
HABILITATION THESES BOOKLET

Spatial dimensions of sustainable tourism

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Content

1. Introduction – spatial changes in tourism.....	4
2. Presentation of the habilitation theses.....	6
2.1 Scientific research interest.....	6
2.2 The structure of the habilitation document.....	6
2.3 Theses.....	7
3. Spatial dimensions of sustainable tourism - interpreting conceptual frameworks at destination level.....	8
3.1 Problem statement, research questions.....	8
3.2 Methods.....	8
3.3 Results.....	9
<i>Destinations</i>	9
<i>Trends in consumer behaviour (responsible tourist, visitor, traveller)</i>	10
<i>'New tourism' – future of tourism?</i>	10
4. Destination and living space - the visitor economy of urban spaces.....	11
4.1 Problem statement, research questions.....	11
4.2 Methods.....	11
4.3 Results.....	12
<i>The city as a destination - focus on urban tourism, the visitor economy of (world) cities, use of space</i>	12
<i>Living space in the 21st century - quality of life and perceptions of place of residence from the perspective of local people in Hungary</i>	13
<i>Sustainable urban tourism from a tourism safety perspective</i>	14
5. Development of cycling tourism in the Lake Balaton region, Hungary.....	15
5.1 Problem statement, research questions.....	15
5.2 Methods.....	16
5.3 Results.....	16
<i>Trends in demand and supply of cycling tourism as an active product</i>	16
<i>Characteristics of cycling tourism in the Lake Balaton region</i>	16
<i>Domestic demand for cycling tourism in Lake Balaton: mapping cycling motivations and attitudes</i>	17
<i>Development directions in connection with the expansion of the Balaton cycle route network</i>	17
5.4 Summary.....	18
6. Contribution to the science and future research directions.....	18
7. Literature.....	19

List of figures

Figure 1: Key principles of ‘new tourism’ in practice	5
Figure 2: Trends in consumer behaviour (tourist, visitor, traveller)	10

List of tables

Table 1: Exploring historical tourism eras from the viewpoint of destination management organizations and consumers	9
Table 2: Segmentation of domestic cycling visitors in the Lake Balaton region.....	17

1. Introduction – spatial changes in tourism

Tourism is one of the most rapidly expanding industries of the 21st century, affecting a large part of the global economy and society. By becoming a mass phenomenon, tourism is also a factor with a strong impact on our environment, encompassing both natural and built elements. The strengthening of an environmentally conscious approach in tourism is not merely an option, it is a necessity in the light of global climate change (Lőrincz – Raffay 2014; Lőrincz et al. 2014) and the fact that over-tourism contributes to it (Gonda – Raffay 2021).

In parallel with the emergence of total tourism, the need for information on the various factors of this complex system has also increased from researchers in the sector (Jászberényi et al. 2021; Gonda 2022; Michalkó et al. 2023). The conceptual framework governing the temporal and spatial concentration of total tourism is also undergoing a transformation. Based on the volume of tourism, it can be stated that

- the entire surface of the Earth can be considered as a tourist destination (World Economic Forum),
- the majority of the population is involved in tourism flows as travellers or as residents of host areas (UN Tourism),
- thus states, municipalities, associations and individuals are also seeking to utilise as much of their resources as possible for tourism (Michalkó 2005; Aubert 2010).

In the context of Hungary, the significant of tourism can be expressed in concrete statistical measurements collected by the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (KSH) and the National Tourism Data Centre (NTAK). These indicators are primarily concerned with the economic volume and processes of tourism including the number of visitors and overnight stays, expenditure, job creation, contribution to GDP, and other economic dimensions) Additionally, they address the 'recovery of economic growth'. However, in the era of the bio- and information technology revolution, there is a growing demand from visitors for unique, interactive and memorable experiences. Kökény – Miskolczi (2022) discusses the advent of the 'tourism 4.0' era, which highlights the rapid development of consumers' information technology capabilities, the rise of recognition technology, robots, chatbots, artificial intelligence (AI), Big Data, virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) in the tourism sector (Miskolczi 2023).

This business- and technology-focused perspective is becoming increasingly nuanced, refined and in many cases, challenged by the quest for quality of life, the people themselves (Michalkó – Lőrincz 2007), a circular approach (Sulyok et al. 2022), sustainable and responsible tourism (Ernszt et al. 2021). If this is translated into comparable and objective data and indicators, it signifies the measurement of visitor satisfaction, the subjective aspect of quality of life (well-being indicators) or the concrete implementation and effectiveness of sustainability measures (e.g. energy, waste, air, water, green space management (Lőrincz et al. 2020c); transport; equal opportunities, partnership, fair work) (Formádi et al. 2022).

The fundamental aspect of tourism is mobility, the spatial dimensions of which presents significant adaptation challenges for all actors in the sector (stakeholders, i.e. those directly or indirectly involved; affected) (Raffay – Lőrincz 2017). Newer and newer host areas are becoming involved in both international and domestic tourism. In an increasingly competitive environment, only those attractions, destinations or tourism operators that are able to meet ever-higher quality expectations can survive (Törőcsik – Csapó 2018). Among the research areas, the study of visitor economics plays an important role; consumer habits and motivations, as well as attitudes towards tourism (Etmiani-Ghasrodashti et al. 2018).

The paradigm shift in the tourism sector – or, in other words, '*new tourism*' in practice - can be described in terms of the host area by the following principles (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Key principles of ‘new tourism’ in practice

Sustainability revolution, circular approach	Putting people at the centre - instead of 'homo turisticus'	Questioning the mystification of permanent and unlimited growth	Putting quality of life at the heart of development
Visitor economy	Optimised visitor flows in time and space	Public good first - focus on the living space	New, comparable metrics and international sustainability standards
Education through storytelling, new narratives	Creating enriching encounters, wondering	Digital, AI and people-centred solutions for managing the experience space	Networking

Source: own editing, based on Dunakavicsok tourism podcast (Balázs Kovács and István Nagy-Szász)

The concept of responsible and sustainable tourism may be regarded as a feedback to the aforementioned challenges. Sustainable tourism has been defined in numerous ways over the past two decades; the Madrid-based World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) itself has also developed its own definition¹. The idea of a framework for responsible and sustainable tourism is closely linked to the recognition that:

- the *tourism-related consumption* has significant negative impacts, which can be categorised into economic, social and environmental characteristics (like pillars in sustainability);
- the *responsible and sustainable development of tourism* necessitates long-term thinking on the part of decision-makers; informed, data-driven and circular planning;
- in the *era of total tourism*, the local and regional level is particularly important, as is its link to sustainability efforts. The focus should be on the impact of tourism on quality of life and on people, rather than on unlimited growth and consumption;
- *new metrics* that are comparable over time and space; the international sustainability standards, research and strategies focused on optimised visitor management;
- *putting sustainability into practice is itself a question* of getting the balance right between need and 'demand' on the part of the networked actors in the tourism sector - demand, the visitor traveller, and supply, the host area;
- *in the case of tourism, the spatial perspective plays a decisive role*: space, 'the right place'. The destination's accessibility, location, natural and cultural attractions are the basics for the destination's specific product offer, creative experiences and sustainable solutions;
- *the majority of the world's population is now urban*, so it is worth focusing on the city as a category of settlement and the urban tourism ecosystem (living space and destination).

¹ 'The development of sustainable tourism meets the needs of today's tourists and host regions in a way that preserves and develops the potential of the future. ...it promotes forms of resource management that meet economic, social and aesthetic needs while maintaining cultural integrity, basic ecological processes, biodiversity and wildlife systems.' (UNEP-UNWTO 2005:11).

2. Presentation of the habilitation theses

2.1 Scientific research interest

My principal research interest is focused on *the connections between tourism, mobility, quality of life, and sustainability within spatial dimensions*. Over the past two decades, my scientific interests have revolved around three key areas:

- 1) Following the completion of my doctorate, my focus was on understanding the challenges faced by *destination management organisations* (DMOs) at the local level. This entailed the examination of bottom-up partnerships, which encompass cooperation between tourists, tourism entrepreneurs, civil society, and the public sector. Furthermore, an investigation was conducted into the characteristics of *tourist information offices, with a particular focus on the Tourinform offices in Hungary*. Specifically, I delved into the regional variations within the national Tourinform network and the development of tourism at the regional level, with a specific focus on health tourism. Additionally, a *case study was conducted on Veszprém*, which involved an investigation of cultural and urban tourism, including guest satisfaction surveys, the leisure habits of residents, and the intersection of quality of life and tourism.
- 2) Subsequent to 2014, my research shifted towards exploring *the relationship between climate change and tourism*, with a keen focus on destination-level product development and the climate-friendly initiatives of destination management organisations. During this period, my research also delved into the roles and impacts of DMOs, particularly in the context of marketing activities, tourism partnerships, and the economic sustainability of the DMO system in Hungary. Beyond the *environmental dimension of sustainability*, I also examined the *economic and social aspects*. Insights were drawn from the Veszprém-Balaton2023 European Capital of Culture (ECoC) competition, as well as the scholarship awarded to the Institute of Advanced Studies in Kőszeg (KRAFT programme), I was involved an investigation of *settlement indicators and the liveability of small Hungarian towns* such as Gyöngyös, Kőszeg, Szentés and Veszprém (Lőrincz et al. 2020d; 2021a).
- 3) From 2019 onwards, my research has been oriented towards the *Balaton region*, particularly during the programme year in conjunction with the VEB2023 ECoC programme (Lőrincz et al. 2022; 2023a). I have explored a number of aspects, including as *the living space* (Lőrincz et al. 2023d), *second homes, green awards* (Lőrincz et al. 2021b), *demand* (covering image, local identity, responsible consumption, and festival visitors), as well as *sustainable tourism, encompassing quality of life* (Lőrincz et al. 2023c), *social innovation* (Lőrincz et al. 2023f), *cycle tourism, crafts* (Lőrincz et al. 2023b), and *public safety* (Lőrincz et al. 2023e).

2.2 The structure of the habilitation document

The habilitation thesis is concerned with the *spatial dimension of sustainable tourism*; the results of the primary research are related to the Hungarian host areas including Hungary, the Lake Balaton region as a living space and destination the Veszprém-Balaton 2023 ECoC programme; the relevant settlements; urban spaces) These outcomes are supplemented with the most important international surveys, studies, literature findings. The structure and logic of the paper progress *from a global perspective towards a local, region- and product-specific approach to tourism*.

In the first thesis, I present the findings on sustainable tourism in the host area, destination management organisations, and (responsible) visitor consumer behaviour. Subsequently, I will

then specifically address the visitor economy of urban tourism and urban spaces from the perspective of the host area considering both the destination and the living space aspects as well as the quality of life of visitors and tourism safety. The third thesis focuses on the sustainable development of the Lake Balaton region, reducing spatial and temporal concentration: narrowing down to the design and practical implementation of the Balaton cycle route network and the results of the primary research that underpins it.

2.3 Theses

T1: Spatial dimensions of sustainable tourism - interpreting conceptual frameworks at destination level

- 1/a: The role of destinations has undergone transformation: destinations are both targeted 'landing spaces' and living spaces. In the era of total tourism, the aim is to develop destinations based on sustainability principles. The primary objective of destination management organisations is to optimise the management of the tourist experience encompassing both the living space and the destination, while improving the quality of life of the stakeholders concerned.
- 1/b: The stakeholders in the visitor economy can be divided into three categories: tourists, the local population and those who work in tourism and derive their livelihood from it. The consumption behaviour of visitors is influenced by a number of factors, including demographic (age, gender, education, place of residence) and classical demand characteristics (motivation, discretionary income, free time), as well as by lifestyle, environmental awareness and knowledge of the practical application of responsible consumption.

T2: Destination and living space - the visitor economy of urban spaces

- 2/a: The classic emergence of urban tourism is linked to the so-called 'world cities', whose population is not commensurate with their role in international tourism. The market characteristics of urban tourism and the development potential of the visitor economy are closely linked to the question of the utilisation of urban spaces (destination and living space). In other words, in addition to the visitors (tourists), the local population, and those who inhabit the settlement on a temporary basis, play a decisive role.
- 2/b: Satisfaction with factors related to the place of residence increases overall well-being (happiness in the concept of subjective quality of life). The order of importance for each factor is as follows: work, family life, living conditions, home, community, health and education. In the Lake Balaton region, coastal settlements are the preferred choice of place of residence; the residential and workplace function of the settlement has a positive influence on the recommendation of the destination.
- 2/c: The concentration of population in urban spaces poses a number of challenges and risks (safety, climatic exposure, transport, migration, quality of life), which are exacerbated by the different use of space (destination and living space). The host area can effectively respond to the challenges of tourism security (public, consumer, health, cyber, transport, orientation and environmental) in urban destinations by increasing climate awareness, applying policing methods and introducing good practices that enhance creativity and visitor involvement.

T3: Spatial aspects of sustainable tourism: developing cycling tourism in the Lake Balaton area

- 3/a: The development of cycling tourism is a priority from both a quality of life and sustainable tourism perspective.

- 3/b: In addition to demographic characteristics (gender, age, education, residence), the segmentation of domestic cycling visitors in the Lake Balaton area can be described by type of bicycle, duration of the trip, physical condition of the cyclist and motivation.
- 3/c: From the standpoint of the supply side, the most crucial requirements are the existence of safe cycle routes with connected and combinable sections, the provision of information (via signage, maps, applications) and the availability of cycle-friendly services (accommodation that is tailored to cyclists, rest areas and drinking water facilities).

3. Spatial dimensions of sustainable tourism - interpreting conceptual frameworks at destination level

There is a common perception that discussing the sustainability of tourism seems contradictory, given that it encompasses the mobility and consumption that have significant socio-economic impacts, cultural understanding and mental well-being. On the one hand, there are arguments that posit overconsumption and temporary inhabitation during travel as contributors to environmental issues. On the other hand, it's important to recognize that global problems and climate change cannot solely be attributed to the tourism sector. Overall, it is imperative that measures must be taken to protect destinations and achieve a balance between consumption and preservation.

We are currently experiencing a significant transformation in the tourism industry. In the era of total tourism (tourism 3.0), success is being measured using qualitative indicators including satisfaction, environmentally sustainable solutions, the utilisation of public transport, and social impact, as opposed to quantitative measures. The conventional notions of destination and tourist are evolving and giving way to the concepts of 'experience space' and 'visitor economy'.

3.1 Problem statement, research questions

My research has focused on the spatial dimensions and potential role of sustainable tourism in international and domestic host areas for several years. The specific research questions are:

- 1) What changes have been observed in the goals of host areas and destination management organisations (DMOs) with regard to sustainable tourism?
- 2) What trends can be identified in consumer behaviour (responsible tourism, visitor, traveller)?

3.2 Methods

Defining the concept of a tourism destination and presenting the basics of destination management required a thorough literature analysis. The specific findings were outlined in the chapter titled 'The Marketing Activities of Tourism Destinations' in the book 'Tourism Marketing' published by Akadémiai Kiadó (Lőrincz 2017). An investigation into the implications of sustainability ambitions for the Balaton region, the Veszprém-Balaton 2023 ECoC region, and the city of Veszprém has been conducted a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. Qualitative techniques included stakeholder interviews and focus group studies, while quantitative research methods employed questionnaire surveys. Three sustainability and territorial-focused research projects² supported the generation and substantiation of the scientific results.

² 'Establishment of a sustainability competence centre based on circular economy at the University of Pannonia';
 'Nothing Special - The Jewels of the Bakony' - VEB2023 European Capital of Culture programme;
 'Sustainable, smart and inclusive regional and urban models'

3.3 Results

Destinations

Destinations can be understood at different spatial levels (Buhalis 2000): from the specific attraction (visitor centre, resort), to the local (municipal) level, through the region, to the size of the country or group of countries, or even the destination marketing activities of individual continents. Additionally, there are tourism destination demarcations based on types (urban; coastal/rural; mountain; rural; original third world; special, exotic, exclusive), target market (business/MICE; leisure; inbound/outbound) and activities/motivations (sightseeing, shopping, leisure, short break, learning/education, religion, beach, relaxation, adventure, health, negotiation, incentive, conference, exhibition, etc.).

Furthermore, a destination function can also be assigned to cultural institutions, projects and municipalities that cooperate and network in connection with a thematic year or a special event (Lőrincz et al. 2021c). An illustrative case is the Veszprém-Balaton 2023 European Capital of Culture programme (ECoC), in which Veszprém, together with the Bakony-Balaton region (comprising 117 connected municipalities), implemented the development of a cultural-creative experience space (Lőrincz et al. 2023f).

The principles of operation (from DMOs point of view) include network thinking, partnership, autonomy (money, resources), expertise (professionalism) and a bottom-up approach (cooperation between the stakeholders directly and indirectly involved in tourism, i.e. tourism service providers, local authorities, civil society). In the context of total tourism (tourism 3.0), sustainable tourism is about conscious planning, destination-neutral development, optimised management of the tourist experience and steps to improve quality of life. Table 1 presents a comparative analysis of the significant changes and characteristics of modern tourism according to historical periods (continental, global, and total) highlights:

- 1) The evolving role of destinations, now serving as both destinations and living spaces.
- 2) The transformation in mobility patterns, demographic changes, work-leisure ratios, and location, leading to a growing focus towards the leisure and experiential space industries.
- 3) The shift from the consumption of services to the consumption of narratives and experiences, emphasize the importance of visitor education.
- 4) Destinations are striving to optimise the management of tourist experience area to mitigate the adverse effects of overtourism and guarantee long-term operational effectiveness.
- 5) A transition from emphasising the economic impact of tourism to enhancing the quality of life for all stakeholders involved in the visitor economy, including local residents, visitors, and tourism workers.

Table 1: Exploring historical tourism eras from the viewpoint of destination management organizations and consumers

Factors	Continental (1.0)	Global (2.0)	Total (3.0)
Spatial appearance	Tourism - visiting resorts and spas, cultural hubs	Tourism - destination	Recreation - experiential space
Tourist consumption focus	Consumption of products	The wide spectrum of service consumption	Consumption of experiences and the stories that shape them; education

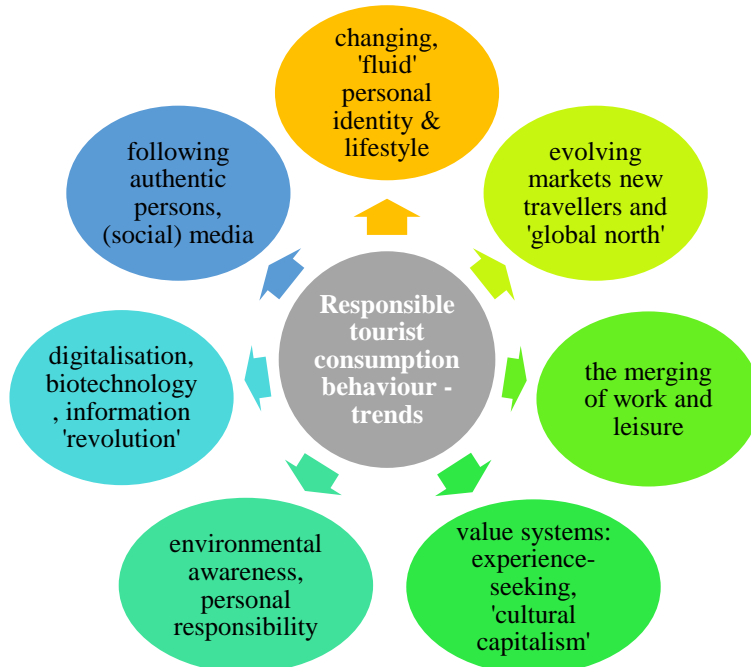
Tourism key players	Traveller - service provider	Stakeholders: tourists, tourism service providers, NGOs, decision-makers	Stakeholders in the visitor economy: local residents, visitors and tourism workers
Role of destination management organisations	No organisational level can be interpreted; we are talking about tourism and catering service providers	Destination marketing and management; coordination of public and private sector activities related to tourism	Optimised management of the tourist experience (living space and destination); improvement of the quality of life of the actors concerned

Source: Further development of the idea from Rátz and Michalkó (2019); the added factors are my own edition.

Trends in consumer behaviour (responsible tourist, visitor, traveller)

From the perspective of the traveller (demand, consumer), the phenomenon of the so-called ‘fluid identity’, which cannot be easily defined by behaviour or attitude, requires increasing consideration. It is a challenge that segmentation by demographics, travel motivations or income levels are proving inadequate in tourism marketing. The relationship between work and leisure or experience and play, is undergoing transformation. The increasing availability of internet access (wifi, 5G internet) and the adoption of new technologies (ICT tools, AI) these travellers will be critical about paid advertisements and commercials. Concurrently, they will adhere to the sources they perceive as credible (social media/news media): influencers or friends' travel advice and recommendations (Figure 2).

Figure 2: Trends in consumer behaviour (tourist, visitor, traveller)



Source: own editing

'New tourism' – future of tourism?

The future of tourism, or 'new tourism', will be influenced by major trends including those related to biotechnology, information technology, digitalisation, neuromarketing, personalised services, and the individualisation of mass tourism, along with their corresponding opposing

trends. In order to ensure sustainability, ethicality and competitiveness of tourism, it is essential to gain a comprehensive understanding of the destination, develop the experiential space, and manage visitor flows effectively. In the future,

- *destinations will be required to project themselves as sustainable* and communicate their efforts to preserve their social, cultural, natural, and built resources;
- the *safety and security of travellers* will assume an increasingly significant role in travel decision-making, especially in an era marked by multiple crises such as the Covid-19 pandemic, geopolitical unrest, energy crises, and inflation;
- *globalisation* will continue to impact tourism, influencing stakeholders' perceptions and expectations through the global economic and political situation and various media channels;
- the *importance of education* through *gamification, storytelling, and narration* will be emphasised, and responses to climate change will be of paramount significance for receiving areas.

4. Destination and living space - the visitor economy of urban spaces

The *settlement is the living space of society*, the place of administrative activity, which sets the framework for the activities of society. As a result, settlements serve multiple functions that operate in parallel, such as housing, workplaces, recreational facilities, tourism and a variety of economic and social activities. It is becoming increasingly important for municipalities to attract population, labour, and capital, as well as economic operators. Local authorities compete for the arrival of industries, services, and companies, as well as for human resources such as residents, tourists, university students, and workers.

Like society, cities are in a *state of constant change*. The objective is to be responsive, to adapt, to meet the needs of local residents and temporary users of urban space (commuters, students, second-home owners) and to become an attractive destination for visitors and tourists. This dual role represents a unique economic and social opportunity: encompassing dynamism and vitality, growth and development. However, it also gives rise to a number of challenges and risks (security, climate exposure, transport, migration, quality of life) (Safe Cities Index 2021). Many scholars (Németh – Birkner 2020; Yasmeeen et al. 2021; ETC 2022) agree that the key to more sustainable and safer urban tourism lies in fostering *creativity, visitor engagement, diversity, and climate-conscious market solutions*.

4.1 Problem statement, research questions

From multiple perspectives on urban spaces - residential choice, mobility, quality of life, safety - I am looking for answers to the question: what are the characteristics of 21st century cities in their dual role as both destinations and living spaces. How can they become attractive destinations and simultaneously becoming stronger, more liveable and more adaptable settlements? The specific research questions are:

- 1) Why are urban tourism and urban hospitality areas so important today?
- 2) What is the relationship between the quality of life of the host area, the living space and the groups using it (local population/residents, tourists)?
- 3) How can cities become safer host areas?

4.2 Methods

The visitor economy of various destinations, including urban spaces, has been extensively studied from the perspective of different actors. In Hungary, several primary research studies have examined the role of quality of life – encompassing wellbeing and welfare – in the context

of residential choice, home, and community, with a particular focus on the Hungarian population and residents of the Lake Balaton area. The subject of tourism security within urban environments has been primarily explored through literature reviews and the presentation of international case studies. The following studies conducted with co-authors are noteworthy:

- 1) *Role of home, place of residence, and community in well-being in Hungary (2021)*. Conducted with co-authors Kornélia Kiss and Zsuzsanna Banász, this study involved a representative sample of 1,000 individuals (stratified by gender, age, and place of residence) surveyed in January 2021. The research aimed to:
 - Identify sociodemographic variables (gender, age, parenthood, education, occupation, income, type of residence, county, region) influencing overall well-being self-reported happiness on a scale of 1-10).
 - Examine the relationship between individual well-being and satisfaction with home and community (evaluating current education, job, family life, housing, home, community).
 - Assess how attachment to the community influences well-being (usage of home, descriptors for their relationship with their home, recommendations to others).
- 2) *Quality of life and living space at Lake Balaton (2018)*. In collaboration with Annamária Sasné Grósz and János Csapó, this research focused on Hungary's second most significant tourist destination, Lake Balaton. The sample was comprised of three groups: local residents working within the municipality, local residents working elsewhere, and second-home owners. The study's primary objective was to understand group differences and develop an Aggregate Municipal Quality of Life Indicator (AQoL). The research employed a questionnaire survey of 844 individuals, with both objective and subjective factors investigated using cross-tabulation, correlation, and analysis of variance. A limitation of the study is that some municipalities in the Lake Balaton region have only urban status. The research aimed to:
 - Explore the factors behind choosing a specific settlement as a permanent residence or second home in the Balaton area.
 - Investigate how the type of attachment to a settlement influences perceptions of quality of life and the living environment.
- 3) *Tourism security in urban spaces (2022-2023)*. This study, conducted with co-authors Szabolcs Mátyás and Krisztina Keller, examined the importance of settlement safety in residential choice and travel decisions.
 - It presented research findings, accepted case studies, and best practices from national and international literature on security risks and tourism security challenges in urban spaces.

These studies contribute to a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing quality of life and security perceptions in different residential and tourism contexts in Hungary.

4.3 Results

The city as a destination - focus on urban tourism, the visitor economy of (world) cities, use of space

The most evident urban phenomenon of tourism globalization is the postmodern reclassification of tourist and non-tourist areas (Murayama 2007). Michalkó (2008:32) emphasizes the geographical expansion of urban tourism, noting that "there are fewer unique tourist zones, with almost no areas left untouched by the international institutions of hospitality." Egedy (2021:23) highlights the significance of culture and the creative industries concentrated in urban areas, asserting that "culture is fundamentally an attribute of cities, and thus, we primarily find cultural places and sites within them." Every city has its own culture derived from its historical development (Montalto et al. 2019). Cultural heritage sites are most often linked to historical

city centres (Egedy 2021), and their rehabilitation can significantly contribute to the local economy and improve the quality of life for the local population (Zhang et al. 2015; UNWTO 2012). The multicultural diversity typical of 21st-century cities means that cultural anthropological factors and the attributes, customs, and communicative strategies of various subcultures and ethnic groups differ (Ürmösné 2017).

The classic appearance of urban tourism is associated with world cities. It should be noted however, that a world city is not synonymous with a large city. Indeed, some cities fall into this category due to their tourism prominence and image. From an international perspective, not all cities with millions of residents are considered world cities in terms of their global political, economic, or cultural influence. Conversely, smaller cities such as Amsterdam, Bath, Dubrovnik, Florence, Las Vegas, and Venice are deemed world cities due to their significant roles in international tourism. Maitland and Newman (2009) present several urban tourism sites, including Berlin, Mumbai, Istanbul, Cairo, London, New York, Paris, Sydney, Singapore, and Toronto, which can be interpreted as examples of world cities in an international context.

Living space in the 21st century - quality of life and perceptions of place of residence from the perspective of local people in Hungary

Based on the results (2021), all three domain groups—sociodemographic variables, selected domains of well-being, and attachment to the community—significantly impact overall well-being. Among these categories, the selected domains of well-being, which are most frequently examined, exert the greatest influence on overall well-being, as evidenced by the strength of the significant relationships.

- The analysis of the sociodemographic factors revealed that gender, age, county, and type of community do not significantly affect overall well-being. Nevertheless, the presence of a child aged 0-18 in the household, educational qualification, employment status, and income were found to have a significant impact.
- Among the frequently examined domains of well-being, higher satisfaction with any specific domain (educational qualification, job, family life, living conditions, home, community, and health) corresponds to increased overall well-being. The following order, based on the strength of the relationships, was established: family life, living conditions, health, home, job, community, and educational qualification.
- Despite satisfaction with the community being near the end of this list, a stronger attachment to the community correlates with greater overall well-being.

Our findings corroborate the results of Kshetrimayum et al. (2020) and Mridha (2020) in several areas. The study by Dolan et al. (2008) also highlighted the multidimensional nature of well-being and affirmed the relationship between seven broad domains and well-being. According to our research, there is a weak to medium but significant relationship between certain sociodemographic factors (educational qualification, income, location) and other commonly examined well-being domains, such as job satisfaction, family life, and health. In Hungary, satisfaction with living conditions, home, community, and well-being demonstrates a moderately strong, positive correlation. While the overall well-being of the Hungarian population is significantly influenced by their attachment to the community, this influence is less pronounced in comparison to the impact of sociodemographic factors or selected well-being domains.

The survey results conducted among residents and secondary homeowners in the Lake Balaton region (2018) revealed several noteworthy findings:

- Respondents who reside and work in the same municipality in the Lake Balaton region were significantly more likely (42.9% versus 32.1%) to highly recommend their place of residence as a potential destination.
- There were no differences in the composite indicators of quality of life between the two groups of local residents. Thus, further analysis was conducted to determine whether there were discrepancies in specific components of objective and subjective quality of life, using variance analysis.
- Significant differences were identified in three of 27 objective municipal evaluation factors: entertainment options, evaluation of the ethnic and age composition of the population, and the friendliness of the population.
- No significant differences were found regarding subjective quality of life factors, indicating that the residents of the Balaton coastal municipalities, irrespective of their place of employment or study, do not differ significantly in their subjective perceptions pertaining to quality of life. However, due to the non-representative sample, these findings cannot be generalized to all Balaton coastal municipalities and their residents.
- The choice of residence ("I like the area, I find it a good and liveable place") is positively influenced by the municipality's location on the Balaton coast. Specifically, 73.3% of respondents who chose their residence based on liking the area live in a Balaton coastal municipality, compared to 55.5% in the overall sample. Additionally, 20.8% of residents in Balaton coastal municipalities chose their residence because they liked the area, compared to only 9.5% in non-coastal municipalities.

Sustainable urban tourism from a tourism safety perspective

The environmental pillar of sustainable urban tourism encompasses the climate change implications for tourism security. The phenomenon of climate change is evident in urban areas, necessitating specific management measures. The rise in average annual temperatures extends the tourist season in temperate zones. However, climate change also increases the number of heatwave days, the frequency of extreme weather events (such as showers, thunderstorms, and sudden downpours), and emphasizes the need for measures related to summer cooling (refreshment points, misting gates, drinking water availability, public fountains, water distribution), air conditioning, and insulation. Event organizers for outdoor festivals and activities must also consider urban heat islands, often scheduling events during evening or nighttime. In the context of climate change and urban tourism, the focus must increasingly shift to technical, physical, public health, disaster management, damage prevention, and mitigation measures (Michalkó 2020).

The concentration of population in urban areas presents numerous challenges and risks related to safety, climatic exposure, transportation, migration, and quality of life (Mátyás et al. 2020). These challenges are further complicated by the diverse use of urban spaces as both destinations and living environments. Several best practices and proven policing methods enhance tourism safety in urban areas, benefiting visitors, tourism businesses, and residents alike (Lőrincz et al. 2023e):

- *Crime prevention and public safety:* Implementing predictive software to prevent and detect crimes in public spaces can significantly improve safety for both locals and tourists. This approach complements traditional physical security measures.
- *Consumer protection:* Violations in consumer safety often go unreported due to their minor nature or communication barriers. To address this, informative posters, leaflets, and the presence of Tourist Police at popular tourist hubs (information offices, hotels, attractions, airports) are recommended.

- *Health safety*: To prevent health risks, visual warning signs should be placed near hazardous wells, springs, and animals, ensuring that non-native speakers are aware of the dangers. Restaurants should use pictograms on menus to indicate allergenic ingredients.
- *Cybersecurity*: The rise of cybercrime necessitates preventive measures such as educating tourists about basic card safety and publicly listing establishments involved in card fraud.
- *Transportation safety*: Differences in traffic rules and driving behaviours pose significant risks. Changes in speed limits and specific traffic regulations should be clearly communicated at border crossings and through websites, apps, and navigation systems. Pedestrian safety, especially concerning different driving sides and signalling gestures, is also crucial.
- *Navigation safety*: The widespread use of online map applications helps tourists navigate urban areas, though communication issues between tourists and locals persist despite the availability of high-quality translation and recognition software.
- *Environmental safety*: High population density and urbanization increase the impact of natural disasters such as earthquakes, cyclones, prolonged rains, and landslides. Environmental safety also concerns soil, noise, air, and water pollution, as well as waste accumulation. Global warming, particularly severe summer heatwaves, poses significant risks to urban tourism.

The interrelation of climate change and urban tourism underscores the necessity for adaptive technical, physical, public health, disaster management, and damage prevention measures (Michalkó 2020). The sustainable and safe urban tourism hinges on creativity, visitor engagement, diversity, and climate-conscious market solutions (Németh – Birkner 2020; Yasmeen et al. 2021; ETC 2022).

5. Development of cycling tourism in the Lake Balaton region, Hungary

The survey intends to deal with an innovative tourism product development approach based on co-creation or customer involvement, related to Lake Balaton, a mass tourism destination in Hungary, from the point of view of the market segment of the *active cycling tourists*. The investigation of the opportunities for the development of cycling tourism primarily relies on a novel approach to attraction and product development centred on the destination where it is a highly important aspect to take into consideration the consumer preferences of the most important related group of tourists, the active cycling tourists. The sustainable approach to tourism product development provides an *opportunity to decrease the spatial and timely concentration of tourism*, which is currently largely concentrated during the summer season.

The aim of this thesis is to explore the aspects of the *customers demand for tourism development in terms of cycling tourism* employing primary data collection in order to receive results that would provide adequate directions for sustainable tourism development in the Lake Balaton destination.

5.1 Problem statement, research questions

The 'Development of the Balaton Cycling Tourism Service' (hereinafter Balaton Bike365³ project) has the objective of achieving sustainable development of the Lake Balaton region and the renewal of the Balaton cycling tourism service. The overall goal was to reposition the

³ <https://www.balatonbike365.hu>

destination by enhancing the attractiveness of the region for cycling tourism, which includes increasing the number of quantifiable cycling visitors, reducing the spatial (inclusion of background settlements) and temporal (seasonality) concentration, and creating a new cycling experience and active tourism attraction in the Balaton environment (MTÜ 2019).

In order to achieve this, the project focuses on expanding designated cycling routes away from the coast and developing services based on a study of sustainability issues and the demand for cycling tourism. The research seeks to address the following questions:

- 1) What is the impact of cycle tourism on different aspects of sustainability?
- 2) What characteristics can be taken into account when segmenting the guest base of cycle tourism?
- 3) What are the expectations of cyclists and active lifestyle enthusiasts regarding the cycling experience in the Lake Balaton region?

5.2 Methods

Revealing the demand side of the active cycling tourists related to Lake Balaton, the authors used both qualitative (focus group discussions and structured interviews) and quantitative questionnaire survey (computer-assisted data collection) research methods. The latter online surveys were carried out in November and December 2019 and resulted with an appraisable sample of 809 questionnaires. In terms of methodology employed, descriptive statistics and relationship analyses were utilised. More than five thousand (5050 pieces) possible relationships were examined between the closed answers in the questionnaire by Kendall's rank correlation coefficient (τ) and Cramer's V, depending on whether the variables could be measured on a nominal or ordinal scale.

5.3 Results

Trends in demand and supply of cycling tourism as an active product

Numerous general and destination-specific researches prove that cycling can be classified among the most favourite leisure activities and thus cycling tourism is one of the most popular active tourism products as well (Bakogiannis et al. 2020; Štastná et al. 2018; Kaplan et al. 2015; Watthanaklang et al. 2016). In the English language, this tourism product is often referred to as cycling tourism, bicycle touring or bicycle tourism. The increasing importance of cycling tourism is well-described by Lamont, M. who states (2009:5) “*The relationship between cycling and tourism is increasingly attracting scholarly attention as cycling experiences a resurgence as a recreational, leisure and sporting activity*”.

Characteristics of cycling tourism in the Lake Balaton region

Cycling tourism can be integrated into a health-conscious approach to quality of life, as an off-season activity. Cycling itself, (outside urban transport) is a popular leisure hobby whose popularity is on the rise. It is particularly important among the urban (urban, educated) populations, who emphasise the sense of freedom, the experience and the activity. The domain of cycling tourism, competitive cycling, can be categorised as 'cool', reinforced by 21st century individualism. Recreational cycling has a prestige, and more and more people (middle-aged, entrepreneurs) are buying eBikes. Lake Balaton is clearly the number one domestic cycling destination in Hungary.

One of the strengths of Balaton cycling tourism is its location, as the Balaton region is a natural gem, an excellent touring destination, where cyclists can breathe in the fresh air in beautiful surroundings (national park, geopark, nature reserve), among many attractions. Cycling here offers a special kind of freedom as it is best explored by bike. The Balaton Highlands have been called "little Tuscany" by many for its wonderful attractions, excellent gastronomy, renowned spas and wines. Another opinion described the Balaton region as "the home of gentle beauty",

referring to the winding roads, the level differences and the varied landscapes including the Keszthely Mountains, Lake Balaton, the Káli Basin and the Tihany Peninsula).

Domestic demand for cycling tourism in Lake Balaton: mapping cycling motivations and attitudes

Cyclists in the Lake Balaton region can be grouped according to several criteria: the sending area (domestic or foreign), the type of bicycle (road, mountain bike or trekking), the duration of cycling, the physical condition of the cyclist and the motivation (Table 2).

Table 2: Segmentation of domestic cycling visitors in the Lake Balaton region

<i>Type of bicycle, purpose</i>	<i>Temporal logic</i>	<i>Physical activity</i>	<i>Motivation</i>
<i>Sport: even training on the road (road bike).</i>	<i>One-day ride, small circuit. On average 60-80 km, e.g. Keszthely-Kis-Balaton or Balaton half-lap.</i>	<i>Full day (sometimes road) ride with a few short breaks. Performance is important, sport value.</i>	<i>Extreme challenge is important (not cycling on a bike road); solo cycling (alone or with a small group of friends).</i>
<i>Recreational: mountain/terrain biking (mountain bike) - often guided by forestry.</i>	<i>Half-day trip. On average 25-30 km, for example Keszthely-Rezi Castle and back or Balatonfüred-Tihany.</i>	<i>Cycling between 9am and 5pm, with a midday break. Max. 50 km/day: cycling = experience.</i>	<i>Organised cyclists, for them the experience is important (they stop several times to eat, drink, swim).</i>
<i>Family, group of friends, company bike (trekking). Parking is important (starting point from car), reliable information, toilet, power source.</i>	<i>One/few hours journey. Use for public transport, local mobility (beach, shop, winery) or short trip (to an attraction).</i>	<i>Sits at a desk all day, so only occasionally cycles shorter distances. Max. 30 km per day.</i>	<i>Guests, holidaymakers or local residents. Local transport, mobility within the municipality (between holiday home/residence and shop/beach/restaurant).</i>

Source: Lőrincz et al. 2020a

Development directions in connection with the expansion of the Balaton cycle route network

Based on the structured deep interviews, the focus group surveys and the received answers:

- A few major trends or directions can be determined (bicycle road, information, service, attitude change). Related to the cycling route developments the most crucial element is the route itself: the most important priority is to construct “a high-quality road in good environmental conditions” followed by the professional designation of the routes that are suitable for bicycle use.
- It is not logical to build a well-developed surfaced road of less than 30 kilometres in length, given that this is a distance that can be desirable for the possible consumers. The surveyed responders emphasized that on the existing forest and agricultural routes, shorter (20-25 kilometres) distances are optimal, where even the hobby cyclists dare to roam.
- According to the professionals, the lack of information, difficulty levels, and the level of safety are the areas requiring the most improvement. On the information maps, the cyclists intend to see routes, crossroads, altitude differences, and road quality information. Taking into consideration the cyclist services, the availability of drinking water, information access on maps and safe bicycle storage are of great priority.

- In the case of the individually organised bicycle tours, it is of great importance to simplify the opportunities for online planning and booking, further on the creation and communication of cycling packages and convenience services.
- There is a growing tendency for positive experiences with e-bikes. The respondents consider this form of cycling as a positive solution primarily for the elderly and those with limited physical capabilities. They noted that with e-bikes “cycling is not an obstacle” and the “couple or group can stay together during the tour”.
- Finally, in order to increase demand, all the respondent groups mentioned the need for a generational shift in order to engage younger generation in cycling activities.

5.4 Summary

The cycling tourism in the Lake Balaton region has had a positive impact on sustainability - environmentally, socially, and economically. The renovation of the 220 km long Balaton Cycle Route and the integration of surrounding areas has resulted in improved accessibility to attractions and an increase in visitor numbers. The BalatonBike 365 project has established a network of approximately 600 km of mapped cycling routes and related services. This initiative has promoted sustainable tourism and reduced spatial and temporal concentration. All these positive changes have taken place in Hungary, specifically in the Lake Balaton area, which is recognized as the most popular inland cycling destination.

The results show that the content analysis of the primary research provides well determining directions for the sustainable tourism development of cycling tourism at Lake Balaton. It appears that customer involvement represents a mutually beneficial arrangement for both the customers (tourists) and the decision-makers (Lőrincz et al. 2020b).

6. Contribution to the science and future research directions

My habilitation booklet critically examines the spatial dimensions of sustainable tourism, focusing on its interactions with mobility, quality of life, and sustainability.

Key contributions

- *Sustainable tourism frameworks*: My research elaborates on the role of destinations as both tourist attractions and living spaces, advocating for sustainability in destination management. This entails optimising tourist experiences while enhancing the quality of life for local stakeholders. The studies highlight how demographic and lifestyle factors, including environmental awareness, influence visitor consumption behaviour and demand characteristics.
- *Urban tourism and quality of life*: The investigation extends to urban tourism, where the dynamics between tourists and local populations are critical. Findings underscore that the impact of urban tourism is contingent upon how well cities manage both visitor and resident needs. Satisfaction with living conditions significantly affects overall well-being, with preferences for coastal settlements in the Lake Balaton region influencing destination recommendations. Additionally, urban challenges such as safety, climate exposure, and transportation are addressed through innovative solutions and promotion of best practices.
- *Cycling tourism in Lake Balaton*: A significant portion of the research is dedicated to cycling tourism, emphasizing its importance for quality of life and sustainable tourism. The study assesses the demographic and motivational profiles of cycling tourists, the necessary infrastructure for safe and connected cycling routes, and the provision of

supportive services. The development of a comprehensive cycling route network in the Lake Balaton region illustrates practical applications of these findings.

Future Directions:

- *Integration of advanced technologies in tourism management:* Future research should focus on the integration of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence, big data, and augmented reality into the field of tourism management. These technologies have the potential to enhance visitor experiences and optimise resource use, thereby contributing to more effective and sustainable tourism practices.
- *Long-term sustainability metrics and indicators:* It is similarly vital that future exploration should address the development and implementation of long-term sustainability metrics. This involves creating objective and comparable data to assess the effectiveness of sustainability measures and visitor management strategies. Emphasis should be placed on metrics that capture the dynamic interplay between tourism impacts and local quality of life, supporting informed decision-making and adaptive management strategies.

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