more multi-dimensional along with the development of the concept. The same applies to the notion of *vital city*, which is construed around the "energy" of its residents, while referring at the same time to the sources of that energy and to the possibility and desired methods of its management. Such energy, its constant release, accumulation and positive use, is considered the key source of the city's vitality. This term can thus be understood as the capacity of the city and of its residents to develop in a constant, sustainable and multi-dimensional manner, where the use of creativity and innovation plays the crucial role (Landry, Urban Vitality…). Such an interpretation leads to a conclusion that vitality requires combination of sustainable development, creativity and various aspects of cooperation in the local development processes in order to obtain multi-dimensional development. Vital cities can thus be described in the context of the three interrelated mechanisms (values) that are crucial for the viability of local development. Such mechanisms include:

- Sustainable development mechanism – related to reasonable use of resources at one's disposal, conservation of resources generating positive characteristics

of the city and local community, ensuring sustainable development, accepting responsibility for future generations and solidary sharing of the outputs of development by various social groups, as well as seeking new methods of use of the city's potentials.

- Creativity use and enhancement mechanism – understood as having and building individual and collective capacity to create new ideas, forms of activity, concepts related to the creative use of local potentials, ability to apply the ideas based in the environment in a creative manner, but also providing conditions for a multi-dimensional and possibly free use of the creative potential of residents.

- Networking mechanism – referring to the local entities' capacity and skills to share various resources, both tangible and intangible, in particular knowledge and ideas, mutual inspiration, cooperation to discover new development opportunities, synergic combination of potentials, in particular in the intersectoral aspect.

According to Landry, one may differentiate between *vitality* and *viability*. Vitality is energy and the resulting power of the city. Management and development of those resources requires concentration and focus on the precisely defined objectives related to the city's viability. Vitality is triggered by creativity that focuses on the process of creation. It becomes a foundation for sustainable and durable development by generating innovations that bring long-term benefits for the city and for its residents. Vitality is primarily a derivative of activity of various entities, the resulting processes and decisions, the level of use (i.e. the scope of use of potentials, the level of interaction, communication and exchange between entities), as well as the level of representation related to the external impact of the abovementioned levels. Viability, a notion complementary to vitality, refers to long-term self-sufficiency, durability, adaptive capacity and self-regeneration[1]. Such understood vitality is thus the necessary support for the city's viability. Vitality describes many activities that as such are not unequivocally good or bad. Activities (based on creativity), use (in respect of sustainable development) and interactions (based on different forms of networking) should focus on the set of shared objectives, directions and tasks whose impact on the city may be considered positive by city users (Landry, Urban Vitality…, Landry, F. Bianchini, Indicators of…).

When properly developed, the three mechanisms depicted in Fig. 1 can support and trigger each other. Sustainable development mechanism encourages limitation of the options of development, but also to seek new methods of use of the city's potentials to prevent its excessive exploitation or exhaustion. Thus application of the rules of sustainable development stimulates creativity and inclines to seek original paths of development. Greater creativity offers greater choice of solutions allowing for the use of available potentials.

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[1] It should be mentioned here about resilient cities that are capable of recuperation of their properties having experienced disturbances or shocks, thus able to adapt and self-regenerate (Drobniak 2015).
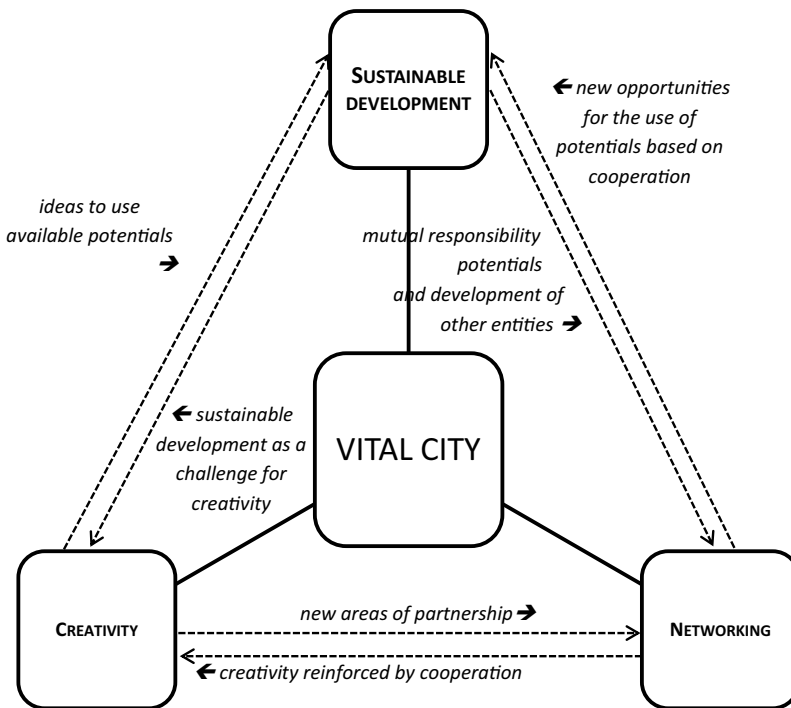
Fig. 1. Vital city in terms of relationships between sustainable development, creativity and networking
Source: Own study.

Sustainable development also has an impact on the networking among various entities. This mechanism saves the potentials, including the non-renewable ones, and thus reduces competition for resources among entities. This also applies to limitation of competition, or rather conflict, between generations. Such conditions offer greater opportunities for local entities to achieve their objectives. Networking allow for the development of new ways of use of the potentials. Cooperation permits to eliminate deficits in resources that may affect respective entities. It also supports seeking solutions that are in line with the rules of sustainable development.

High level of creativity contributes to the identification of new areas of cooperation. It is thus a mechanism that supports networking. Cooperation leads to intensified group creativity. Networking also permits to implement creative solutions through concentration of energy and potentials of respective entities on creative projects.

2. Contexts of generating urban vitality

The analysis of relationships between the processes presented in Fig. 1 can be conducted in detail in the five contexts of perceiving and describing cities. This study discusses the following contexts:

- city for citizens[2];
- sustainable city[3];
- creative city;
- city of opportunity[4];
- city in its environment.

The first context is directly based on the assumption that **a vital city is fuelled by the energy of its residents.** It is impossible to discuss urban vitality without taking into account its key local development actors. A vital city for citizens requires the achievement of three values that can be defined as:

- community;
- development idea adequacy;
- space for residents.

Reinforcement of the actual local community should be considered one of the most important modern challenges for urban development. Relationships in local communities are at risk of gradual fading due to the growing mobility of residents and their inclination for migration, and thus the weakening connection with their place of residence, "globalisation" of behaviour and values, and declining family ties. The maintenance, reinforcement or restoration of local community in support of urban vitality requires:

- creation of mechanisms allowing participation of residents in decision-making processes and thus recreation of the residents' belief that they have real impact on their future in the city;
- increasing the cultural capital of the city measured by skills of residents acquired as a result of their participation in public life, ability to perceive cultural features of the city, awareness of the value of local resources (Bourdieu 1986);
- reinforcement of residents' participation in the life of the city, in particular in activities taken by non-governmental organisations, initiatives and events, as well as in economic processes, in line with the developments on the labour market;
- preparation of the residents to use public services, increasing their ability to develop on the basis of facilities provided in the city, but also integration of local communities around the offered cultural and leisure activities;
- enhancement of the ties between residents while supporting the openness of local communities; the ties between residents are the condition and at the same time the effect of the activities and processes described above; however, the city should be perceived not only as a system connected by centripetal forces, but also

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[2] The appeal for a city for citizens is being voiced in the reference literature (Douglass, Friedmann 1998) and in the context of the actual conditions in Polish and foreign cities by the growing number of academics, businesses, local governments and by groups of citizens, *e.g.* combination of smart city with a city for citizens during Smart City Expo in Barcelona (15-17 November 2016), and in Poland, activity of the Bytom-based City for Citizens Group, or dissemination of such tools as the participatory budgeting.

[3] The term directly refers to the goals adopted in the United Nations Development Programme (goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities).

[4] Cities of opportunity are often discussed in the marketing context, but the term is also used for the purposes of key city rankings (such as Cities of Opportunity) [www.pwc.com/assetmanagement].

as a system developing by benefiting from the surrounding environment; instead of being self-centred, local communities of vital cities must be open to initiating relationships with entities from their environment; we should mention here the different understanding of social capital, focusing on "group membership" and integration around standards and values ("centripetal" approach) and the creative capital emphasising the independence of creative entities and the questioning of established standards and commonly accepted values; the energy of a vital city should combine the pursuit of integration and the openness to other entities.

Problems related to weak community are often connected to the development idea adequacy. A certain discrepancy can be often observed, due to various reasons, between the objectives/directions of development set at the local policy level, and the expectations of city residents. The spectrum of objectives set in a city is virtually unlimited. The boundary conditions are defined based on the city's situation and available potentials, as well as on the creativity of entities having impact on local policies. When formulating the objectives, two rules should be taken into account:

- correlation of development with the experience and awareness of residents; the created urban development ideas must be comprehensible for the residents, therefore, they should refer to the real experiences forming part of the local system of values; following paths set by other centres may seem more creative, but ultimately less beneficial due to the scepticism of residents and lack of their actual involvement in the implementation processes; this rules does not exclude the attempts to achieve a visible qualitative change; it depends, however, on the education of the residents, using good examples that translate ambitious ideas to measurable facts, and above all, on setting a clear path for the transition to new values (social and economic structure);

- harmonisation of the development idea with the city's history and its potentials; urban development is a process which, if radically discontinued, poses the risk of a deep crisis; when pursuing local development, focus should be on the possibly full use of the created conditions and available potentials, obviously in accordance with the rules of sustainable development; the history of cities which faced a crisis is often considered not just the reason of the current problems, but also as a barrier for further development; nevertheless, we should perceive history and experience as a source of an important competitive advantage, i.e. the specific nature and the distinguishing qualifications of a given centre; moreover, resources that become useless with regard to continuation of the current development model may become very attractive for new types of activity; this is proved by many successful revitalisation projects using post-industrial structures or reviving workers' districts; very often local communities consolidate around those potentials, as they treat them as a part of their heritage or symbolic space.

Real implementation of the abovementioned rules depends on the early initiation of restructuring measures. The pressure for fast changes hampers or even prevents the desired continuation.

Another value in the context of city for citizens is space. Space for residents can be described on the basis of:

- visible presence of residents in the city space; it implies daily presence of residents in public areas, treatment of those areas as a venue for satisfaction of specific needs and aspirations; the city should not be perceived mainly as a space to move through, but rather as a space to stay and meet;
- residents' involvement in the creation and development of space related to implementation of partnership revitalisation projects, improvement of visual and functional aspects of the city space, providing social hosts for "no-one's" space.

Table 1. Impact of the "city for citizens" on the reinforcement of urban vitality mechanisms

	Sustainable development	Creativity	Networking
local community			
residents' participation mechanisms	reinforcement of development by positive relationships within the local community	participation enhancing decision-making processes on the basis of residents' creativity	relationships within the local community that create confidence and facilitate networking for groups, organisations, institutions
cultural capital	awareness of the value of the city's heritage and limitation of degrading methods of use of the city's potentials	awareness of the values inherent to the city that might be used in support of development	common perception of the city, using analogical language and symbols that support initiating relationships
residents' participation in the city life	maintenance of interest in traditional activities and ability to develop them among residents	initiating partnership, original, creative projects by local groups, including non-governmental organisations	inclusion of residents in activities and groups creating the life (vitality) of the city
preparation of residents to use public services	improvement of effectiveness of public services by increasing the scale of their use	use of available public services by residents	residents' integration around the available offer, including leisure activities
development idea adequacy			
combination of development with experience and awareness of residents	social stability in development processes resulting from maintaining the ratio between the "past" and the "future"	opening of the local policymaking process to the ideas from various groups, including those supporting smooth transition to the new development model	lack of exclusion of various groups of residents due to their earlier experiences ("settlement" in the old structures)

	Sustainable development	Creativity	Networking
harmonisation of the development idea with the city's history and potentials	ensuring continued development, transition to a higher level of development with limitation of negative impact (degradation of potentials, social and economic decline)	new methods of use of available resources; use of resources "rejected" under the earlier model of development	cooperation of groups creating new development factors with groups constituting carriers of experiences and tradition
space for residents			
residents' presence in the city space	residents' presence in the city space as a manifestation of power and vitality of the city; guaranteeing life in public space in support of its development (market for business and public services)	residents' behaviour enriching the city space, adding value to beyond the architectural aesthetics	meetings of residents in the city space that fosters integration
residents' involvement in the creation and development of city space	sustainable management of the city space; maintenance of interest in the use of city space among residents	use of residents' ideas relating to the development of the city space	integration of residents around the space that is important for them; ensuring continuity between the implementation of the partnership project related to spatial development and its use by the entities implementing the project (guaranteeing interest in project results)

Source: Own study.

Second context, sustainable city, directly refers to the rules of sustainable development. A vital and sustainable city should be characterised by the following values:
- adequate urban "metabolism";
- specific development code (city DNA);
- correlation of functions.

Urban metabolism relates to the types of local potentials and the methods of their management. Adequate metabolism supports urban vitality if it leads to:
- the use of potentials for the appropriate, *i.e.* long-term, inclusive, responsible development: the city "consumes" potentials in a reasonable manner, avoiding

their exhaustion, preserving them for the future generations, without preventing various entities from taking advantage of the effects of resource management;

- *quasi*-cyclical nature of processes: the management process involves the processing of resources, generation of outputs, and creation of a surplus in relation to the scale of the invested potentials; adequate metabolism is related to the creation of a surplus (of matter/energy) that allows for transition to an economic cycle of higher quality; therefore, vital city development trajectory may be depicted as a spiral leading to "higher" levels; *quasi*-cyclical nature of processes permits the application of experiences to similar cycles while adjusting subsequent cycles for new values; in this aspect, it is necessary to use innovation and creativity, as well as the enterprising nature of local entities.

A vital city requires creation of a specific urban development code. Vital city development mechanisms may be appropriately developed if structures exist in the city that create and preserve urban development ideas. In this context, institutional capital, local leaders and managers, cultural capital that organises the residents are of fundamental importance. Urban DNA[5] is crucial for the continuity of development, exceptional nature of the centre, and thus for the attractiveness and competitiveness of the city.

Sustainable city is a city where functions develop in a correlated manner. It is the method of use of resources that leads to integrated development with synergy between different areas of urban development (functions, entities), and situations where one function limits the development of other functions are eliminated which in turn limits the areas of tension between various local entities.

Table 2. Impact of the "sustainable city" on the reinforcement of urban vitality mechanisms

	Sustainable development	Creativity	Networking
urban metabolism			
adequate use of potentials	use of renewable potentials; limited use of non-renewable potentials	seeking new development methods allowing for the preservation of non-renewable resources	solidary sharing of resources that limits the areas of conflict between entities elimination of limitations related to resources by initiating cooperation

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[5] Urban DNA is usually discussed in the context of the specific nature of a city and its development, but also in terms of understanding the functioning of the city, including in terms of its spatial and historical aspects (Clark 2017); similar notions include *genius loci* of the city that refers to the city's identity (Królikowski 2011), or *urban fingerprints* (in the spatial structure context, the term was used in [http://www.citylab.com/housing/2015/09/mapping-the-urban-fingerprints-of-cities/404923/].

	Sustainable development	Creativity	Networking
cyclical nature of processes enriched by qualitative progress	ensuring sustainable development and harmonious transition to "higher" levels	creating a surplus to be managed in a creative manner creating new ideas to produce new quality in terms of urban development	traditional partnership configurations under repeated processes new partnership configurations related to new quality of local development
urban DNA			
structures creating and preserving urban development ideas	maintaining continuous development; city's ability to function as a learning organisation	ensuring specific nature of the city based on innovation and creativity of local structures	institutional capital allowing creation and maintenance of relationships between local entities social and cultural capital reinforced under partnership development processes
correlation of functions			
integrated development	balance between respective functions, multi-dimensional use of resources	feeding new functions with creativity and innovation of the whole urban system	development of intra- and intersectoral partnerships based on relationships between respective functions of the city

Source: Own study.

The creative aspect deserves separate analysis in the context of vital cities. A vital city is a city capable of broadly understood creation being the derivative of two key attributes of a city:
• the city of ideas and innovation;
• the city of "exchange".

Creativity depends on internal capacity of a given entity and on the possible transfer of ideas between entities. In the first context, the capacity to create and use ideas by local entities is crucial. The beginning of a broadly understood process of creation is to generate new, original development objectives, and then to develop specific solutions that would allow for the achievement of such objectives. It is a process that involves the ability to accurately assess the conditions for development and the spectrum of available potentials and needs, but also the consistency and the courage necessary for the transformation of an idea into actions that would generate specific results. It is also a process of cooperation between local entities, improvement of their creative capacities and innovation, and reinforcement of the creative culture.

An important component of creation is the capacity to use the development factors that are traditional for a given centre, including those created at the earlier stages of urban development.

The second pillar supporting the city's capacity to create is exchange. This includes the processes related to:

- the functioning of mechanisms allowing for the penetration of ideas to different sectors, initiation of permanent or contextual cooperation, taking up joint projects with high innovation/creativity factor; part of such mechanism is to develop the ideas of other entities;
- confrontation of approaches and views, a clash of different concepts, or even conflicts; in this case, inspiration to develop an original idea or solution might stem from an objection against a different position; such situation requires sufficient support which would lead to a creative use of the dispute or conflict.

Table 3. Impact of the "creative city" on the reinforcement of urban vitality mechanisms

	Sustainable development	Creativity	Networking
the city of ideas and innovation			
entity's capacity to create	better use of the city's resources discovery of new potentials or new methods of use of traditional potentials	large number of creative solutions; discovery of new objectives for urban development, including the solutions that allow for their achievement	development of ideas that may be used by other entities or that may form a basis for cooperation
exchange			
penetration mechanisms	better understanding of conditions in other sectors, leading to a more aware use of resources	improved creativity of solutions by multiplying the creativity of partners	collective work on creative ideas and their joint implementation
confrontation mechanisms	preventing petrification of development	competition triggering innovation and creativity; creation by creative negation of other solutions	creation of different configurations of local entities, competing groups (importance for urban vitality depends on the development of rules governing the relationships between entities)

Source: Own study.

Urban vitality should be built in the context of the city's relationships with the surrounding environment. Other centres are the benchmark for the attractiveness and competitiveness of the city. In a mobile world, with the movement of residents, companies, and organisations, enhancement of urban vitality requires aware management of the city's relationships with its environment. Each of the mechanisms

used to describe vitality (sustainable development, creativity, networking) can be reinforced or weakened by other centres and processes occurring in the environment. An analysis of a city in its environment should take the following matters into account:

- the city's position in its environment;
- capability to build relationships with the surrounding environment;
- the city's resilience;
- the city's magnetism.

The broadest of the abovementioned issues, the city's position in its environment, refers to such urban assets as:

- capability to face the processes occurring in the surrounding environment: understanding of global processes, ability to identify megatrends, ability to identify the city's position in those processes, in particular capacity to combine and use the potentials at the disposal of local entities to improve the attractiveness and competitiveness of the city;
- capacity to become a leader among other centres in application for development potentials; reinforcement of urban vitality does not merely require the use of the potentials that are at the higher level than in other centres; such an approach could lead to hampered development and to gradual exhaustion of resources, and thus to limiting the city's life to mere vegetation; it is also important to acquire potentials from the surrounding environment; this skill can be treated as one of the key ratios of urban vitality.

A particular matter relating to the creation of the city's position is its capacity to build relationships with the environment. This ability is related to:

- the functioning within cooperation networks: modern world is an extremely rich and constantly transforming set of partnerships in various spatial dimensions; both individual entities and the city as a whole may intensify the development processes by cooperating with the environment; a special case is the participation of cities (or entities from a city) in recognised partnership programmes (business, cultural, social etc.);
- creation of supralocal network nodes: apart from joining cooperation networks, a vital city should also aspire to create new networks or nodes; this would support local specialisations and allow for the acquisition of strong partners.

In order to develop in a sustainable and harmonious manner, a vital city should reinforce its resilience to the processes occurring in the environment. Part of those processes implies risks for local development. It is thus necessary to build the capacity to respond to such processes in a creative manner. It is also important to interpret various events and processes in an enterprising manner. In many cases, change is perceived as a threat in its first stage. Good understanding of changes and their consequences allows for approaching them in a creative manner and often for their interpretation as opportunities.

The strength of a vital city depends on its ability to attract resources and entities that enhance local structure. Such an obvious conclusion should be complemented, however, with a brief discussion on the conditions that should be met in order for such process to actually reinforce the city. Attraction of entities may bring both

positive and negative effects. New entities may enter into conflicts with local entities, they may take up activities degrading the city's resources, and in structural terms, they may preserve traditional development without long-term prospects. It is thus crucial not only to acquire entities from the surrounding environment, but also to include them in local structures. In the case of investors, this involves *e.g.* their incorporation in the local economy and transformation of the network of local partnerships. A specific development factor much desired by cities nowadays is the key events that contribute to the city's prestige and recognition in the eyes of important entities.

Table 4. Impact of the "city in its environment" on the reinforcement of urban vitality mechanisms

	Sustainable development	Creativity	Networking
the city's position in its environment			
capability to face the processes occurring in the surrounding environment	inspiration with new models and directions of development that support sustainable development	creative responses to the processes in the environment; creation of solutions without precedent in the environment	creation of coalitions in support of competition in the environment
capacity to become a leader among other centres in application for development potentials	replenishing and saving internal resources	increasing the possibility to implement creative concepts of development based on external potentials	partnership between local entities to use the potentials in their environment
capability to build relationships with the surrounding environment			
functioning within cooperation networks	extension of development potential, also to directions that are in line with the rules of sustainable development	participation in creative projects	development of local cooperation networks and extension of the list of partners; greater prospects for the implementation of partnership projects
creation of new network nodes	attracting partners to achieve key development objectives selected from the point of view of sustainable development	leadership in key areas of urban development	city entities to perform lead functions in the cooperation network

resilient city			
capacity to respond to the processes in the environment in a creative manner	ensuring durable development that is uninterrupted by changes in the surrounding environment	discovery of opportunities in changes	transformation of partnerships to adjust to the changes in the environment
magnetic city			
ability to attract resources, entities, events	opening new paths of development in line with the rules of sustainable development, provided responsible local policy is ensured; introduction of new development potentials to the city	reinforcement of urban creativity by attracting mobile entities with significant resources and experiences	enrichment of the set of local partners and development of cooperation with them

Source: Own study.

An important measure of urban vitality is the spectrum of opportunities offered to different entities. Selected aspects of the city's attractiveness for entities from its surroundings have been discussed above. However, a city of opportunity is mainly the area of action for local entities, whose energy defines urban vitality. A city of opportunity may be associated with:
• room for opportunity;
• centre using mobility-related events.

A city as room for opportunity can be understood as the centre's ability to offer opportunities for action to local entities, focusing on the creation of mechanisms instead of just factors supporting the activity of those entities, and provision of positive motivation to residents. Creation of opportunities should be combined with the above described preparation of residents to use the available facilities.

Events related to mobility that are so characteristic for the globalised world are often perceived as a threat. A city which loses its entities and potentials also loses its vitality and must aim at mitigating the threat of "drainage" of its resources. At the same time, however, mobility is an opportunity which, when used, can enrich the city with potentials and entities that are vital in the era of globalisation.

Table 5. Impact of the "city of opportunity" on the reinforcement of urban vitality mechanisms

	Sustainable development	Creativity	Networking
room for opportunity			
the city's ability to offer opportunities for action to local entities	providing conditions for sustainable development of local entities focusing on compliance with the rules of sustainable development by providing a set of facilities to entities	offering conditions for unlimited creativity	conditions for the implementation of creative partnership projects growing number of entities that can be potential partners in local networks
mobility as an opportunity			
use of mobility to enrich the city	enrichment of local economic and social structures and diversification of local development that supports its durability	attraction of highly creative entities	attraction of entities with great potential to build local cooperation networks

Source: Own study.

Summary

Many cities, including those in the Upper-Silesian Agglomeration, have rich history and great social and economic potential. However, those features do not imply urban vitality. It is commonly accepted that revitalisation measures should be implemented, i.e. measures aimed at improving the vitality of cities and local communities. The contrast between the potential measured by the number of residents or the size of the local economy and the level of the city's vitality becomes particularly notable in industrial centres in need of radical transformation. In the cities, such problems of the enterprise sector directly translate into the social and economic situation of large groups of residents, with the emergence of pathological phenomena and reduced occupational and social activity of residents. Lower activity or liquidation of large enterprises limits the development prospects for a large part of residents, who at the same time experience a drop in their self-worth. This in turn results in failure to accept the coming changes, negation of the emerging new social and economic order, and isolation of important social groups, including those who played the key role in the local development processes in the past. Enclaves of old workers' districts gather persons who are unable to find their own place under the new circumstances, a feeling that is gradually transferred to the youth and children.

The structure of human capital also affects the possibility to develop new economic functions and higher-level services related to education, science and culture. Demand for such services is limited both by the interests of the potential beneficiaries and by their financial means.

The analysis of human capital and creative groups in post-industrial cities reveals a growing polarisation of the society. Next to the residents with qualifications and positions characteristic to traditional economy, local leaders, active groups, creative circles emerge with high level of skills, initiators of creative projects, recognised at the regional and supraregional level. The greatest challenge is to include the larger number of residents in the local development processes and to use the potential of local creative groups that could be translated into reconstruction of the mindset of the local community and into the change of the internal and external image of the city. Building a vital city is a considerable challenge in conceptual terms and an even greater one in real terms. Urban vitality is a conglomerate of many mutually reinforcing attributes related to internal and external aspects of local development. A vital city is:

- a city of opportunity, which inspires for action and supports the growth of residents' aspirations;
- a creative city, whose development particularly focuses on the search for its specific nature, discovery of new paths of development that are adequate to the features of a given centre;
- a participatory city, offering facilities to its residents while building their qualifications that allow them to use those facilities;
- a city of internal and external relationships, which creates its strength and position by reinforcing the ties and seeking complementarity with regard to the surrounding environment;
- a system-city, i.e. a city that is intentionally selective with regard to the acquired potentials and entities which are in line with the local structure and build a network of creative relationships.

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