

# **Doctoral (PhD) dissertation**

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**LUDOVIKA UNIVERSITY OF PUBLIC SERVICE**  
**Doctoral School of Public Administration Sciences**

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**EXPLORING THE ROLE OF CITY MARKETING IN URBAN  
GOVERNANCE: A CASE STUDY OF THE UKRAINIAN CITY**

**SUMY**

Doctoral (PhD) dissertation

**Supervisors:**

Prof. Dr. Norbert Kis

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**Budapest, 2024**

## DECLARATION

I, Yezhova Anastasiia, declare that the PhD thesis entitled “Exploring the Role of City Marketing in Urban Governance: A Case Study of the Ukrainian City Sumy” is the product of my work. This thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Any previously published materials that have been used in this thesis, to the best of my knowledge, have been duly acknowledged. Unless otherwise referenced or acknowledged.

Signature

Date: 2024.08.09

## ABSTRACT

This dissertation thoroughly examines the multifaceted field of city marketing and offers detailed information valuable to practitioners and academics. As we navigate through operational definitions, scrutinize specific components, and explain strategic considerations, each aspect reveals its crucial role in enhancing competitiveness and societal well-being. Methodologically, the study uses a rigorous data collection approach, laying the foundation for seamless replication in future studies.

The strategic decision to focus on a case study city in Eastern Europe is motivated by the desire to address region-specific challenges and opportunities in Central and Eastern Europe. By focusing on Sumy (Ukraine) as a critical test site, the study examines the unique socioeconomic and cultural landscape endemic to this geographic region. This approach ensures the study's relevance to local development and city marketing strategies in this distinctive part of the European continent.

The study moves beyond traditional dichotomies using a mixed methods strategy that integrates quantitative and qualitative approaches. The quantitative aspect, consistent with the deductive methodology, supports the objectivist point of view, while the qualitative aspect, based on the inductive approach, rejects positivism in favour of emphasizing individual interpretations. Each strategy is accompanied by specific data collection and analysis methods, including numerical and statistical analysis for the quantitative approach and specialized methods for processing textual data in the qualitative area.

The essence of this study lies in the symbiosis of theoretical foundations and practical applications. In the context of global disruptions such as the COVID-19 pandemic and military conflicts, the study provides deep insight into the adaptability and resilience of city marketing strategies across urban landscapes. Its goal is to contribute to the theoretical discourse and practical strategies to cope with unprecedented challenges and promote sustainable urban development.

## ABSZTRAKT

Ez a disszertáció alaposan megvizsgálja a városmarketing sokrétű területét, és részletes, értékes információkat kínál a szakemberek és a tudósok számára. Ahogy eligazodunk a működési definíciók között, megvizsgáljuk az egyes összetevőket, és megmagyarázzuk a stratégiai megfontolásokat, mindegyik szempont feltárja döntő szerepét a versenyképesség és a társadalmi jólét fokozásában. Módszertanilag a tanulmány szigorú adatgyűjtési megközelítést alkalmaz, ami megalapozza a zökkenőmentes replikációt a jövőbeni tanulmányokban.

A stratégiai döntést, hogy egy esettanulmányos kelet-európai városra összpontosítsunk, a régióspecifikus kihívások és lehetőségek kezelése motiválja Közép- és Kelet-Európában. Az ukrain Sumyra, mint kritikus teszthelyre összpontosítva a tanulmány megvizsgálja az e földrajzi régióban endemikus egyedi társadalmi-gazdasági és kulturális tájat. Ez a megközelítés biztosítja a tanulmány relevanciáját a helyi fejlesztési és városmarketing-stratégiák szempontjából az európai kontinens e jellegzetes részén.

A tanulmány túllép a hagyományos dichotómiákon egy olyan vegyes módszerrel, amely integrálja a kvantitatív és kvalitatív megközelítéseket. A deduktív módszertannal összhangban lévő kvantitatív szempont az objektivista nézőpontot támogatja, az induktív megközelítésen alapuló kvalitatív szempont pedig elutasítja a pozitívizmust az egyéni értelmezések hangsúlyozása mellett. Minden stratégiához specifikus adatgyűjtési és -elemzési módszerek társulnak, beleértve a kvantitatív megközelítéshez szükséges numerikus és statisztikai elemzéseket, valamint a minőségi területen a szöveges adatok feldolgozására szolgáló speciális módszereket.

A tanulmány lényege az elméleti alapok és a gyakorlati alkalmazások szimbiózisában rejlik. A globális zavarok, például a COVID-19 világjárvány és a katonai konfliktusok összefüggésében a tanulmány mély betekintést nyújt a városi marketingstratégiák alkalmazkodóképességébe és rugalmasságába a városi tájakon. Célja, hogy hozzájáruljon az elméleti diskurzushoz és a gyakorlati stratégiákhoz, hogy megbirkózzon a példátlan kihívásokkal és elősegítse a fenntartható városfejlesztést.

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*(in English)*

As I pen down these acknowledgements, I am reminded that the path to completing this dissertation was anything but easy. Along the way, the world grappled with formidable challenges, from the unforeseen turmoil of COVID-19 to the harrowing spectre of a full-scale war in Ukraine. These events tested my resilience, both morally and psychologically. However, the unwavering support and belief of those around me have brought me to this moment.

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I am also deeply indebted to my initial scientific supervisor, Professor Istvan Tózsza, whose research interests set me on the path to exploring urban marketing. Your articles and educational materials were my gateway to the captivating world of city marketing.

My family deserves a special place in my heart. Their unwavering support is beyond measure. When I began my graduate studies, my beloved grandmother, Nina, and grandfather, Igor, were still with us. While they are no longer here, it's crucial to acknowledge that everything I have achieved is a tribute to their belief in me and their steadfast support.

I reserve a profound gratitude for my parents, Olha and Andrey. They are my rock, always present, no matter the circumstances. These are the wisest individuals in my life, ever ready to uplift me when I falter.

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*(in Russian)*

Для меня написание диссертации не было легким и беззаботным путешествием, на ее пути случились такие страшные бедствия как Covid-19 и полномасштабная война в Украине. Эти периоды были достаточно сложными морально и психологически, но благодаря людям, которые поддерживали меня и верили в меня я сейчас пишу эти строки.

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Лера – лучшая соседка по комнате, которая превратилась в невероятно дорогого мне друга. Именно благодаря аспирантуре наши жизненные пути пересеклись, и вот по сей день твоя дружба и мудрость всегда помогают мне в самые тяжелые моменты и греют в самые радостные.



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Мама і Папа — це найближчі мені люди, які незважаючи ні на що завжди поряд. Це наймудріші люди в моєму житті, які завжди підхоплять, якщо спіткнувся.

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Лера – найкраща сусідка по кімнаті, яка перетворилася на неймовірно дорогого друга. Саме завдяки аспірантурі наші життєві шляхи перетнулися, і ось донині твоя дружба і мудрість завжди допомагають мені у найважчі моменти та гріють у найрадісніші.

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## **Executive Summary**

Chapter I. This chapter presents the scientific problem under study, including its relevance and novelty, as well as the research questions and hypotheses under consideration. It also outlines how practitioners or academia can use the study results.

Chapter II. This chapter describes the research strategy and data collection methods, including using a data collection questionnaire.

Chapter III. This chapter provides a literature review and defines key terms related to city marketing, including city image, city marketing, city branding, and city targeting in the context of city marketing. The concept of “right to the city” is also considered. Furthermore, the chapter examines city marketing as a part of urban governance, exploring the role of city marketing strategies within the broader framework of urban governance and their impact on urban development.

Chapter IV. This chapter examines the role of urban marketing in urban governance, including a discussion of urban development and marketing strategies and a case study of the Ukrainian city of Sumy. It also looks at the impact of COVID-19 and relocation trends on urban marketing, including creative class theory and reasons for relocation. It discusses ways to make small towns more attractive for relocation.

Chapter V. This chapter presents an analysis of the data collected, including in-depth interviews and descriptive statistics of the questionnaire results.

Conclusions: In the concluding section, readers will find comprehensive insights into city marketing, guiding practitioners and academia in developing effective strategies for enhanced competitiveness and community well-being. The synthesis of theoretical frameworks with practical implications, exemplified through the Sumy case study, provides a concise understanding of dynamic city marketing as a part of modern public administration.

References. This section lists the works cited in the dissertation.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>Abbreviation</b>	<b>Stands For</b>
AVL	Automatic Vehicle Location
BKK	Budapest Transport Company (Budapest Közlekedési Központ)
Covid	Coronavirus Disease
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HBO	Home Box Office (entertainment company)
ID	Identification
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
LLC	Limited Liability Company
NPS	Net Promoter Score
RF	Russian Federation
ROI	Return on Investment
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats
UAH	Ukrainian Hryvnia (currency)
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
US	United States
USP	Unique Selling Proposition



## GLOSSARY

**City branding:** strategic management of a city's image for a mass audience. The focus is on creating a consumer-centric mental image through targeted communication, promotion and mega-event management.

**City development:** a focused and coordinated effort to improve urban areas through strategic initiatives, policies and investments aimed at sustainable infrastructure growth, economy and general well-being.

**City image:** overall perception and characteristics associated with a place in the human mind. It can develop spontaneously or result from intentional image-building activities.

**City marketing strategy:** a comprehensive plan focused on improving the quality of life of target audiences through strategic initiatives, communications and urban planning.

**City marketing:** a long-term strategic activity aimed at the operation and development of the city according to its (potential) market's demands, stakeholders' wants and needs, and competitive environment.

**Creative class:** a group of highly educated, innovative individuals who contribute to economic growth through their creative work.

**In-depth interviews:** a qualitative research method in which a researcher conducts in-depth, semi-structured conversations with individuals to gather detailed information about their experiences, beliefs, and opinions.

**Post-war tourism:** developing and promoting tourism in a region or country after a conflict or war.

**Right to the city:** a concept that encompasses two key aspects: the right of participation, which emphasizes the importance of municipalities responding to the needs of society through direct democracy, and the right of appropriation, which focuses on equal access, use and occupation of urban space by all residents. It goes beyond physical access and includes the right to participate actively in creating urban space, emphasizing the dynamic interaction between citizens and the urban environment.

**Small city:** a city with a population of fewer than 250,000 people.

**Target audience:** a specific group of people or demographic that a product, territory, or message is intended to reach and resonate with.

**Urban governance:** the management and organization of cities that involves developing and implementing policies, creating decision-making structures, and promoting collaboration among stakeholders.

# 1. CHAPTER I: DESCRIPTION OF SCIENTIFIC PROBLEM, RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND HYPOTHESIS

## 1.1. TOPICALITY OF THE ISSUE

### 1.1.1 RELEVANCE OF THE RESEARCH

*“Marketing should not be exclusively the advantage of private sector.”*

Gabriela Cecilia Stanciulescu

Is the era of distance and locality going away in our interconnected global village? On the one hand, we enjoy the convenience of hassle-free travel, the dominance of online communication over face-to-face interaction, and the availability of unique products from far-flung corners of the world. However, on the other hand, recent global upheavals, such as the pandemic and military conflicts, are forcing us to face the limitations of our interconnected lives. In 2020, a significant part of the world’s population was locked within the geographical boundaries of their countries and cities. Under this confinement, people were faced with important questions about the meaning of their current place of residence. As people grappled with work, family responsibilities and personal well-being, they wondered whether their chosen living space was truly worth accepting in the face of global challenges. This paradox forces us to think that we are deeply rooted in the essence of our local surroundings.

Of the sincere expressions of dissatisfaction among residents, the most terrifying is: “I dream of leaving this city as soon as possible.” This declaration underscores every community’s deep and enduring goal to become the embodiment of residential excellence. Failure to realize and tackle this aspiration can set the stage for a narrative similar to the cinematic image in the movie opening scene of *Mortal Engines*. In this vibrant visual narrative, a colossal mobile city ruthlessly consumes a smaller one, serving as a symbolic representation of larger urban centres insatiably expanding at the expense of their smaller counterparts, driven by the pursuit of resources (Rivers, 2018).

The population of the Earth continues to grow. The urbanization process has acquired new speed, and it is expected that by 2050, around 66 per cent of the world’s inhabitants will reside

in urban areas. As of 2022, according to the World Bank, the share of the urban population of Ukraine was 70 per cent (World Bank Open Data, 2024). The most crucial task for municipal authorities is to increase everyone's living standards and use all accessible resources rationally and efficiently.

When addressing urban growth, it is critical to consider sustainability and counter the threat of large urban centres eliminating smaller communities. Connecting local development with sustainable practices is essential, emphasizing that community-focused initiatives are more practical and sustainable than centralized approaches.

Delving into the question of why certain cities attract more investment despite location and financial resources is at the core of this study, and it argues that city marketing is the key to the answer. This process involves treating cities as marketable products, developing their brand and reputation, and strategically positioning them to attract investors, businesses, and current and potential residents based on the available resources. The hands-on approach to city marketing is increasingly reflected in creating particular departments, agencies, and positions in city administrations. These organizations are not just trading the city for immediate gain; they integrate the concept of city marketing into a city's long-term development strategy, recognizing its critical role in shaping the urban landscape and attracting investment over time.

A couple of decades ago, municipalities were relegated in the eyes of citizens to the status of quick problem solvers. The central government was the core of the citizens' trust, being responsible for the country's overall welfare. Today, a seismic shift has occurred: local governments have taken on a key role in shaping cities' social and economic dynamics, creating healthy living environments and ensuring the population's well-being. This transformation is organically combined with the prevailing trend in the European political arena – decentralization (Allain-Dupré, 2016; Allain-Dupré et al., 2020; Ansell & Gingrich, 2003). It becomes a cornerstone thanks to the subsidiarity of local decisions and the dominance of a new political paradigm in which the local takes precedence over the central. The initiative starts with the grassroots, emphasizing the importance of local participation and involvement in driving urban development.

This growing importance at the local level can also be explained by the spread of the European political principle of multi-level governance (“A Guide to Multi Level Governance,” 2015; “Multi-Level Governance: A Conceptual Framework,” 2010). Multi-level governance, originating from the EU's Committee of the Regions, articulates the European Commission's

vision of “building a Europe in partnership” and promoting inclusive decision-making. Multi-level governance involves the EU Member States and local and regional authorities, promoting shared responsibility for creating and implementing EU policies. The essence of multilevel governance lies in the efficiency achieved by joint actions at different levels of government that optimize the implementation of policies, actions and strategies.

An integral part of multilevel governance is recognising that local authorities play a vital role in this collaborative system. Local authorities, working with local communities and using their local knowledge, are essential in determining the feasibility and success of plans developed through multi-level governance. This interaction provides a detailed understanding of the local context and culture, allowing for more informed decisions and improved implementation of plans. The interaction between local authorities, communities and multi-level governance structures fits seamlessly with the multifaceted nature of city marketing, where local understanding and community participation are indispensable elements in developing successful development strategies.

To sum up, the local government officials are the leaders and custodians of cities’ interests. Their focus on strategic planning becomes paramount, recognizing the increasing role of policymakers, as N. Kis argues (Kis, 2018). Economic prosperity becomes a litmus test for a city’s overall success, as urban development strategies are intricately linked to critical elements such as increasing foreign investment, competitiveness, creating a sustainable environment, and strengthening solid local communities. As Rondinelli and Vastag (1997) highlight, the shift from mass-production industries to technology- and knowledge-based systems of production requires metropolitan areas to cultivate a business climate that supports internationally competitive firms. This involves not only attracting foreign direct investment but also fostering an environment where skilled labour and modern infrastructure can thrive. Moreover, as cities integrate into the global economy, agile business practices and strategic international alliances become essential for sustaining economic growth. Effective governance and urban development strategies that emphasize public-private cooperation and institutional flexibility are also critical in enhancing the international competitiveness of metropolitan areas. Therefore, local government officials must adopt comprehensive strategies that address these multifaceted aspects to ensure the economic vitality and overall success of their cities (Rondinelli & Vastag, 1997).

Therefore, the central premise of this study is based on a valid point and verified assumption – the increasing responsibility assigned to the local level. Growing competition for local human resources and the importance of attracting younger generations increases the need for effective city marketing. In 2022, the youth age ratio in Ukraine was 23 per cent, reflecting a decline in the share of the young population compared to the 1991 figure of 32 per cent (World Bank Open Data, 2022).

The solution lies in refining city marketing strategies that will be a powerful tool for local governments to navigate this complex terrain and ensure the vitality and future of their cities.

Following the trend of emphasizing city marketing, some cities have adopted marketing strategies or will do so soon. A common approach is looking at the benchmark set by foreign cities and adopting strategies similar to those of the most successful. Undoubtedly, adopting the same strategies cannot guarantee success – a city's success story cannot repeat in the same scenario in a completely different region. Due to this, it is crucial to consider the specific characteristics of the territory, its population's societal behavioural patterns, its economic situation, culture and level of development.

Therefore, it is essential to note that the application of this study's results is limited within the geopolitical boundaries of Central and Eastern Europe, a region characterized by nuanced historical trajectories and cultural heterogeneity. The strategic definition of this geographic scope is driven by recognition of the region-specific challenges and opportunities inherent to cities in that area. Recognizing the commonalities across this part of the European continent, the study can be helpful for local development and city marketing strategies of this geographical subgroup as the case study city of the research is located in Eastern Europe.

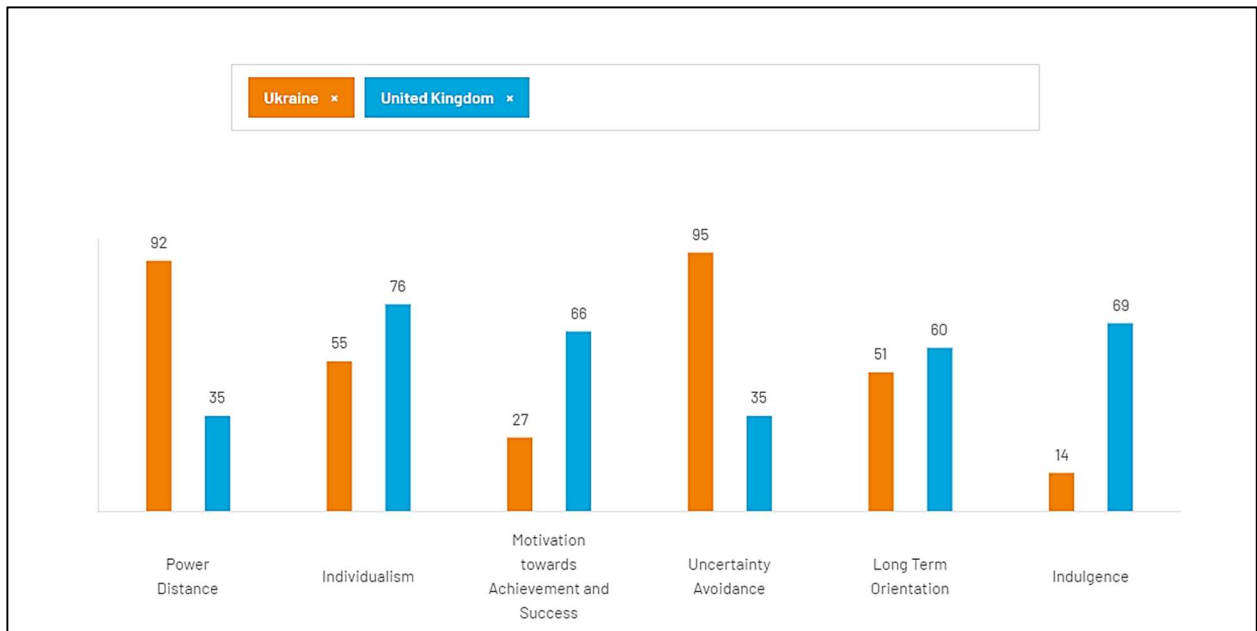
In keeping with Samuel P. Huntington's seminal work, the *Clash of Civilizations* (Huntington, 2011), we would like to point out that it is not only geographical borders that separate Western Europe from Central and Eastern Europe.

Samuel P. Huntington's study provides a theoretical lens to view the profound cultural differences between Western, Central, and Eastern Europe. Huntington argues that cultural differences, rather than ideological or economic factors, are the primary sources of conflict in the post-Cold War era. In the European context, the cultural border separating Western Europe from its central and eastern counterparts becomes a key demarcation element. The historical legacy of the Byzantine Empire and the influence of Orthodoxy in the East, in contrast to the

Roman legacy and the dominance of Catholicism in the West, contribute to cultural divergence. Understanding these cultural nuances is paramount in political science as they shape political behaviour, institutional frameworks, and policy preferences. This cultural divide is not just a relic of the past but a continuing force shaping how the region's cities see themselves. From this perspective, cities are more than just physical aspects; they represent ongoing cultural changes. These changes include a combination of historical influences, social ideas (collective beliefs, values, norms, and concepts) and consequences of globalization in Central and Eastern Europe.

The main difference between Western and Eastern Europe lies in the economic development levels and historical backgrounds of the countries in each region (Compare the Difference Between Similar Terms, 2024). Western European countries, such as the United Kingdom, France, and Germany, are much more economically advanced compared to Eastern European countries, which once belonged to the Soviet bloc. Additionally, Western Europe has experienced high economic development rates and industrial revolutions, contributing to their more advanced economies. Moreover, Western European countries often exhibit characteristics of modernization and individualization in their lifestyles, while Eastern Europe, influenced by its historical ties to the Soviet bloc, may showcase different cultural traits and economic structures. These differences impact marketing strategies and consumer behaviour in each region.

Exploring the cultural disparities between Western and Eastern Europe reveals significant differences (The Migration Translators, 2019). These variations manifest across various facets, including social behaviour, lifestyle, beliefs and values, and communication styles. It can be supported by getting acquainted with G. Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions Theory, and the online country comparison tool developed by his Institute (*Country Comparison Tool*, 2024).



*Figure 1: The comparison of cultural dimensions of Ukraine (Eastern Europe) and United Kingdom (Western Europe)  
Source: hofstede-insights.com*

In terms of social behaviour, Western societies prioritize individualism, promoting directness and assertiveness (Figure 1). Conversely, Eastern cultures value collective harmony, often favouring indirect communication to avoid conflict. Lifestyle preferences also diverge markedly. Western culture celebrates personal achievement and self-expression, fostering independent lifestyles. In contrast, Eastern culture places a premium on family and community ties, leading to more communal and family-oriented societies. Beliefs and values serve as another point of contrast. Western societies uphold ideals of personal freedom, democracy, and human rights. Meanwhile, Eastern cultures prioritize social harmony, duty, and deference to authority. Communication styles further underscore the cultural divide. Western cultures typically employ direct communication methods, while Eastern cultures lean towards indirect communication, often relying on nonverbal cues to convey messages effectively.

A severe problem the field of city marketing faces is the lack of city marketing research with case studies of cities in this particular region. Local governments will likely fall victim to ineffective strategy planning without such knowledge. This problem has been a topical one for Ukrainian cities, one of which has become a subject of research for this dissertation.



Another central issue municipalities face is their negligible acknowledgement that they are losing enormous human resources due to mobility. Moreover, they are already competing for all resources within and outside their countries, even without recognizing that.

For example, in Ukraine, low standards of living and ongoing military conflict drove people to search for higher-income opportunities and safety since 2014, and the full-scale war has tremendously worsened these statistics. According to the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine, the number of Ukrainians permanently employed abroad in 2019 was 3.2 million. It represents a staggering 18 per cent of the total labour force of the country (Вінокуров, 2019). However, unfortunately, in reality, the numbers could have been much higher.

The estimated number of refugees from Ukraine recorded in Europe and Asia since February 2022 as of December 6, 2022, was 2.9 million (*Ukrainian Refugees by Country 2022* | Statista, 2022).

According to the UNHCR records, 7,271,817 refugees from Ukraine are now located in Europe as of 11 July 2023 (*CREAM: Centre for Research and Analysis of Migration - Ukraine Crisis*, 2023).

According to The Global Competitiveness Index 4.0 (Schwab, 2019), Ukraine occupied the 85th position among 141 countries. It was the least competitive state, after Moldova, among neighbouring countries. In this context, by competitiveness, we mean the country's productivity, eventually leading to economic growth and the rise of human well-being (Cann, 2017).

After the decentralization process and budgetary reforms that took place in 2015, Ukrainian cities were allocated more resources and consequently power in determining their future (in comparison, the development budget of the city of Sumy for 2013 was 60 million UAH (1,455,338 EUR as of 16.07.2023), while for 2016 it became 600 million UAH, ten times bigger (Корнієнко, 2020).

Therefore, the municipality is expected to have a clear vision formalized into the city's marketing strategy in order to raise the city's competitiveness level. The attractiveness and investment potential of the settlement can be and must be broadcasted through the efforts and cooperation of local public administration and all the stakeholders.

### 1.1.2. THE NOVELTY OF THE DISSERTATION

The urban marketing research landscape predominantly focuses on developed countries such as the Netherlands (Boisen, 2007; Boisen et al., 2018; Braun, 2008; Horlings, 2012), the Nordic region (Mabillard et al., 2023), the UK (Acuti et al., 2018; Jones, 2015; MacNiven et al., 2023) and the US (Ashworth & Voogd, 1993; Herstanti, 2023), while city marketing processes in the developing cities are less covered in the literature. It creates a severe issue: cities in the marketing development stage face a limited understanding of city marketing practices and limited resources that prevent interaction with foreign consulting agencies and are forced to formulate marketing strategies on their own. In reality, this often leads to a process of “adapting” strategies based on highly successful Western models. The main reason is the lack of a comprehensive and open methodology for city marketing research and guidelines for developing strategies using the city marketing approach in the Eastern and Central Europe region. This deficiency hinders the practical and contextually relevant development of city marketing strategies for cities in this region.

Moreover, this lack of comprehensive city marketing research methodology perpetuates a gap in strategy development for developing cities and compounds the problem in light of the distinctive cultural nuances between Western and Eastern Europe, as mentioned previously. As developing cities try to adapt strategies based on Western models, the cultural differences inherent in these regions create an additional layer of complexity. With its historical background, the cultural fabric significantly influences how marketing is perceived and implemented. A thorough understanding of these cultural differences becomes imperative as strategies developed for success in a Western context cannot be easily adapted to Eastern European conditions (Coker, 2020). A more inclusive approach to city marketing research is needed to address these inequalities and guide Central and Eastern European cities in developing strategies seamlessly aligned with their unique cultural landscapes.

The foundational literature sources of the city marketing field often direct the reader’s attention to the needs of the target audiences within the place. At the same time, none of the available bodies of knowledge give clear instructions on measuring and understanding the wants, needs, and demands of the city’s target audiences. For example, P. Kotler, D.H. Heider and I. Rein describe in their work “Marketing Places” how target audiences are chosen (Kotler et al., 1993). They specify the factors influencing the place-buying process but do not cover the research phase. In his “City Marketing Towards an Integrated Approach” (Braun, 2008), Erik Brown

makes a pioneering conclusion about the customer-oriented approach in city marketing. His research methodology is based on in-depth interviews; however, all his interviewees are British, Swiss, Dutch and Swedish experts. It is reasonable, as one must remember that his research question is about the integrated approach and effectiveness of city marketing, which is not widespread and developed in less developed countries.

Developing a city marketing strategy consists of three stages: audit, collecting data from the target audience and subsequent analysis, culminating in formulating the strategy. The initial stage, audit, is widely covered in the existing literature with widely accepted concepts such as SWOT analysis (covered in works of Kotler P. and Piscotti I. (Piskóti & Nagy, 2007, 2008)), helping cities understand their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The final stage, strategy writing, often takes inspiration from successful examples overseas, where the structure and content of triumphal strategies serve as a reference point. In contrast, the intermediate stage, which involves collecting data from target audiences and then analyzing them, has received relatively limited attention in the existing literature.

The most challenging obstacle in the way of city marketing strategy development is the necessity to be based on the local distinctive characteristics and particularities of each city (Deffner & Metaxas, 2006; Seisedos, 2006). This requirement presents a significant challenge as it demands a deep understanding of the city's unique attributes and development objectives to create an effective marketing plan. Additionally, ensuring alignment between the vision of the city, development objectives, and strategies can be complex and requires a comprehensive analysis of the city's internal and external environment. This challenge underscores the importance of customizing city marketing approaches to suit the specific characteristics and needs of each location.

This study aims to elaborate a new approach that will guide municipalities in the complex field of conducting surveys and detailed analysis of the wants and needs of the city's target audiences. It goes into detail: What questions work well in personal interviews? How should a survey be carefully constructed? What methodologies should be used when analyzing the data collected? This study aims to fill a critical gap by offering municipalities comprehensive guidance on the intricacies of survey construction and analysis, thereby spurring the evolution of more effective city marketing strategies.

The case study of this dissertation is Sumy, a city located in Ukraine in Eastern Europe, serving as the testing point for this particular region. Using a developed survey approach in Sumy, this

study aims to test and refine the methodology in a contextual setting, ensuring its relevance and effectiveness for Central and Eastern European municipalities. The unique socio-economic and cultural landscape of Sumy will provide valuable information, contributing to the overall goal of improving the planning of the city's marketing strategy in this unique geographical and cultural context.

**Novelty: elaborating a new approach of survey-making for a more effective city marketing strategy planning.**

### **1.1.3. OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE UTILIZATION OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS**

The dissertation will be helpful for public management, place marketing, and branding researchers and students. It will be of exceptional value to municipal public administration workers (namely, from the departments dealing with economic development, investments, and tourism) since analyses of the city marketing strategies presented in the dissertation can safeguard from typical mistakes or incentivise the realization of particular ideas. Moreover, the work will allow the reader to understand the city marketing concept and why the municipality should consider its implementation.

As mentioned among the tasks and results of the research, the strategic choice of the Ukrainian city of Sumy will be based on the survey methodology derived in the research process. The author will share the results with Sumy municipal authorities when completed. While conducting a series of interviews with local authority representatives, the researcher will announce the preparation of guidelines and will discuss the ways of their dissemination and implementation. Up to this moment (January 2022), Sumy has in place a development strategy until 2030, which focuses on the following strategic goals: creating conditions to make the city fully accessible locally and internationally; creating opportunities for quality of life, talent development and productive work of its residents; increasing the competitiveness of the city's economy; increasing efficiency in city management. Creating a positive city image to attract investors and tourists constitutes one of the subgoals for the increase in competitiveness.

## 1.2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS, TASKS, HYPOTHESES AND RESULTS

The research aims to elaborate a survey model for creating the marketing strategy for Central and Eastern European cities by developing the city marketing strategy model for the Ukrainian city of Sumy. To achieve the purpose, it is needed to accomplish the following **tasks**:

- To develop the working definitions of city marketing;
- To analyse through broad scientific sources base, current place and role of city marketing in urban governance;
- To analyse the city marketing strategies and their implementation in selected cities, and based on that, identify the main blocks and interconnections of the benchmark marketing strategy;
- To conduct in-depth interviews with different target audiences and, based on the information collected, create a survey;
- To collect and analyse the data to identify the demands of Sumy's target audiences and their characteristics (portrait);
- To develop the marketing strategic decisions for the main challenges of Sumy.

The novelty of the work will be seen through the attempt at thorough exploration of current and prospective city marketing strategical activities of the selected cities and applying the available experiences and the research tools in the process of data collection and development of strategic directions for the Ukrainian city, which has never been done before. According to it, the following **results** will be achieved:

- Development of the working definitions of city marketing;
- Analysis of current place and role of city marketing in urban governance;
- Analysis of the city marketing strategies in selected cities in search of the benchmark;
- The designed survey for the identification of target audiences' needs.

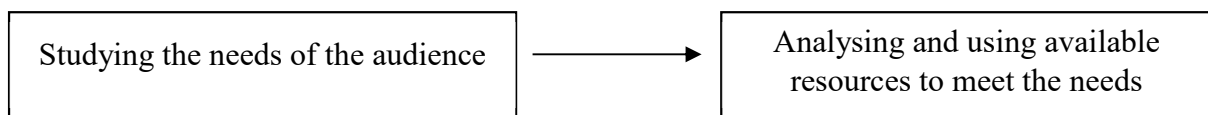
This study will enable us to answer the following **questions**:

- 1) Why is city marketing crucial for local governments in the current competitive environment of cities?
- 2) What is the structure of a city marketing strategy?
- 3) What questions should be included in the survey to identify the demands of the city's target audiences?
- 4) Who are Sumy residents, and what are their needs?

The **main research question** is:

- 5) What steps should be taken to attract more residents, businesses, investors and tourists to Sumy?

#### City marketing approach



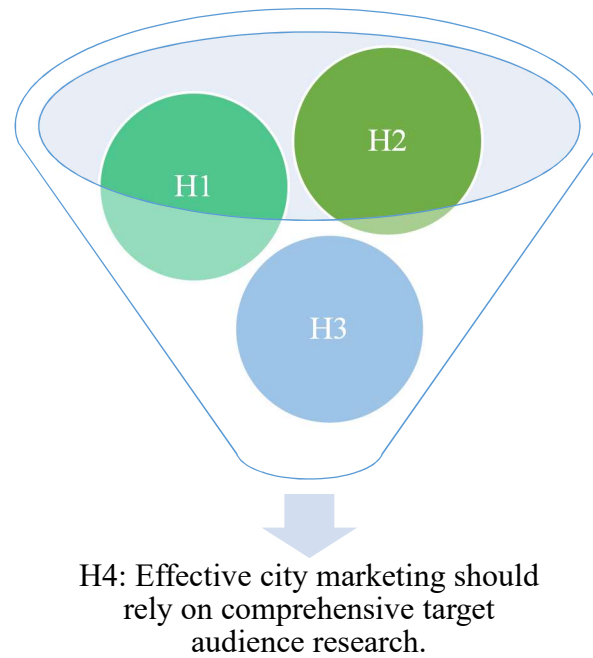
#### Main Hypotheses

**H1:** Cities without a robust marketing strategy face decreased competitiveness.

**H2:** Analyzing city marketing strategies unveils a structured framework with interconnected components, forming the basis for an effective marketing strategy.

**H3:** Perception of inhabitants and business actors unveils local cultural characteristics and dominant values.

**H4:** Effective city marketing should rely on comprehensive target audience research.



This model navigates through the impact of marketing strategy on city competitiveness (H1), the structured framework derived from strategy analysis (H2), the influence of local culture on perception (H3), and the pivotal role of target audience research in effective city marketing (H4). These hypotheses contribute to a holistic understanding of city marketing effectiveness dynamics.

**Table 1. Conceptual framework of the thesis**

<b>Questions</b>	<b>Tasks</b>	<b>Hypotheses</b>	<b>Verification</b>
Why is the city marketing approach crucially important to the local governments in the current cities' competitive environment?	To develop a working definition of city marketing.	Cities without a robust marketing strategy face decreased competitiveness.	Leveraging hermeneutical reasoning and success stories from diverse cities employing city marketing strategies, the Sumy case study provides empirical validation for the hypothesis, underscoring a tangible link between the absence of a robust marketing strategy and weakened competitiveness.
	To analyse through a broad basis of scientific sources, the current place and role of city marketing in urban governance		
What is the structure of a city marketing strategy?	To analyse city marketing strategies and their implementation in selected cities and identify the main blocks and interconnections of the benchmark marketing strategy.	Analysing city marketing strategies unveils a structured framework with interconnected components, forming the basis for an effective marketing strategy.	Based on an extensive literature review and analysis of urban marketing strategies in successful urban centres, we have identified the fundamental elements that form the essence of urban marketing strategy.
What questions should be included in the survey in order to identify the demands of the city's target audiences?	To conduct in-depth interviews and create a survey based on the information collected.	Perception of inhabitants and business actors unveils local cultural characteristics and dominant values.	Utilizing a survey with measurable cultural elements and values facilitates the quantification of cultural aspects, emphasizing their pivotal role.
Who are Sumy's residents, and what are their needs?	To collect and analyse the data to identify the demands of Sumy's target audiences and their characteristics.	Effective city marketing should rely on comprehensive research of the target audience.	The Sumy case study confirms that inefficiency in city marketing is linked to the absence of a survey-based, perception-driven strategy.

Source: own elaboration



## 2. CHAPTER II: RESEARCH STRATEGY, DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

The presented study uses a mixed-methods strategy, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. A quantitative strategy aligned with a deductive methodology for testing hypotheses and theories takes an objectivist perspective. On the other hand, the qualitative strategy, which embraces an inductive approach to theory development, rejects positivism and focuses on individual interpretations within a constructivist framework.

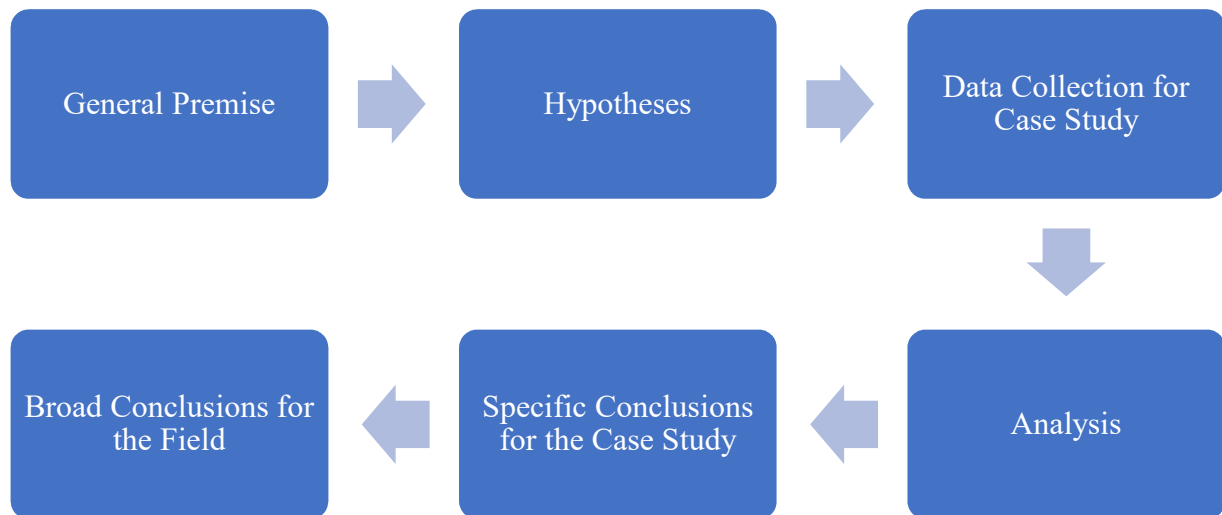
Each strategy uses specific data collection and analysis methods. The quantitative approach is based on collecting numerical data (for example, coding of mass survey data) and uses statistical analysis methods. In contrast, a qualitative strategy involves collecting textual data (e.g., interviews, observational data) and using specialized analytical methods for structure.

Choosing a mixed strategy integrates the principles and methods of both qualitative and quantitative approaches to produce reliable and comprehensive results.

Following the deductive logic of this study, we move from the general to the specific, incorporating a feedback loop to refine the overall findings. Using a case study provides a valuable tool for developing a new survey model, adding new value to more comprehensive urban marketing practices. Our case study serves as a means of testing, moving from hypotheses to thesis and enriching the overall structure of the study. In the city marketing field, the case study method was used by Ashworth G. J. & Voogd H., Boisen M., Kalandides A., Kavaratzis M. Zenker, S. & Beckmann, S. C., and Vuignier R. L.

When we embark on a detailed study of city marketing strategies, implementing a deductive reasoning framework becomes our research's critical framework (Figure 2). This deductive approach begins with a broad statement postulating the existence of specific components in city marketing strategies. Based on these overarching premises, hypotheses are carefully developed, suggesting that the effectiveness of city marketing depends on these identified components. This is followed by a comprehensive data collection plan using content analysis and statistical observation methodologies. Subsequently, a deductive reasoning circuit is initiated, systematically drawing specific conclusions from the accumulated data. Through this deductive lens, we seek to not only illuminate strategic marketing decisions tailored to the specific problems of Sumy but also to obtain broader information that contributes to the development

of city marketing practices on a more general scale. The deductive reasoning framework acts as a methodological basis, providing a rigorous and logical investigation beyond a single case study and enriching the broader discourse in city marketing.



*Figure 2: Deductive Reasoning Scheme*

*Source: own elaboration*

The word cloud visual tool was employed to develop a working definition of city marketing and city marketing strategy. In the creation process, the prepositions, articles, conjunctions and different forms of the verb “to be” are removed from the definition as they do not contribute to the sense of the words. The online tool *worditout.com* was used for word cloud creation.

To create the work’s operational definition, definitions from different scholars’ theoretical works are taken and ranged chronologically. Exclusively, “city” and “urban” marketing definitions are used. Definitions of “place” and “territorial” marketing are considered to not be applicable in this case, as they cover a wide range of settlements (from village to country), which vary from each other in terms of regulations, population, budget, target audiences, and strategic approach.

The literature review methods, content analysis and observation, will be applied to analyse the current place and role of city marketing in urban governance. The researcher will monitor the

news connected to the city marketing field, for example, mega-events in various settlements and their outcomes. Concrete examples of different cities will be examined.

The author will apply comparative methods to analyse the current city marketing strategies and their implementation in selected cities. The comparative analysis identifies similarities and differences, standard and special in objects, allowing the establishment and isolation of standard features and differences. The comparisons will be made in a cross-sectional framework, where objects in cities' strategies will correlate by defined criteria. The analysis will be limited to describing the state of affairs (descriptive comparison) without predictive conclusions.

The main criteria for strategy analyses will include:

- Vision and mission
- City description
- Objectives
- Target groups
- Key messages
- Marketing methods
- Plan of Implementation
- SWOT Analysis
- Brand

The narrative design will be applied to develop strategic marketing decisions for the city of Sumy's main challenges as the researcher will use in-depth interviews and questionnaires to collect the necessary data about customers and their needs. The author's origin explains the city choice and, therefore, the facilitation of the research by enhanced networking. The necessity of understanding the main challenges of Sumy and developing strategic decisions to face them exists due to the mass emigration of the population abroad, to the capital and Kharkiv (before the war). Therefore, the residents would become the primary target audience of the potential strategy.

The decision was made to conduct semi-structured, in-depth interviews based on its successful application in the field by Braun E., Kavaratzis M., Hankinson G., and Asandei M. The researcher will interview city residents: locals from the non-business area (e.g. teachers, pensioners, scientists), business owners, investors (more probably their representatives), students of Sumy universities from other cities, local government officials and tourists. Three

representatives of each group will be recruited for the interview. The information gained through the interviews will be used to create the questionnaire. The interviewer will discuss the demands of the interviewees regarding the city and form the pool of items for the questionnaire. Around 400 questionnaires are estimated to be collected. Both online and printed versions will be used. People will measure their satisfaction level with a Likert scale. When applicable, one open answer will be present in some of the survey's questions. Due to the inability to gather stratified sampling, we used a random sampling methodology where we randomly selected individuals to receive a questionnaire to ensure the diversity of our sample compared to the overall population.

The method of statistical observation will be employed for the analysis of the questionnaires. Calculations will be conducted using Google Sheets. The correlation analysis will be applied to process statistical data aiming at the correlation coefficients. It is possible to use it if there are enough observations from more than one variable (for a particular type of correlation coefficient). In this case, the correlation coefficients between one pair and a set of pairs of attributes are compared to establish a statistical relationship between them.

The recruitment process of the interviewees will be based on the researcher's network, as the case-study city is the latter's hometown. Social media, namely Instagram and Facebook, will be used as a communication channel to recruit the necessary respondents with relevant profiles and, most importantly, those interested in the city's development and willing to cooperate. The sex and age of the interviewees will be neglected in the selection process.

The author will also use the "snowball" search of the prospective interviewees. She will ask each interlocutor whom else she/he can advise for the conversation. The core questions for the interview will be sent to respondents in advance, but undoubtedly, additional questions will appear during the process. The conversations will be held in the Ukrainian or Russian language, but transcriptions of audio recordings will be translated by the researcher into English and added partially to the central part and wholly to the annexe of this dissertation.

The grey list of the general questions for the interview is the following:

1. Were you born in Sumy? When did you move to Sumy?
2. Have you experienced life in other cities/countries? Why did you come back?
3. Have you ever thought about moving away from Sumy? Why?
4. Can you describe the typical resident of Sumy?

5. When people from other cities ask you about Sumy, how do you describe it?
6. Are you satisfied with your education/business/career? What are the main pitfalls in your development?
7. What would you like to change in your education/business/career?
8. Are human relations (ties) significant in the city to achieve your goals?
9. How do you usually spend your free time? What kind of events is lacking in Sumy?
10. When you have guests from other cities, where do you take them around Sumy?
11. Have you seen the Sumy brand book? Do you like it? What would you add or change? (in case the interviewee has not seen the brand book, the video summary will be presented during the interview and discussed afterwards).

## **2.1. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE DATA COLLECTION**

In the following pages, the author reveals a complete set of survey questions, carefully selected from an extensive series of interviews conducted among various demographic segments of the Sumy municipality. This section clarifies the internal values held by residents, including underlying issues that remain the same after the interview, including demographics such as age and gender.

The primary purpose of this survey goes beyond a typical investigation; it tries to reveal the subtle layers of satisfaction, demands and needs intertwined in various layers of the population of Sumy and their cultural specifics. A critical sub-task relates to the conceptual formulation of the umbrella that will cover the city's marketing strategy in a complex manner. Formulating a strategy appropriate to a dynamic urban landscape requires thoroughly examining core social values, especially in light of the ever-changing political arena.

Recognizing the transformative impact of current political dynamics, the author astutely included a special section in the questionnaire to elicit these underlying values – an astute methodological choice to reflect the collective ethos of a society. In addition, some questions are strategically oriented to focus on satisfaction with urban life, providing a detailed picture of Sumy's urban panorama.

### **Question 1. What is your favourite attraction in the city of Sumy?**

The question is critical to the study as it directly addresses participants' preferences and identifies potential tourism magnets in the city. By collecting information about people's

favourite attractions, researchers gain valuable insight into the elements that elicit a positive response from residents. Understanding preferred attractions lets you identify the city's key features and unique advantages.

**Question 2. Choose the words that can be used to describe the residents of the city of Sumy.**

The question holds significance for the research as it provides valuable insights into the self-perception and identity of the city's residents. By allowing participants to select words that they believe describe the residents, the questionnaire aims to capture the collective identity and image of the city as perceived by its inhabitants. This information is essential for understanding how the local population views itself, identifying common characteristics, and shaping the narrative integral to the city's marketing strategy. The self-perception reflected in the chosen words serves as a foundation for crafting messages that resonate with the community and contribute to developing a strategic, identity-driven marketing approach for the city.

**Question 3. How important are these life components to you? (Figure 3).**

The question probes the significance of various life components to the respondents. Using a Likert-type scale matrix enhances understanding by allowing participants to express nuanced opinions rather than providing binary responses. By exploring the importance placed on different aspects of life, such as family values, economic stability, or cultural activities, the questionnaire aims to uncover the priorities and values of residents. This information is instrumental in tailoring the city marketing strategy to align with the genuine needs and aspirations of the local community, ensuring that the promotional efforts resonate with the residents on a personal and meaningful level.

How important are these vital components to you? \*

	Does not matter	A little important	Importantly	Extremely important
Personal development and self-realization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Family values	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Multiculturalism and tolerance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Service to the state	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Art	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Material welfare	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personal safety	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Society and your place in it	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Spiritual development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*Figure 3: Question on values.*

*Source: own elaboration*

#### **Question 4. How do you mainly move around the city?**

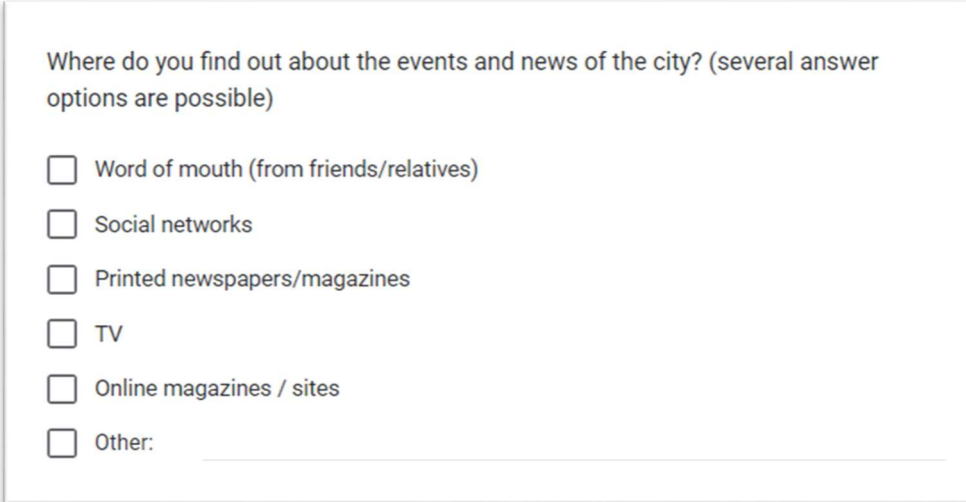
The question provides critical insights into the transportation habits and preferences of residents. Understanding the predominant modes of transportation is essential for promoting sustainable and accessible urban mobility. The research can inform decisions related to infrastructure development, traffic management, and promoting eco-friendly transportation options by gaining knowledge about whether residents prefer public transport, private vehicles, cycling, or walking. **Question 5. “Do you do sports?”**

The inclusion of this question is fundamental for several reasons. Firstly, it provides valuable insights into the residents’ lifestyle choices, contributing to the overall understanding of their health and well-being. The data collected from this question can guide the development of

recreational and sports facilities, influencing urban planning decisions to align with the preferences and needs of the residents.

**Question 6. “Where do you find out about the events and news of the city?” (Figure 4)**

It is pivotal for understanding the communication channels that residents rely on to stay informed. This information is crucial for shaping effective city marketing strategies, as it provides insights into the most influential platforms and mediums through which the local population receives information. The city can optimize its communication efforts by identifying these channels, ensuring that announcements, events, and news reach the broadest possible audience.



Where do you find out about the events and news of the city? (several answer options are possible)

- Word of mouth (from friends/relatives)
- Social networks
- Printed newspapers/magazines
- TV
- Online magazines / sites
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

*Figure 4: Question on the channels of information distribution.*

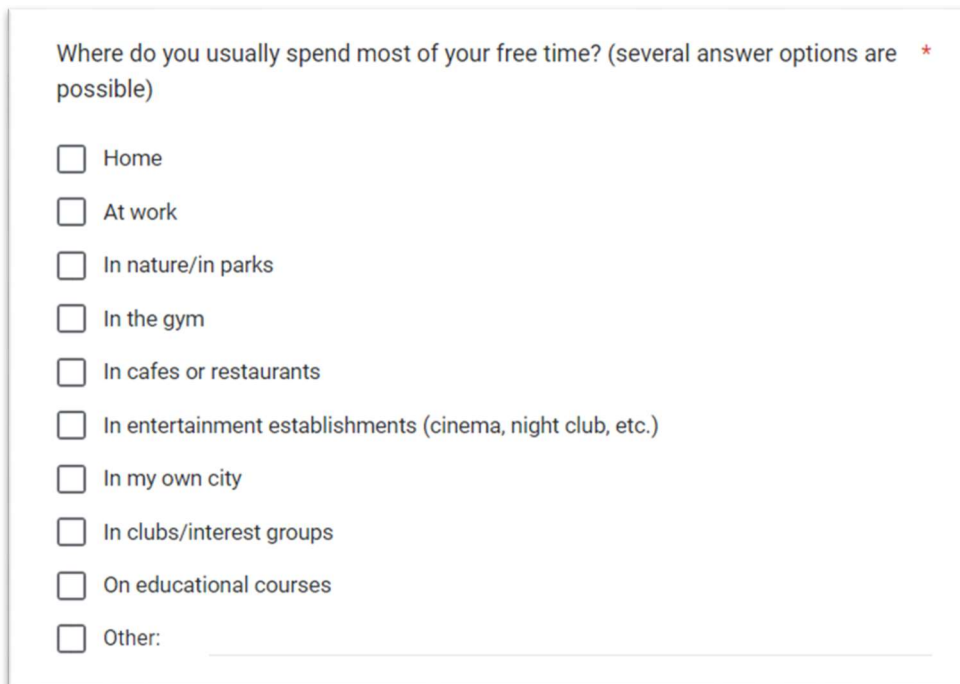
*Source: own elaboration*

**Questions 7. “What is your attitude towards people of other nationalities living in the city?”** The city is becoming more and more internationally diverse, as all the universities offer programmes in English. If municipalities want to develop in this direction, creating a tolerant atmosphere for international students/people is crucial, referring to the research of the creative class by Richard Florida (elaborated in the following part of the dissertation). Word of mouth and social media are powerful tools for shaping opinions, as people like to share negative experiences and complain. In order to avoid it, a comfortable atmosphere for newcomers should be created through particular activities reflected in the city’s marketing strategy. Moreover, what kind of foreign investor would be willing to put money into a xenophobic environment? We live in a globalized world and should follow global rules to survive in the urban arena.



**Question 8. “Where do you usually spend most of your free time?” (Figure 5)**

The question delves into the recreational preferences and habits of the city’s residents. Understanding how individuals allocate their leisure time provides valuable insights into the amenities and facilities that contribute to the quality of life in the city. This information is pivotal for city marketing, as it helps identify key areas of interest and potential attractions that can be highlighted in promotional efforts. Moreover, the data aids in shaping a city’s cultural and recreational strategy, ensuring that urban spaces cater to the diverse leisure needs of the community.



Where do you usually spend most of your free time? (several answer options are possible) \*

- Home
- At work
- In nature/in parks
- In the gym
- In cafes or restaurants
- In entertainment establishments (cinema, night club, etc.)
- In my own city
- In clubs/interest groups
- On educational courses
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

*Figure 5: Question on free time spending.*

*Source: own elaboration*

**Question 9. “What do you miss in the city of Sumy?”**

The question serves as a valuable tool for identifying gaps and areas for improvement within the city. By exploring the aspects that residents feel are lacking, the research gains insights into the unmet needs and expectations of the community. This information provides a roadmap for addressing deficiencies and enhancing residents’ satisfaction. Additionally, understanding the elements missed by individuals contributes to creating targeted initiatives that can positively impact the city’s attractiveness and livability.

**Question 10. “At the moment, are you satisfied with the following areas of your life?”**

The question assesses the overall well-being and life satisfaction of the residents. This question is crucial for understanding individuals’ subjective experiences and perceptions, providing valuable insights into the factors contributing to or detracting from their satisfaction (Figure 6).

At the moment, are you satisfied with the following areas of your life?				
	Not satisfied	A little satisfied	Satisfied	Very satisfied
Personal life / family	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Professional development	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Material well-being	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Education	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sports	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Health	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The comfort of an urban environment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Leisure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

*Figure 6: Question on satisfaction level.*

*Source: own elaboration*

**Question 11. “To what extent can local government influence your level of satisfaction with each of these areas?”**

The question is pivotal for understanding the local government’s perceived role and impact in shaping residents’ satisfaction levels in various life areas. It delves into the governance dynamics and its influence on residents’ well-being. This question helps identify the extent to which residents attribute their satisfaction or dissatisfaction in different life domains to the actions and policies of the local government. The responses aid in gauging the effectiveness of local governance in meeting the needs and expectations of the population, forming a critical component for crafting targeted strategies and policies.

**Question 12. “Are you satisfied with the activities of the local authorities of the city of Sumy?”**

This question is important for assessing the perceived performance and effectiveness of the local government in the city. The responses show residents’ trust and confidence in their local government.

**Question 13. “Have you ever wanted to move from the city of Sumy?”**

**Question 14. “Why did you return to Sumy?”**

**Question 15. “Do you intend to move again if you can?”**

These questions delve into resident mobility, helping to understand the factors influencing migration patterns. Understanding why residents want to leave, their motivations for returning, and potential future relocation plans provides a detailed picture of a city’s attractiveness. This information helps identify positive aspects that attract residents and areas that need improvement to improve overall satisfaction.

**Question 16. “Were you born in Sumy?”**

The question is significant for the research as it aims to discern potential correlations between individuals’ birthplace and values. By exploring whether there are shared values among indigenous people and assessing the extent of any differences from non-native residents, the research can uncover insights into the influence of birthplace on value formation. This question provides an opportunity to understand the dynamics of cultural cohesion or diversity within the local community, contributing valuable information to the study of local identity and the development of effective city marketing strategies that resonate with the diverse values of the population.

**Question 17. “In which district of the city do you live?”**

This question aims to uncover potential correlations between residents’ satisfaction levels and their residential districts. By gathering information on the specific areas of the city where respondents reside, the research can analyze whether there are discernible patterns in satisfaction between individuals living in the city centre versus those in the outskirts. This exploration is instrumental in evaluating the balance of city infrastructure and entertainment options across different districts. Understanding these correlations can provide insights into residents’ localized needs and preferences, guiding the development of targeted city marketing strategies tailored to enhance satisfaction and well-being in specific geographical areas.

**Question 18. “What type of housing do you live in?”**

This question indirectly indicates respondents’ income levels without explicitly asking about financial status. The type of housing a person resides in often reflects socio-economic factors and provides valuable contextual information for understanding the diverse demographic profiles within the city.

**Question 19. “Your completed level of education”**

The question provides insights into the educational background of the respondents. The level of education often correlates with various socio-cultural aspects, influencing factors such as tolerance, life satisfaction, and overall values. By including this question, the research aims to identify the dominant educational groups within the city, shedding light on the city’s overall educational landscape.

**Question 20. “Your occupation”**

Including this question allows for categorising respondents into distinct stakeholder groups, providing a comprehensive understanding of the city’s diverse workforce. The question also helps assess unemployment status and establish correlations with the respondents’ educational levels. This data is particularly beneficial for potential investors as it offers insights into the skillsets and capabilities of the available workforce in the city. Also, we should find out if we can call the city a “students’ city”. Students can be separated as the target audience, which will need an individual approach as a part of the strategy. For example, the Dutch city of students, Groningen, has around 200,000 inhabitants, and almost 50,000 are students. It means that if the city population has  $\frac{1}{4}$  of university students (c. 60,000), the marketers can direct the activities towards prospective students, graduates from a secondary school and their parents from the internal audience, other cities and countries.

**Question 21. “Gender”**

It is a fundamental demographic variable that allows analysing responses based on gender-specific perspectives. Gender can significantly influence individuals’ perceptions, preferences, and experiences within the city.

**Question 22. “Age”**

The values can be hugely diversified in the age groups. So, it was decided not to make an open question but to statistically simplify the analysis of the results while making four age groups.

**Ethics**

Ensuring that interviews are conducted ethically is paramount in any research endeavour, and procedures will be followed with the utmost respect for interviewees. A vital element of this process is transparent communication, in which the interviewer directly informs the participant about the intended audio recording. In cases where a person refuses to consent to recording, an alternative approach will be taken, which involves comprehensively documenting the information in writing.

In the latter scenario, the collected data would be anonymized and catalogued in a structured format, preserving the confidentiality and privacy of the participants. This structured anonymization will be reflected in the final version, displaying demographic details in a standardized form (Female, 28, teacher). Before any research results publication involving a respondent's identity, an active step will be taken to obtain explicit permission to ensure that the individual is comfortable with the disclosed information.

Supporting documentation will be collected to enhance the transparency and integrity of the interview process. It will include a completed questionnaire from the respondent, including personal details such as first name, last name, date and place of birth, as well as details of the date and place of the interview. The respondent will also receive a signed consent form confirming his consent to using the voiced information in the study context.

The need for such careful documentation arises from the intention of facilitating the integration of these materials into scientific work by making them accessible to a broader public. Additionally, this practice confirms the accuracy of information by offering a verifiable source for citation and reference within scientific discourse.

As a sign of openness and accessibility, the interviewer provides the respondent with their contact information, whether in the form of a phone number or a social media URL. This provision is intended to allow the interviewee to communicate any preferences, suggestions or considerations after the interview regarding the use of general information. Additionally, this open line of communication allows respondents to approach the interviewer with new ideas or additional information that may have emerged since the initial interview.

Essentially, these careful ethical protocols protect interviewees' rights and privacy and enhance the research endeavour's credibility and reliability by promoting a relationship of trust and transparency between the interviewer and participants.

**Table 2: Methodology matrix**

<b>Research task</b>	<b>Methodology</b>	<b>Primary data collection method</b>
To develop the working definitions of city marketing and city marketing strategy;	Theoretical literature review Content analysis Word cloud creation	
To analyse, through a comprehensive basis of scientific sources, the current place and role of city marketing in urban governance.	Literature review System analysis	Observation
To analyse city marketing strategies in selected cities and, based on that, identify the main blocks and interconnections of the benchmark marketing strategy.	Descriptive comparative analysis Content analysis	
To develop strategic marketing decisions for the main challenges of the case study city.	Deductive reasoning Content analysis Statistical observation	Semi-structured in-depth interviews Closed-ended questionnaire

Source: own elaboration

### **3. CHAPTER III: LITERATURE REVIEW AND DEFINITION OF TERMS**

#### **3.1. CITY MARKETING AS A THEORETICAL CONCEPT**

A high number of studies and publications is devoted to the question of territorial marketing, in particular, the works of Kotler P., Asplund C., Rein I. and Haider D., Ashworth G. J. and Voogd H., Braun E., Kavartzis M., K. Dinnie, Pankruhin A., Vizgalov D., Ward S. V., Boisen M., Piskóti I., and Nagy S., Stanciulescu G. C., Tózsá I., Avraham E., and Ketter E., Moilanen T. and Rainisto S., Vuignier R. are considered to be foundational for this research.

Foremost, several existing terms relatively project the same idea: “place marketing” (Metaxas, 2010; Olga Rauhut Kompaniets, 2018; Piskóti & Nagy, 2007; Vuignier, 2016), “city marketing” (Araújo de Azevedo, 2011; Braun, 2008; Brizotti-Pasquotto et al., 2014; Chigora & Hoque, 2018; Deffner & Liouris, 2005; Kavartzis, 2008; Rivas, 2018) and “urban marketing” (Alexa, 2010; Asprogerakas, 2007; Stanciulescu, 2009; Tózsá, 2011, 2019). The first one includes not only cities but a variety of territories, from villages to countries and regions (Vuignier, 2016). Therefore, it has a broader meaning and includes the latter two synonyms. As a target customer, groups of rural and urban localities are different; the decision was to separate and specify the approaches to the marketing strategies of each.

The practical application of city marketing traces its roots to the XIX century (Ward, 1998). It was during that period that the visual identity of New York was created. Since then, the success story of “I Love NY” became one of the most prominent examples in scientific literature.

Martin Boisen raised the question of a theoretical duality of city marketing, as its concept is considered by scientists and practitioners in two different ways: “A scientist looks at city marketing as a specific way in which cities react to a perceived state of inter-urban competition, whereas a practitioner looks at city marketing as a specific tool-box from which specific managerial practices can be employed” (Boisen, 2007). Herewith, it is to be noted that we will focus on both approaches.

To analyse the theoretical framework chronologically, we should start with the work of “Broadening the Concept of Marketing” by Kotler and Levy (1969), who created the very first

theoretical notion of place marketing. They also proposed to apply the marketing concept to non-business entities, but conceptual frames were not identified.

Philip Kotler, widely known as “the father of marketing”, continued his research in the field of place marketing and, in collaboration with Rein I. and Haider D. (1993), was among the first to introduce the concept, where the citizens of the modern world became consumers, and territories (cities, regions countries) products. Their work is based on the idea of the commodification of the settlements. Nevertheless, this approach was severely criticized by S. Anholt (cited in Hospers, 2009).

Although, the opposite opinion that cities are not products is discussed by Alberto Vanolo (2020). The author challenges the idea that cities can be considered as special kinds of products in need of specific branding techniques. Vanolo reflects critically on city branding and its relationship with urban geography, arguing that cities should not be viewed as commodities requiring marketing strategies akin to products. The manuscript delves into the complexities of urban identity, the commodification of cities, and the boundaries between branding and urban geography, suggesting that cities are fundamentally different from products in their essence and should not be treated as such in marketing practices.

The term “city marketing” appeared in European scientific literature in the 1990s. It was defined as an activity aimed at ensuring the balance between urban services and the demand for them by the population, business companies, tourists, and other city visitors (target groups). In 1990, the fundamental work of G. Ashworth and Jan Hendrik Voogd, “Selling the City: Marketing Approaches in Public Sector Urban Planning”, was published, the authors of which focused on European cities’ development and promotion goals. In 1992, J. van der Meer published the book “The Role of City Marketing in Urban Management”, in which the city is considered a product offered to the target groups.

Above-mentioned Ashworth and Voogd stated that city marketing involved establishing strong relationships between producers and consumers aimed at improving the social and economic performance of a city (Ashworth & Voogd, 1988). Over time, the concept of city marketing has expanded beyond traditional approaches to city planning, with emphasis placed on strengthening the market position of cities in activities such as attracting business investment and improving the efficiency of services.



After the place marketing concept became popularised, many cities implemented it into their strategic plans and/or policies. In most cases, the concept was narrowed to the place branding, and consequently, promotion activities, as a rule, had one goal – city brand awareness. However, its reach goes far beyond that and consists of economic, social, and infrastructural dimensions. Moreover, those activities were primarily oriented toward visitors (tourists), who represent only a tiny part of the city's stakeholders (and the least profitable one) (Tózsza, 2011). (Potential) residents, business companies, and investors were usually left behind.

According to Chigora and Hoque, the concept is based on a coordinated marketing approach used by different city managers to promote cities as tourist destinations (Chigora & Hoque, 2018). The process should involve situational analysis, cooperation between cities and the use of various marketing activities to improve the city's image and attract visitors. These collaborative efforts typically include the provision of financial resources and the development of capacity and infrastructure for effective city marketing campaigns.

The fundamental work of Erik Braun, "City Marketing: Towards an Integrated Approach", outlines the theoretical frames of city marketing (Braun, 2008). The main idea of the work is to show through numerous examples that effective city marketing as a process is very systematic and involves an integrated approach. The author raises the problem of distinguishing the terms between the prosperous cities with good names and the cities with bright industrial pasts now suffering from an economic downturn.

According to Erik Braun, "the core idea of marketing is to think in terms of wants and needs of the (potential) customers" (Braun, 2008). Thus, the philosophy of the work foregrounds the societal marketing concept based on city marketing; it can be called customer-oriented. Therefore, it is not only about infrastructure, urban planning, or economic development but also about people, their needs and demands. The striking example is the main difference between the goals of a business marketing strategy and the urban one. In the first case, companies see the result in terms of profit; in the second case, it is well-being.

Local authorities' leading role in city marketing is coordinating the actors and keeping them updated on the strategy implementation and results. Furthermore, those activities should be held on a legal basis granted by the municipality (Boisen, 2007).

In the Netherlands, city marketing is seen as a strategic tool to increase the political relevance of analytical activities and redefine the understanding of complex city operations, potentially

introducing a new paradigm for urban management (Ashworth & Voogd, 1988). The adoption of city marketing strategies is increasingly recognized as a tool for initiating processes that increase the relative market position of cities, with a focus on specific planning measures aimed at stimulating urban development and increasing regional competitiveness.

It is crucial to mention competence marketing, which was introduced in the framework of settlement and regional marketing by István Piskóti and Szabolcs Nagy (2007). The theory's main point is that all marketing activities should be based on the most substantial competencies of the settlement. Keeping in mind that marketing is a process of balancing supply and demand, the task of the place (in our case, the city) is to meet the buyers' demand by utilising its resources and competencies. To understand the best competencies of the city, their audit will be the highest priority. There are value-, image-, target group-, competitor- and activity audits, in which cumulative results and experts' conclusions will highlight which competencies are to be promoted and sold, the means of communication with the customers and areas to improve.

Moreover, Piskóti and Nagy applied the 4Ps model to place marketing and stated that the 2Ps model could be used instead of the 4Ps: product (territory) + promotion (communication activities). The other two "Ps" cannot be adapted, as the "place" of our product is impossible to change and the "price" is too narrow a concept for the city as a product.

The work "City Marketing: A Significant Planning Tool for Urban Development in a Globalised Economy" by Alex Deffner and Christos Liouris considers city marketing as a tool for the city's product promotion and development. It states that in some situations, image, "a simplification of a large number of pieces of information", becomes more crucial than reality (Deffner & Liouris, 2005). It can be seen through the examples of the cities with "great heritage potential" but which find themselves much less successful than their peers with rationally developed marketing strategies. At the same time, Simon Anholt highlighted in his interview for The Guardian that "reputation is a reality with delay" (Adams, 2014), which gives us room for heated discussion, whether image and reputation are artificial and "varnished" or, despite everything, they are always formed under the flow of actual events.

To create an operational definition of city marketing, we took six definitions from different scholars' theoretical works and arranged them chronologically (Table 3). Hungarian, Dutch, Russian, American, and Greek schools are represented. The earliest of the presented definitions was given in 2007.

We use exclusively “city” and “urban” marketing definitions. Definitions of “place” and “territorial” marketing are considered to not be applicable in this case since they cover a wide range of settlements (from village to country), which vary from each other from the point of view of regulations, population, budget, target audiences, strategical approach.

**Table 3: Definition of city marketing by different scholars**

The definition	The author	The publication title and year
City marketing, in operational terms, refers to the conscious attempts to position a city and <u>increase the city’s competitive advantage</u> in relation to competing cities – with the explicit purpose of fulfilling specific ambitions of gaining shares of specific segments of the market through <u>strategic initiatives</u> .	Martin Boisen	The Strategic Application of City Marketing to Middle-Sized Cities (2007)
City marketing is the coordinated use of marketing tools supported by a shared <u>customer-oriented philosophy</u> , for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging urban offerings that have value for the city’s customers and the city’s community at large.	Erik Braun	City Marketing: Towards an Integrated Approach (2008)
City marketing is a set of actions of the urban community aimed at <u>identifying and promoting their interests</u> to fulfil specific tasks of the <u>social and economic development</u> of the city (translated from Russian).	Denis Vizgalov	City Marketing/Маркетинг города (2008)
City marketing is defined as the designing of a city <u>to satisfy the needs of its target markets</u> . It succeeds when <u>citizens and businesses are pleased</u> with their community and the expectations of visitors and investors are met.	Mila Gascó-Hernández Teresa Torres-Coronas	Information Communication Technologies and City Marketing: Digital Opportunities for Cities Around the World (2009)
Urban marketing is establishing a <u>strategic (operational) programme</u> to reveal the <u>comparative advantages</u> of a region or a settlement and to communicate them towards the consumers (buyers).	István Tózsa	City on Sale: an Introduction to Urban and Regional Marketing (2011)

<p>City marketing is a <u>strategic procedure</u> which is considered <u>successful</u> when two main goals are achieved/are satisfied:</p> <p>a) achievement of the development goals as set by this procedure</p> <p>b) <u>meet the expectations and demands of the market targets</u> each city sets in order to be attractive for investors, visitors and citizens etc.</p>	<p>Theodore Metaxas</p>	<p>From city marketing to museum marketing and opposed (2013)</p>
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Source: own elaboration

A word cloud was created to have a clearer vision of the definitions above (Figure 7). In the creating process, the prepositions, articles, conjunctions, and different verb “to be” forms were removed from the definitions as they are not sense-bearing words. The online tool <https://worditout.com> was used for word cloud creation.



*Figure 7: The construction of a Word Cloud according to the word-usage frequency in the analysed definitions of the city marketing*  
Source: own elaboration

All the given definitions have emphasized the strategic nature of city marketing (“strategic initiatives”, “social and economic development”, “designing of a city”, “strategic (operational) programme”, “strategic procedure”). Moreover, they can be divided into two groups: competition-oriented and customer-oriented. The first group includes the definitions of M. Boisen and I. Tózsá, which mention competitive and comparative advantages that present the neo-liberal economic paradigm. The definitions also point out the economic background of the

scholars. Having a customer-centric view, the second group brings attention to the needs and demands of the city's stakeholders and potential customers, namely to their satisfaction.

The author proposes the following operational definition based on the conducted analysis:

**City marketing is a long-term strategic activity aimed at the operation and development of the city according to its (potential) market's demands, stakeholders' wants and needs, and competitive environment.**

In the analysis process, it was observed that the studied definitions could be separated into two groups: competition-oriented and customer-oriented. The author used features of both in the operational definition. It has been emphasized that city marketing is, first of all, a strategic activity that needs time. Secondly, it cannot exist without considering its market's demands. Thirdly, the municipality should always be aware of the competitors so as not to miss the flow of necessary human and economic resources.

City marketing has been a direct result of inter-settlement competition and attempts to strategically occupy the leading positions in the region (Boisen, 2007). The world is developing dynamically, and to some extent, distance is no longer a problem or a reason for the producer or the workforce. Even if a company's headquarters is located in the heart of Europe, its factory can be easily built in the far East of Eurasia, reasoned by the cheap workforce, beneficial taxation policies, and developed logistics. For example, nowadays, brain drain is one of the biggest problems for Ukraine. Many talented and skilled professionals migrated to Western countries before the war started. Considering the strong bond between the Ukrainian people and their families, distance is no longer a barrier. A person focuses on the well-being and development level of a particular settlement. The main reasons for migration are security, high inflation rates, political uncertainty, and economic instability.

Therefore, the great "battle" for the young workforce has started for cities, even though some cities are still unaware.

Nevertheless, the author supports the idea of cooperation rather than competition, which raises a new question for researchers: is cooperation among cities possible within the framework of city marketing or is competition only feasible?

In the context of the literature review, it is impossible not to consider the ideas developed by the author of the first textbook on the topic of nation branding, “Nation Branding – Concepts, Issues, Practice”, Keith Dinnie. The state brand equity model is a conceptual model of a national brand that entails a collection of brand assets connected to its name and symbol (Dinnie, 2008).

According to this idea, the state’s brand equity comprises internal and external assets. Landscape and culture are examples of innate assets, and acquired assets are internal counter-purchases, art support, and loyalty. K. Dinnie highlights assets evaluated via the experience of others (perception of the country’s image, image of the country in foreign popular culture) and dispersed assets when referring to external assets (national brand ambassadors, diaspora, exports).

The national brand’s architecture, according to this model, is divided into three levels: the actual umbrella national brand; the brands it defines in specific industries (tourism, exports, domestic investment, politics and culture, attracting qualified specialists, sports); and independent brands at the level of regions, cities, specific national goods and services, and cultural and educational institutions. According to this idea, the national brand influences tourism and is part of its umbrella structure, whereas the brand of a more localized territory (region, city) is a relatively independent branding object. In addition, there is a strong relationship between the national brand and the regional brand architecture.

Another of K. Dinnie’s ideas is the ICON model. Although it is important to note that this model was initially offered as the foundation for nation branding, the ICON model (Figure 8) offers tools for place-branding professionals to think through their city branding efforts and apply them over long-term periods (Dinnie, 2015). The concept contends that adopting an integrated, contextualized, organic, and unique approach defines best practices for place branding.

An integrated approach to territory branding involves a high level of inter-agency cooperation and joint programs of the public and private sectors.



Figure 8: the ICON model by K. Dinnie (2015)

Place branding should be contextualised instead of being compelled to follow a rigid, planned pattern. The values of stakeholders should guide the development of the municipal brand. The organic component of place branding suggests that decision-makers must acknowledge that place brands evolve not just due to intentional manipulation by official authorities but also in unanticipated and unplanned ways outside their control.

The place brand should incorporate new elements, whether concrete evidence like the reconstruction of the urban environment or symbolic elements like the development of storytelling about the location and its identity. This is reflected in the ICON model's fourth and final dimension.

To successfully integrate marketing into the activities of the city council and optimize public administration, it is necessary to use the principles of strategic marketing and innovative methodologies. Based on the ideas presented by Olivier Serrat in "Marketing in the Public Sector" (Serrat, 2010), there are several key strategies for effective implementation:

A fundamental step involves the recognition and implementation of various forms of marketing, including product/service marketing, social marketing, political marketing and demarketing, as described by Judith Madill. Using a strategic marketing approach is vital to meeting challenges

such as meeting mandates, meeting stakeholder expectations and achieving revenue targets in a resource-constrained environment. Investment in targeted marketing training is needed to equip public sector staff with the necessary skills.

Integrated marketing strategies that address all aspects of the marketing mix – product, place, price, and promotion – are essential. Aligning marketing initiatives with the overall goals of the organization increases accountability across all operations. The use of relational capital and relationship marketing can overcome resistance to marketing in the public sector by emphasizing its strategic importance.

To counteract negative perceptions of public domain marketing, it is critical to highlight its role in meeting citizen needs and delivering tangible value. By incorporating these strategies, a city council can revolutionize its public administration, facilitating the successful implementation of city marketing and improving its overall competitiveness.

To sum it all up, the objectives and goals of city marketing involve enhancing a city's competitiveness, attracting investment, promoting tourism, and building a positive image to drive economic development and quality of life. City marketing aims to differentiate cities from competitors, showcase unique offerings, create brand identity, and attract visitors, investors, and businesses. The goals include improving the city's reputation, generating economic growth, increasing tourism revenue, promoting innovation, and fostering social cohesion (Rivas, 2018). City marketing strategies are designed to enhance the overall performance of a city by leveraging its strengths, attracting global players, ensuring security and transparency, and capitalizing on the power of the city brand (Araújo de Azevedo, 2011).

The core idea of city marketing revolves around the concept of creating a close and permanent relationship between the producers and consumers of urban activities. Essentially, city marketing involves aligning urban actions with the demands of targeted customers to ensure the efficient social and economic functioning of the area. This process aims to establish a connection between the supply and demand sides, requiring a deep understanding of both the spatial and organizational structures, the characteristics of the urban product, and the needs of the users as consumers. City marketing efforts focus on developing this relationship through a strategic approach that incorporates elements such as product positioning, the marketing mix, financial measures, organizational measures, promotional measures, and spatio-functional measures.



### 3.2. CITY IMAGE

For this research, the concept of “image-making” is fundamental and has psychological roots. It is believed that the concept of “image” was introduced into scientific use by Sigmund Freud (30s of the XX century), who published a journal of the same name. Over time, “image” became more than a psychological term. In the 1960s, the American economist K. Baldwin introduced the term “image” into business and then into everyday use (Ихсангалиева, 2020, p. 116).

In Ukraine, the concept of “image” became widely used in the 1990s. There was a demand for professional image creation for artists, athletes and politicians. Image as a form of reflection of the material world and social reality in the human mind existed at different stages of the development of society. However, the science of image (imagology) appeared only when information and communication (especially telecommunication) technologies took a leading place in the formation of public opinion. Imagology is the science of building an image. This discipline is characterized as scientific and applied, which arises at the intersection of psychology, sociology, philosophy, cultural studies and many other sciences. Imagology studies the formation, functionality and management patterns of the image of a person, territory, object, phenomenon, or service. Thus, imagology is a set of knowledge and techniques for creating a controlled image of an object, the science of effective management of the object’s image (Квешко & Квешко, 2008).

The psychological conditionality of imagology is expressed in the need of an individual or a particular group for self-realization, self-affirmation and self-esteem. When the image mismatches the expectations, it becomes a serious obstacle to achieving a goal or establishing a relationship. This applies not only to human beings but also to territories.

S. Naumova, in her manual “Imagology”, offers a detailed description of the image. According to the researcher, the image is the result of typification (Наумова, 2004). Typification is an integral part of everyday communication practice, in which complex and multifaceted phenomena are constantly reduced to simplified types. According to S. Naumova, an image is a stereotype, a brief characteristic of someone or something, regardless of whether it is formed spontaneously or results from purposeful image-making activities. Image as a type always differs from the type of an actual image owner (Наумова, 2004).

The image is an element of the symbolic world created in the process of typification, as mentioned before. The world is perceived and defined by people through a system of symbols.

Things, people, natural objects, processes and events are engraved in the mind with the help of symbols (for example, “Iron Lady”, “Casanova”, “Paradise on Earth”). The image must be considered in inseparable unity with the factor of communication. Image is a mediator between its owner and the perceiving person. Conscious image management is always designed for some purpose of image-making for the message’s sender (Наумова, 2004).

Image-making is a scientific and practical branch of imagology and is a set of methods and techniques, elements and operations designed to implement the task of creating the image of the object (person, territory, phenomenon, service). Some scholars argue that calling image-making technology “communicative” is wrong. They justify this by the fact that when creating the image of an object or territory, the specialist deals with an inanimate object and interacts not with it but with the audience. Nevertheless, if we talk about communication as a connection of any objects (people, phenomena), then in this sense, image-making is communication technology.

Then, as noted by S. Naumova, the elements of image-making include the following subjects:

- 1) recipients receive image-making messages;
- 2) inductors (senders) are a source of image-making messages;
- 3) image owners/carriers in relation to whom the image is created.

The carrier of the image is, at the same time, an inducer. Consciously or subconsciously, it sends information about itself. However, image-makers and all interested parties act as inducers: competitors, partners, and friends (Наумова, 2004).

For our study, it is essential to determine the subject of image-making. In imagology, as in any other science, the term “subject” refers to something that can be changed or reformed. In imagology, such a subject is the image of an object (person, territory, organization) created through thought about the object’s image. Thus, when creating the image of the territory, the subject of image-making is the image of this place, and the object of image-making is a group of people who, thanks to the image-maker, form a specific opinion about the prototype of the image. There may be several objects during image-making. Aimed action directed at the subject of image-making has to present the audience with the subject’s image in the best light (the ethics of image-making does not allow the image-maker to report on such characteristics of the prototype, which it does not possess, but it does not forbid to hide any information unless it is asked or whether the law requires its representation).

In this work, we consider the image of the city to be an integral part of marketing activities. They are based on and work for it. We will not reinvent the wheel because many works are devoted to the concept of the image of the city, its definition and its constituting parts. Therefore, it was decided not to create the operational definition for this term.

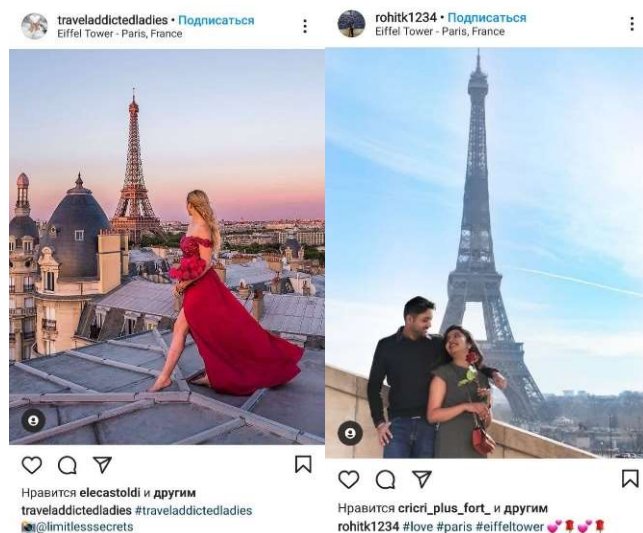
Dr István Piskóti and Dr Szabolcs Nagy reckon that a particular target group's decision-making process depends on the city's image and the degree of trust (Piskóti & Nagy, 2008). The decision may concern the choice of a destination city for the weekend or even the relocation. Therefore, they call the image the "determining factor in the success of a city" and the "basic appearance of the place-product", and it is difficult to object to that. Since a settlement is not analogous to an ordinary material product, a city for a marketer is an accumulation of services, objects, impressions and emotions that a user can get when interacting with a city as a product. It is pertinent to refer to the scholars mentioned earlier that a person's decision to "buy" a city as a tourist, resident or investor will be based on belief in the success and expected results after the interaction. For example, a user sees on social networks stories (the story is a feature that allows users to share photos, videos, and other content that disappears after 24 hours) of his/her friends about their trip to Budapest: beautiful photographs, the positive emotions of travellers, mouth-watering dishes. A person desires to feel and see the same things, so he/she has some expectations about this place.

As part of the work with the city image, some researchers believe that the main difference between the image of the territory and the product is precisely the following: in the first case, actions speak much louder than words (Choi He-suk, 2011). It is not enough for urban marketers to broadcast the message across all the channels that a place is outstanding; it must be outstanding in real life. Instead, the marketer's task is to carry out an examination that results in a SWOT analysis. Firstly, it is crucial to bring the city's strengths to the fore, which Kotler et al. classify as one of the four main place marketing activities: "communicating the place's image to create awareness of the place's distinctive advantage" (1993). Secondly, hide the weaknesses in the background. To be even more precise in statements, the weaknesses should not just be disguised and moved behind the scenes; they should be paid attention to, and work on them should start immediately. As S. Anholt aptly notes, "What advertising and marketing cannot ever do is to make a bad city look good: once again, that is propaganda, not brand management, and it is as wasteful as it is ineffectual" (Anholt, 2007, p. 62). In other words, urban marketing is not only a communication activity but also a thorough work on mistakes in various urban fields, from urban design to the work of the city administration.

Furthermore, since we are talking about urban design, it is impossible not to mention the work of Lynch, “The Image of the City”, in which he says that if there are no places in the city to take pictures, or in more modern language, which we would like to post on social networks, it will be challenging to promote the image of this place (Hospers, 2009). The image of the city, according to Lynch, is primarily a visual representation of it in the human mind. Urry’s work supports this research. He believes that people go on journeys to find places different from the environment in which they live (e.g., the desire to live at sea or in the mountains). A suitable remark in this context can relate to working with target groups, namely that promoting a city for tourism should be directed to residents of those cities and countries for which something will be a new experience when travelling to a settlement.

People tend to be part of a beautiful picture to show they have been here. One of the most photographed objects in the world is the Eiffel Tower in Paris. In addition to a desire to check-in in Paris, people also try to adopt the characteristics of the place, which Paris broadcasts, with the help of photographs: romance, luxury and beauty (Figure 9).





*Figure 9: Publications of various users on Instagram with “Eiffel Tower” geotag*

*Source: Instagram*

In an article on correcting the negative image of the community, Z. Ahmed writes that the final image of a destination is formed in a tourist’s mind through two processes – organic and induced (modelled) (Ahmed, 1991). The organic process involves friends, acquaintances, social networks, and mass media recommendations. In other words, these communication channels are not influenced by marketers promoting the place. At the same time, there is an induced process consisting of activities and materials that have been created as part of the work on a positive image. It is important to note that people with different backgrounds use entirely different sources of information, which must be considered in strategic planning.

Also, in this context, it is worth quoting Z. Ahmed: “What tourists think about a destination’s image is strategically more important than what a marketer knows about the destination” (Ahmed, 1991). This quote again emphasizes the need to study and research the perception of the place by target groups, which are a priority within a particular marketing campaign. Ideally, the work should be carried out with all target groups and be long-term, but it depends on the campaign budget.

Image audit is a crucial stage of strategic planning. There is a need to understand how the settlement appears in the eyes of different target groups, both internal (residents) and external (tourists, potential residents). A pretty controversial point: what image is easier to work with, with a negative or with a neutral one (lack of it)? Let us consider that this is more a question for practitioners and a new field for research within the framework of city image, branding and marketing.

It is worth remembering the importance of comparative analysis of the image of the settlement with competitive ones since it is pretty tricky to offer a unique service or product without being aware of the situation on the market. Most often, cities with similar populations and/or capital status located in geographical proximity are competitors to each other. For example, the competitors of the Hungarian capital, Budapest, are Warsaw, Prague, Vienna, and Bratislava.

### **3.3. CITY MARKETING VERSUS CITY BRANDING**

M. Kavaratzis and G.J. Ashworth talk about the shift from city marketing to city branding not only due to the great success of product branding but also due to the rapidly evolving concept of corporate branding (Kavaratzis & Ashworth, 2005). They state that marketing directly works with creating and communicating a city image, which is the starting point for place branding. Territorial marketing for them is primarily about working with people, focusing on the consumer, or doing “business from the consumer’s viewpoint”. On the other hand, branding works with consumers’ mental images without losing sight of brand awareness and brand loyalty. Based on people’s perception of the city, a strategy is developed for the formation of the city’s future, creating added values in an attempt to influence the mental maps of the audience in the manner necessary for the settlement. All the same, arguments can be found in M. Kavaratzis’s dissertation “From City Marketing to City Branding”, published three years later (Kavaratzis, 2008). It states that the objective of urban marketing is brand management.

In his master’s thesis, M. Boisen considers branding as one of the marketing techniques, components, elements, and aspects (Boisen, 2007). The researcher devotes paragraphs of the work to explaining the difference between city marketing and branding. According to him, branding focuses on creating a brand, a symbol that will communicate specific values of a place to a mass audience (as opposed to marketing, where segmentation usually takes place), which is subsequently formed into a slogan and logo. In marketing, a brand refers to the image of a city, which exists exclusively at the level of subjective perception of the audience. Boisen also emphasizes that if branding is more about communication and promotion, marketing includes “real change in services, planning and administration”.

Concluding the latter, M. Boisen considers branding a tool of communication work with the image of a settlement, while G. J. Ashworth and M. Kavaratzis attribute this function to marketing.

Renaud Vuignier describes the distinction between marketing and branding by reminding us that branding is part of marketing according to the classical definition (Vuignier, 2016). Branding refers to the brand management process. Moreover, branding always turns to marketing activities, especially at the implementation stage. He also notes that place marketing and branding have recently increasingly become interchangeable in the scientific literature, which cannot be considered the correct answer to this riddle. He quotes Erik Braun, who says, “Branding is seen as the next step or the ultimate objective” of marketing.

In their article, S. Zenker and E. Braun say that in the 2010s, place branding began supplanting place marketing to form positive associations in the minds of target groups (Zenker & Braun, 2017). They also point out that stakeholder management is a significant part of place branding since, usually, when it comes to a city, it is necessary to orchestrate not only one brand but many. These include brands of companies associated with the settlement and located there, brands of landmarks, museums, and theatres.

At the same time, L. Ye and E. Björner, in their work on city branding in Chinese megacities, note, while citing M. Kavaratzis, that branding differs from marketing in that it focuses more on strategic planning (Ye & Björner, 2018). The author of this dissertation disagrees with this interpretation since both directions are based on long-term planning, and without them, they are ineffective. Short-term marketing or branding activities will not bring the desired result, and therefore, in this case, we consider it inappropriate to contemplate what is more strategic.

In his dissertation, Y. Jiyoung argues that, unlike city branding, city marketing does not have a holistic approach (Jiyoung, pp. 17–18). After such a statement, one should turn to the fundamental work of Erik Braun, “City Marketing: Towards an Integrated Approach”, which precisely describes the opposite and thereby refutes this argument. Y. Jiyoung does not stop at this point and continues that marketing is exclusively focused on promoting the city as a product and has nothing to do with the image and identity of the settlement. Marketing planning activity is nothing but based on it. The work of Hungarian scientists also supports this argument: I. Piskóti and S. Nagy “Identity and Image in the City Marketing”. Another argument, which is impossible to agree with, is that “marketing strategy expects direct profits by focusing on consumption and sales of a product, branding strategy focuses more on constant communication with its customers” (Jiyoung, 2010, p. 17). In other words, the author is trying to tell us that the marketing strategy is focused on selling and neglects communication with consumers. In this work, we have repeatedly emphasized that urban marketing is based on two-way

communication with its target groups; in the absence of it, all marketing activities are called into question.

Another valuable work that compares and differentiates city promotion, city marketing and city branding was published in 2021 (Ma et al., 2021). It compares 23 Chinese cities to find some correlations between city size and their predominant industry to the approach used. The authors characterize city promotion with a city logo, slogan, promo videos and materials, websites, and media platforms. In contrast, city marketing is about policies and measures to reduce business costs and attract talent and companies. City branding includes indicators like professional city branding websites, organizations and departments, policy documentation, detailed strategy, experts' and stakeholders' involvement in the branding processes (collecting ideas and voting) and professional events like forums, conferences, and mega-events. According to the study, urban size matters if we talk about three approaches. Smaller cities with a predominant industrial sector tend to act in the framework of city promotion, which the limited budget can explain. At the same time, megacities with a dominant tertiary sector focus on developing city branding strategies.

**Table 4. Comparison of city marketing and city branding characteristics**

City Marketing	City Branding
Segmentation	Mass audience
Consumer-oriented	Consumer mental image-oriented
Service, planning, administration	Communication and promotion
Event-management	Mega event-management
Small- and middle-sized cities	Mega and tertiary dominant sector cities

Source: own elaboration

After analysing the literature and several cases, the author concluded that successful branding is impossible without a solid foundation, which marketing must lay. Branding and marketing strategies can exist in parallel and be a single whole, but in the end, they continually pursue the same goal of the settlement's prosperity. A branding strategy alone will not bring the desired



results since it is hard enough to work with mental maps and perceptions without trying to improve reality administratively.

In this study, the author believes branding is a part of marketing and its logical continuation. Marketing strategies work to improve the city's image by trying to translate the needs of target audiences into reality. In contrast, branding strategies work to build a brand, to ensure that the audience gives value to the city's attributes at the moment, sees the best of it, appreciates improvements, remains loyal, and ideally shares these experiences with others, thus improving their brand awareness.

### **3.4. TARGET AUDIENCES OF THE CITY IN THE FRAMEWORK OF CITY MARKETING**

As mentioned above, city marketing is located in the centre of the concept, not the city itself, as might be expected. More essential figures are customers (target groups and stakeholders). The city's stakeholders are the residents, the government, and the business. In other words, the stakeholders are the entity's members, whose support and activities make it functional and who are "affected by or can affect the achievement of an organization's objectives" (Freeman & Reed, 1983). Therefore, without them, an entity ceases to exist. The aim of city marketing is completed when all the stakeholders' expectations correspond with the reality of the city's social and economic environment. It is crucially important to set objectives for the city's development which stakeholders support. This support is vital for the long-term success of the strategy.

From another point of view, not every stakeholder is competent enough regarding strategic management or urban development issues and, therefore, cannot effectively influence the process. This approach can be equal to a national vote. It is fair enough to state that the majority of society is not educated in political and social sciences, but it does not give ground to deprive them of a voting right. It is an archaic way of thinking and has nothing in common with today's civic engagement and breakthrough in the equality of humans.

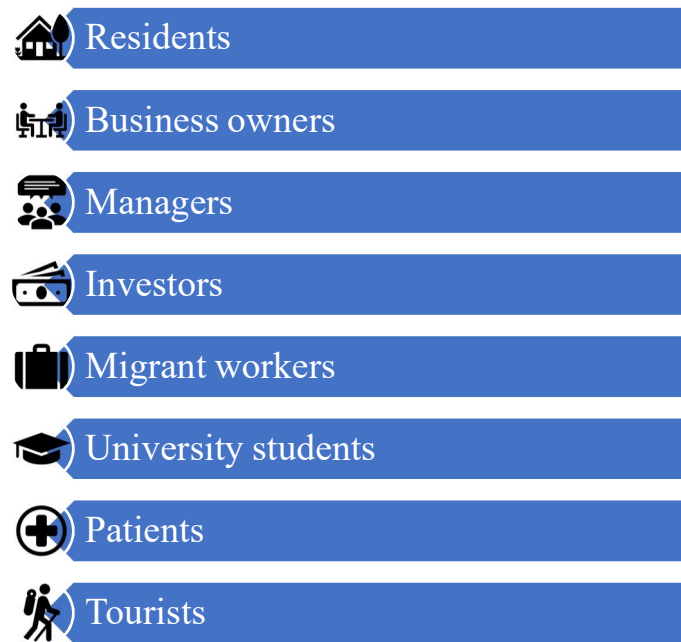
Target groups can also be addressed with another marketing term – "consumers" (who use the services provided by the city), and the stakeholders may correspond with the term "prosumers". The idea of "prosumption" was introduced by Toffler in his work "The Third Wave" (Toffler,

1980), where he describes the process in which the product is produced and consumed by the same actors in early societies (the First Wave). In the Second Wave, during industrialization, people turned into consumers who spent their income buying the products produced at the factories. The Third Wave combines the features of both types, as these days' people install solar batteries to satisfy their energetic needs, write blogs and record videos, post them on social networks and act as a source of information, meanwhile being readers and subscribers of the content produced by others. The example mentioned above closely relates to city marketing, as every local or tourist turns into a prosumer of the settlement while posting pictures and/or referencing it.

Nowadays, many companies try to turn their consumers into prosumers. Namely, the customers who share their experiences about the product usage or actively participate in creating a new product can be called prosumers.

The most detailed classification of the city marketing target groups is proposed by I. Tózsá (2011) (Figure 10). They include the local population, managers (operators), investors, migrant workers, university students, patients, and tourists. It is essential to mention that the priority principle structures the order of groups presented above. The local population is always the first to satisfy, as they are an inevitable part of the city's competencies.

The communication process explains that managers occupy a higher position than investors. The managers are the people who work as "filters" for the decision-makers. Their subjective perception of the place undoubtedly influences the report and presentation of the location to the investor.



*Figure 10: The target audiences in city marketing*

*Source: own elaboration*

A paramount task of city marketing is to create a favourable and loyal image of the settlement among its target audiences. The notion of the image seems vague and ambiguous in scientific literature. It is very complex in its definition, and many factors influence its formation: infrastructure, society, local government work, tourist sights, and accessibility. However, what about the city's image among people who have never visited it? In this case, we refer to reflecting reality as pictures in people's minds – specific ideas, associations, and beliefs about the city collected through various channels of communication and information dissemination (personal conversations, news, movies, social media, literature). It is called an external image.

Nevertheless, it is impossible to create an image divorced from reality among people who live in the city (internal image). They see real problems from the inside and have their own experiences that cannot be changed through a couple of positive media stories. It is not enough to create a particular “message” for them. Only real profound changes in the living environment can cause image improvement. Residents are an inevitable part of the settlement, together with business actors and representatives of local administration. Therefore, we call them not only target audiences but also stakeholders.

In this work, we will operate the following target audiences of the city:

- 1) **Local population** (residents, locals, citizens): people who permanently reside in the settlement, usually work and pay taxes (does not refer to the underaged and elderly population). The author would like to raise the question of further research on whether the matter of not paying taxes excludes houseless people (commonly referred to as “homeless”) from the “local” group. In this study, we will not do that, guided by the concept of the “Right to the city” of H. Lefebvre(Lefebvre, 1967). Some practitioners also distinguish between low-cost and high-cost residents: low-cost residents are those who provide a net profit for public revenues, and high-cost residents consume more social services than they pay in taxes and fees for using public services.
- 2) **Business owners**: mostly residents who have officially registered enterprises in the city and pay taxes.
- 3) **Investors**: can be city locals or outsiders interested in a range of investment capabilities, e.g. investing in the development of the settlement and/or its enterprises, buying real property or municipal bonds.
- 4) **Managers** (operators): employees of investors, whose obligations include the collection of information, report preparation, analysis of the prospective investment projects and their evaluation. Managers are essential for the city because their perception of the place and their conclusions directly influence the investor’s decision-making process.
- 5) **Migrant workers**: people who are employed in the city but reside in a different settlement. Usually, this type of worker commutes daily.
- 6) **Students**: people who study at the educational institutions located on the territory of the settlement. Institutions include universities, boarding schools (e.g. sports), vocational training schools, and conservatories.
- 7) **Tourists**: short-term or long-term visitors to the city who reside in another settlement. The purposes of the visit can vary from sightseeing and event attendance to business.
- 8) **Patients**: visitors of the city who arrive for medical treatment or check-ups. This group is significant for places with unique treatment facilities (for example, Budapest is rich in thermal water, and Istanbul and Seoul are famous for plastic surgery facilities).

The different demands of the target audiences explain the importance of thorough market segmentation. Some demands can overlap. For example, each target group is interested in a safe and clean environment.

There are three types of segmentation strategies: concentrated, differentiated and undifferentiated (Ashworth & Voogd, 1988). The first type of strategy concentrates on one

target group. The second one focuses on several groups but has a tailored approach to each. The third one also encompasses more than one target audience; nevertheless, it has a “one size fits all” approach.

### **3.5. CITY MARKETING AS A PART OF THE URBAN GOVERNANCE**

The urban governance involves the organization and delivery of government services within towns and cities, along with the interactions among state agencies, civil society, and various stakeholders (Mirzaei, 2023). In diverse geographical contexts and political systems, urban governance may exhibit variations in terms of structures, processes, and priorities. These differences can stem from factors such as historical background, cultural norms, level of economic development, administrative practices, and regulatory frameworks specific to each region or country.

For example, urban governance in one geographical context may prioritize issues such as sustainable development, social equity, and public participation, while in another context, the focus may be on economic competitiveness, infrastructure development, and attracting investment (Muhammad Ade Kurnia Harahap et al., 2023). Political systems also influence urban governance, with democratic systems emphasizing participation, transparency, and accountability in decision-making processes, while autocratic systems may prioritize centralized control and efficiency in governance (Mirzaei, 2023).

Urban governance embodies the shift from traditional government structures to a broader concept of governing that involves collaboration between various sectors such as public, private, and civil society, emphasizing networks over hierarchical relations (Badach & Dymnicka, 2017). The concept of urban governance has gained significant attention among academics, practitioners, and politicians since the 1990s and has become a global standard advocated for improving the quality of life in urban settlements (Muhammad Ade Kurnia Harahap et al., 2023). Urban governance encompasses principles of collaboration, inclusiveness, transparency, and effective decision-making processes involving various stakeholders to ensure sustainable urban development and address complex urban issues.

There are various models of urban governance, the UN Strategy Guidance Note on Strengthening Urban Governance spotlights four primary models: managerial, corporatist, pro-

growth, and welfare (Roberts, 2023). These models are distinguished by their defining characteristics, policy objectives, style of policy implementation, nature of political interactions, significant public-private collaborations, relationships with the local state, primary contingencies, key tools, subordination patterns, and evaluation criteria.

The publication “Measurability of Good State and Governance II” delves into the theoretical frameworks concerning state governance, tracing the evolution from state-centric governance to good governance (Kaiser, 2017). This evolution has challenged conventional interpretations of state roles and governance practices, leading to the emergence of inclusive, partnership-oriented governance strategies that harness resources from diverse sectors. This transition underscores a move towards a more collaborative and decentralized approach to governance, geared towards addressing contemporary challenges. This state governance transition resonates with urban governance concept as well, or should we say incorporates it.

In the urban governance landscape, various stakeholders take on critical roles and responsibilities, each making a unique contribution to the functioning and development of urban areas (Pierre, 1999). These stakeholders include local governments, citizens, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and private sector enterprises.

Local governments are at the forefront of city government, with significant powers over rulemaking, regulation, funding allocation, and infrastructure development. Their responsibilities include urban planning, government service delivery, community engagement, economic stimulation, and public safety within their jurisdiction.

Citizens, as active participants in city government, exert their influence through participation in decision-making processes, providing feedback, and holding authorities accountable. Their responsibilities extend to participation in local government activities, cooperation with local authorities, contribution to community development initiatives and protection of their rights and interests.

NGOs representing specific interests and promoting social interests play a key role in city governance. They share their experiences, facilitate collaboration among stakeholders, and serve as watchdogs for ensuring accountability and transparency in management practices. Their responsibilities include advocating for social issues, promoting civic engagement, providing services to communities, conducting research, and influencing policy development in urban areas.

Private sector enterprises, including businesses and investors, are an integral part of city governance, driving economic growth, supporting infrastructure development and creating employment opportunities. Their involvement covers investment in city projects, compliance with regulations, promotion of sustainable practices, job creation and collaboration with local authorities to achieve urban development goals.

Urban governance is confronted with a number of challenges and opportunities in the dynamic landscape of rapid urbanization and globalization. As highlighted in the UN Strategy Guidance Note on Strengthening Urban Governance (Roberts, 2023), managing urban growth emerges as a formidable task, necessitating enhanced governance mechanisms to navigate the complexities of urban development. With an increasing proportion of the global population gravitating towards urban centers, the quality of life within cities assumes paramount importance. Among the prominent challenges faced by urban governance are the imperative to ensure universal service provision across sprawling metropolitan regions, particularly in contexts with multiple local government entities. Furthermore, effective management of assets and resources becomes crucial to meet the diverse demands of construction, manufacturing, food, and energy systems inherent in urban environments.

Urban governance operates at the intersection of various disciplines, including urban planning, public policy, and community development, creating dynamic interactions that profoundly influence the structure and functioning of cities. Central to this interaction is the key role of urban governance in organizing and implementing policies and plans thereby shaping the physical, social and economic contours of urban landscapes (Muhammad Ade Kurnia Harahap et al., 2023).

In the field of urban planning, urban governance serves as the guiding force that shapes decision-making processes. City governance systems, including structures, policies, and regulations, have a profound impact on city planning decisions regarding land use, zoning, transportation, housing, parks, and infrastructure. Through effective urban governance, urban planning efforts are directed towards achieving the overarching goals of sustainability, social equity and economic progress.

Similarly, in the realm of public policy, urban governance plays a central role in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of policies at the local level. Policies covering public services, social welfare, environmental protection, economic prosperity and urban regeneration are conceived and adopted within the framework of urban governance. A strong

urban governance system ensures that public policies remain community-focused, transparent in their implementation, and aligned with broader urban development imperatives.

Moreover, urban governance intersects closely with community development, promoting collaboration, participation and empowerment of local communities. Urban governance structures serve as conduits for community participation in decision-making processes, resource allocation, and policy formulation. Community development initiatives, including affordable housing schemes, social welfare programmes and cultural endeavours, often find support and assistance through city government mechanisms.

The emergence of new technologies and data-driven approaches presents substantial and diverse implications for urban governance, marking a pivotal juncture in the evolution of city management and development strategies (Da Cruz et al., 2019). One key implication is the potential impact of the metaverse and other emerging technologies on urban governance, management, and development. While the precise outcomes are not fully known, it is anticipated that technology-driven changes will shape future urban governance strategies. This necessitates careful consideration by public leaders, business leaders, professionals, and various interest groups in shaping sustainable cities. Smart city initiatives are also expected to play a crucial role in the design, construction, and management of cities. As these initiatives gain importance, urban governance strategies, systems, and programs will need to be developed accordingly. Engaging a wide community of interest and implementing effective education and learning measures to encourage smarter citizen behaviour pose challenges for future urban governance.

Connectivity is poised to have an increasing influence on the development of interconnected city systems. As urban areas face challenges related to climate change, pollution, and disease control, there will be a demand for integrated urban governance structures to address these issues.

Urban resilience is as a critical aspect of city management and sustainable development (Da Cruz et al., 2019). Governance mechanisms will need to evolve to facilitate inclusive and participatory processes in the redesign, rehabilitation, and retrofitting of urban infrastructure and settlements, particularly in response to aging cities and the impacts of climate change.

Furthermore, participatory urban governance is expected to gain significance across various urban governance functions. This will add complexity to stakeholder engagement processes and



call for technological advancements to analyze vast amounts of qualitative and quantitative data for decision-making. The inclusion of artificial intelligence (AI) in decision-making processes underscores the need for a balanced approach that prioritizes sustainable urban development outcomes over self-interest groups.

Improving urban governance to effectively address urban challenges and meet the needs of a diverse urban population requires the implementation of a variety of strategies (Martin et al., 2003). The transition to new forms of urban governance has become a prerequisite for overcoming the complexities and dynamics of the current political landscape. One key strategy is to promote participatory governance, which involves encouraging active citizen participation in decision-making processes to promote inclusiveness, transparency and accountability. This ensures that city government remains responsive to the needs and aspirations of the city's diverse population. Additionally, an emphasis on decentralized decision making by devolving power to local governments and communities can lead to more tailored and effective solutions that reflect the unique needs and conditions of different urban areas. Also, increased collaboration and partnerships among public, private, and civil society actors can leverage diverse experiences, resources, and perspectives to comprehensively address complex urban problems.

Prioritizing sustainable and inclusive development is another important strategy that involves integrating principles such as sustainability, equity and social inclusion into urban governance frameworks. This ensures that development initiatives consider the long-term environmental, social and economic impacts on the city's diverse population.

Finally, the use of data-driven approaches and modern technologies can improve decision-making processes, service delivery and promote effective urban management, especially when addressing challenges related to infrastructure development and service delivery.

City marketing plays a crucial role in contributing to various urban governance objectives such as economic development, social cohesion, and environmental sustainability. Here's how city marketing contributes to these key urban governance objectives:

**Economic Development.** City marketing activities aim to promote a city's competitive advantages, attract investments, encourage business development, and stimulate economic growth. By strategically marketing a city's unique characteristics, cultural attractions, and

business opportunities, city marketing can create a favourable environment for economic activities, job creation, and revenue generation.

Marketing concepts and theories can be applied to attract investors (Abamu, 2019; Mai The Cuong, 2005; Metaxas, 2010). In the specific context of attracting foreign direct investment (FDI), understanding the benefits that investors seek from the investment environment is crucial (Thanh Cuong Dang et al., 2023). The government should align its policies to meet the requirements and needs of FDI firms to attract investments successfully. This approach treats investors as customers, highlighting the importance of comprehending their needs.

Factors influencing city image and FDI perception discussed in the thesis “Exploring the Impact of City Image on Foreign Direct Investment Perception: The Case of Dubai” (Bogari, 2018) include government authorities and regulations, environmental stability, lifestyle, multiculturalism, and infrastructure. The political environment, government strategy, economy, society, technological environment, legal structure, and overall environment all play essential roles in impacting the attractiveness of a particular city, affecting FDIs positively or negatively. Furthermore, study explores the positive effect of locality image on attracting FDIs, emphasizing the importance of government support in decision-making processes related to FDIs.

Fundamentally, the attractiveness of a city for FDI contributes to regional development by increasing the capital stock and productive capacity (Metaxas, 2010). FDI can bring multiplier effects such as local procurement of goods and services, local spending on wages and salaries, technology transfers, infrastructure contributions, and improved labour force skills.

In conclusion, based on the analysed literature, the key components to attract FDI to a city are identified as clear positioning statement, promotion strategy and communication programmes. Moreover, identifying key success factors (e.g. using SWOT analysis), comparison of business costs, and analyzing the international production networks, value chain, and Multinational Corporations presence play a significant role in determining the attractiveness of the city for investors and their decision-making process.

**Social Cohesion.** City marketing serves as a vital mechanism for increasing social cohesion in urban settings by promoting civic pride, community participation and a shared sense of belonging among residents. Through the promotion of a city’s cultural heritage, local events and community initiatives, city marketing initiatives contribute to the development of shared

identities and values among diverse population groups (Kavaratzis, 2009). Effective communication strategies used in city marketing campaigns strengthen social connections, build trust among residents and promote inclusivity and civic participation, ultimately contributing to a more cohesive and united society.

The findings of the study, “Branding and Marketing the City as a Business Ecosystem” highlight the critical role of city marketing in strengthening social cohesion by promoting unity and collaboration among different stakeholders (Rivas, 2018). City marketing efforts involve a wide range of city entities, including businesses, start-ups, local innovators, educational institutions, cluster initiatives and technology parks, in a collaborative effort to promote the city as a thriving business ecosystem.

By engaging diverse stakeholders, city marketing campaigns create a platform for communication, storytelling and the exchange of viewpoints, fostering a sense of belonging and shared identity among residents. In addition, city marketing activities that showcase the city’s unique strengths and assets inspire pride and affection among residents, making a significant contribution to social cohesion

**Environmental Sustainability.** City marketing can also support environmental sustainability by promoting eco-friendly practices, green initiatives, and sustainable development projects. By showcasing a city’s commitment to environmental protection, green spaces, clean energy solutions, and sustainable urban planning, city marketing can raise awareness about environmental issues and encourage residents and businesses to adopt sustainable behaviours (Chambwe et al., 2023). Promoting the city as an environmentally conscious and liveable place can attract environmentally conscious residents, businesses, and tourists, contributing to a healthier and more sustainable urban environment.

In summary, city marketing plays a vital role in advancing urban governance objectives by boosting economic development, fostering social cohesion, and promoting environmental sustainability. Through strategic branding, communication, and promotion efforts, city marketing can enhance the overall quality of life, competitiveness, and attractiveness of a city, driving positive outcomes for its residents, businesses, and the environment.

The most challenging aspect in the development of city marketing strategies is the need for cities to understand and adapt to the evolving urban governance and management practices. This involves recognizing the importance of incorporating marketing tools into the city’s

strategic planning, governance, and decision-making processes (Seisdedos, 2006). It requires a shift towards a more comprehensive and holistic approach (Braun, 2008), where city marketing is not just about promotional activities but becomes a fundamental philosophy driving urban management practices

### **3.6. THE RIGHT TO THE CITY CONCEPT**

The “right to the city” concept appeared in the late 1970th in the book “Le Droit à la Ville” by Henri Lefebvre (Lefebvre, 1967). The concept has two dimensions: the right to participation and the right to appropriation. The first dimension draws attention to the necessity of the municipality to listen to people, not to make decisions solely, but to understand and rely upon society’s needs. Therefore, the notion of direct democracy might be present. The government is responsible for the development of civil society.

On the other hand, in the physical sense, the appropriation right is about the usage, access, and occupation of urban space equally by all the city residents. However, H. Lefebvre goes beyond that and states that appropriation is also about the right to “produce” space, which closely intertwines with the first dimension.

The concept was most consistently developed by neo-Marxist adherents; namely, David Harvey calls into question the effectiveness of neoliberal cities, where authorities are increasingly privatizing urban spaces for corporate and private interests (Harvey, 2008). Taking the side of the citizens’ majority, which cannot influence the processes of urban development and often fails to secure a decent lifestyle and satisfy fundamental rights, Harvey urges to seek the right to transform the city according to society’s everyday needs. In this case, the standard needs are the basic needs of those who usually do not have the power to influence urban politics.

Harsh criticism of neoliberalism can also be seen in the work of Don Mitchell, “The Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space”, where he emphasizes that “If anyone needs the right to the city, surely it is the homeless” (Mitchell, 2003). The initial idea of driving homeless people from the streets came from the fear and disguise of the middle and upper classes. On the contrary, the problem of poorness and homelessness should be tackled based on the needs of marginalized residents, as D. Mitchell points out.

International organisations have issued several research papers that support the right-to-the-city concept and encourage cities to implement it in practice. For example, UNESCO's "Urban Policies and the Right to the City", where it is stated that the right to the city is not favourable, and the organization has no intention to promote it as a new legal instrument (Brown & Kristiansen, 2009). At the same time, the idea of participatory democracy is presented as crucial and inseparable from substantive citizenship. Moreover, over security is discussed in a way: if the democratic space is policed and controlled, and therefore, it loses its initial social function, whose interests does it serve then? .2

The second example is "The European Charter for the Safeguarding of Human Rights" (UCLG Committee on Social Inclusion, Participatory Democracy and Human Rights, 2012), adopted in 2000 at the conference "Cities for Human Rights". The very first right mentioned in this charter is the right to the city, which is elaborated as follows:

*Cities belong to all their residents.  
Everyone must be able to find the conditions for achieving fulfilment from a social, political and ecological point of view while assuming solidarity duties.  
Local authorities foster respect for the dignity and quality of life of their residents.*

As we can see, in the latter case, the right to the city has a more participatory dimension than an appropriative one. In this Chapter, the right to housing is also mentioned, where the focus is put on decent housing, including shelters for dispossessed people.

In 2001, Brazil adopted the federal law "The City Statute" as a part of the constitution, which recognizes the collective right to the city. Therefore, it is the first case when the country makes this right positive. It has two main functions: social (public space belongs to society and not for commercial interests) and democratic city management (participatory society). Again, we can observe two dimensions of the right to the city, mentioned in the beginning.

Nevertheless, should we separate the right to the city? In the very end, it is a combination of particular first-generation human rights from the UN Declaration (UN General Assembly, 1948):

1. Article 2. "Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms... without distinction of any kind, such as ... social origin, property, birth or another status."

2. Article 13. “(1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.”
3. Article 17. “(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.”
4. Article 19. “Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression...”
5. Article 21. “(3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government...”

In the author’s opinion, considering that the Declaration of Human Rights is not a legal instrument, duplicating it in various forms and with different names will bring the issue to the discussion and draw the public attention to it.

Moreover, it is more difficult for the city management to ignore non-target groups of the city, like dispossessed people, because all groups are equal in the right to access the city as a public good. Moreover, ensuring social well-being is more important than commercial success.

## **4. CHAPTER IV: CITY MARKETING IN URBAN GOVERNANCE**

### **4.1. IN SEARCH OF A “PERFECT” CITY MARKETING STRATEGY**

This subsection will discuss the structure of the city’s marketing strategy. To understand what parts the strategy should consist of, existing strategies of several cities in Ukraine, Finland, the USA, and Australia were analysed. In the comparative table, we can see the sections that came across in the strategies, and by the number of pluses, track which sections are most frequently, or on the contrary, rarely used in strategies (Table 5).

The selection of Helsinki, Melbourne, North Port, Vinnitsa, Krivoy Rog, Lake Oswego, Richmond, Central City, and Avon for analysis in the dissertation is strategically based on several key considerations. First, the marketing strategies of these cities are readily available online, providing full access to relevant data and materials for thorough analysis. This accessibility ensures that the research process can be conducted efficiently and effectively. Moreover, having marketing materials in English makes them easier to understand and interpret, allowing results to be disseminated more widely and facilitating cross-cultural comparisons. In addition, the selected cities represent different regions of the world, covering different geographical, socio-economic and cultural contexts. This diversity allows for a comprehensive examination of city marketing strategies across different global landscapes, offering valuable insights into the versatility and adaptability of marketing practices. By examining a diverse range of cities, the dissertation aims to provide a detailed understanding of effective city marketing approaches that can inform urban development strategies around the world.

The operational definition of a city marketing strategy is as follows:

**City marketing strategy is a comprehensive plan focused on improving the quality of life of target audiences through strategic initiatives, communications and urban planning.**

The descriptive part of the sections will be held in the order they appear in the strategy. The first is **vision and mission**. A mission gives the work or activity of a person, company or document meaning and makes the process participants more purposeful. Mainly, the mission answers the question: “What, how, and for whom is it being done?” and, in an intelligible form, explains what the subject of the mission exists for. If we are talking about the mission of a marketing strategy, then it describes the highest goal of its creation and what its implementation should lead to. For example, the mission of the City of Melbourne strategy is: “We will increase visitation to the city by inspiring those Melburnians who seek and use interesting experiences as social currency” (City of Melbourne). As for the vision, this is how we want to see this territory in the future, what we are striving for. Continuing to use the example of Melbourne: “Melbourne City is the top-of-mind destination for shopping, dining, cultural events, sport, live music, arts as well as emerging strengths in recreation, leisure and intellectual nourishment” (City of Melbourne).

The **description** of the city section was found only in the strategies of Ukrainian cities. Its relevance to a strategy depends on its purpose and circulation. Of course, the strategists and residents are familiar with the information about the city and will find it superfluous. At the same time, it is unlikely that a detailed version of the strategy is provided to familiarise investors or tourists (who are unlikely to read the strategy) as a target audience. According to the researcher, a description of the city may be present in a strategic booklet to show the vector of the city’s development and familiarize stakeholders who are not city residents or potential target groups.

**Objectives** have been described in almost every strategy, and in this study, we consider them an integral part of planning. They can be combined into semantic groups or exist independently. Their number also depends on several factors, starting with the strategy’s timeframe and ending with its budget.

**Target groups** were mentioned in each strategy, which is unsurprising because all marketing activities are based on target audiences’ needs. It is noted in the scientific literature that branding activities are directed from the product to the audience; in the case of marketing ones, on the contrary, first, we research the market, and only after that do we begin to interact with it. Many marketing strategies target only one group – tourists. In this case, it is better to call them city marketing and destination marketing strategy (they were not used for this analysis). In other cases, there were always three primary audiences: city residents, tourists and investors.



Depending on the case, the target audiences are fragmented: students, entrepreneurs, start-ups, government officials, and civil organizations. It all depends on the specifics of the city and the goals set in the strategy.

**Table 5: Comparative table of the city marketing strategies sections**

<b>City / Section</b>	<b>Vision and mission</b>	<b>City description</b>	<b>Objectives</b>	<b>Target groups</b>	<b>Key messages</b>	<b>Marketing methods</b>	<b>Plan of Implementation</b>	<b>SWOT Analysis</b>	<b>Brand</b>	<b>Budget</b>
<b>Helsinki</b>			+	+	+	+	+		+	
<b>Melbourne</b>	+		+	+		+	+			
<b>North Port</b>			+	+	+	+	+	+	+	
<b>Vinnytsia</b>	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+	
<b>Kryvyi Rih</b>	+	+	+	+			+	+	+	
<b>Lake Oswego</b>				+		+	+		+	+
<b>Richmond</b>			+	+	+	+	+	+		+
<b>Central City</b>	+		+	+		+	+	+	+	
<b>Avon</b>			+	+	+	+	+	+	+	+
<b>Total sum of “+” out of 9</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>3</b>

*Source: own elaboration*

The **key messages** section usually follows the target audiences. They represent the main messages the city's target groups should receive in marketing activities. For example, the main message for locals might be, "Do not leave the city X; there are many opportunities for your development." At the same time, the message for tourists is, "Our city is the perfect place for an inexpensive family weekend." Depending on the number of messages, strategies can be divided into focus strategies, differentiated and non-differentiated. A focus strategy is aimed at only one target audience (this is the case with a destination marketing strategy when its target is exclusively tourists). A differentiated strategy considers different target groups and has a different approach (message) for each of them. An undifferentiated one, in turn, interacts with different target groups but has the same approach for everyone (Deffner & Liouris, 2005).

**Marketing methods** also appear in almost every strategy. They are a crucial element because they constitute the tactics with the help of which the strategy's goals can be reached. Further, a detailed description of each is to be found. Moreover, we will describe several methods and concepts to enhance the city's marketing strategy.

Marketing method: City Ambassador

Brand ambassadors play a key role in modern marketing strategies, serving as influential advocates who embody the essence and values of a brand (I. E. Fawwaz, 2020; Lestari et al., 2021; Putri Sabella et al., 2022). These people, often with a strong affinity for a brand and its offerings, use their personal authority and extensive connections to promote products or services to a wider audience. By embodying a brand's identity and effectively communicating its messages, brand ambassadors develop meaningful connections with consumers, promote brand loyalty, and drive engagement across channels (Ahmad et al., 2019; Setio Putri, Feby Eka Vivi & Tiarawati, 2021). In today's highly competitive market, the strategic use of brand ambassadors has become a key factor in increasing brand awareness, improving reputation and market penetration.

While brand ambassadors primarily focus on supporting specific products or services provided by a company, a similar concept applies to city ambassadors. Just as brand ambassadors embody the values and essence of a brand, city ambassadors act as champions of their cities' distinctive features and offerings. In urban environments, ambassadors play a critical role in spreading positive perceptions and enhancing the reputation of their cities. Drawing on a diverse professional background spanning various sectors such as the arts, commerce, healthcare and academia, these ambassadors are tasked with promoting the virtues of the city to both residents

and external audiences. Their responsibilities include creating narratives that celebrate the city's cultural diversity, economic activity and recreational opportunities, thereby promoting a favourable perception of the region.

Research findings highlight the importance of ambassadors' involvement in shaping public opinion (Leonard, 2024). Significantly, special care is taken to select ambassadors who have deep ties to the city, whether by birth or long-term residence, as they have an intimate understanding of its intricacies and unique strengths. Moreover, ambassadors who visit different geographic regions bring valuable information and perspectives to their promotional efforts, thereby enriching the narrative surrounding the city.

An important aspect of modern ambassadorial practice is the use of digital platforms, especially social media, as powerful tools to amplify promotional messages (Ferrazzano, 2024). With the ability to reach large audiences in real time, social media facilitates the dissemination of curated content that showcases a city's appeal and facilitates engagement with various stakeholders. Consequently, the strategic use of these digital channels becomes a key component of effective ambassadorial campaigns.

Proposals aimed at creating educational initiatives tailored to ambassador training represent a forward-thinking approach to developing skilled city promoters. Such programs will provide participants with comprehensive knowledge regarding the city's history, cultural assets, economic dynamics and future development trajectories. In addition, they will instil important communication skills needed to articulate compelling narratives and effectively engage with diverse audience segments.

Therefore, the role of city ambassadors goes beyond mere advocacy and includes multi-faceted work aimed at creating a positive perception of the location. Using their diverse experiences, intimate knowledge of the city, and strategic use of digital platforms, ambassadors help create a compelling narrative that resonates with both residents and global audiences. Moreover, initiatives aimed at formalizing ambassador training represent a promising path to developing a cohort of experienced advocates capable of executing sustainable promotional efforts and advancing the city's strategic goals.

To gain a deeper understanding of the method of ambassadorship, the researcher decided to participate in the school to educate new ambassadors in the city of Sumy. Given that in the fourth year of the postgraduate program, it was decided to dedicate one passive semester to

collect data for research, the researcher had the opportunity to live these six months in the city of Sumy, the case city for this dissertation. By coincidence, at the end of September 2021, the recruitment to the school of ambassadors was announced, which lasted four days for three hours. Agency Promotion Sumy organized the school with the support of organizations such as the British Council and Active Citizens. The meetings were in the evening, as the school participants had diverse profiles: students, teachers, engineers, and private entrepreneurs. The school comprised four modules: history, brand, essential people and project management.

On the first day, we got to know each other, played ice-breaking games, and figured out who the city's ambassador was. Since there were 42 participants, we were divided into three teams, and each team presented different adjectives and nouns that described the ambassador and were associated with it. To summarize, the most common words were sociability, creativity, charisma, erudition, a person who is interested in social life, a mediator, someone who represents the city and its history, a persistent person who always has his/her finger on the pulse, and it is also the face of the city.

After that, we listened to a presentation by a tour guide in Sumy. She shared information on the most popular excursions and sightseeing tours around the central part of the city. She mentioned the rules of the excursion structure that events should be presented from the past to the present, but the main thing is that all the information should be intertwined. It is crucial not just to lay out the sequence of events but also to show the interconnection, to talk about what circumstances from the past influenced the current state of things and why they developed as they did. She also drew attention to the fact that the excursion should have an element of conversation. In order to keep the viewer's attention, it is imperative to maintain a dialogue with them, sometimes asking questions or for an opinion, because in this way we can involve our tourist or viewer.

After that, we were sent on a tour of the city centre, and we could see how a practising guide works and immerse ourselves in the city's history because we discussed that an ambassador is a person who knows the history and that there is no present without the past. Thus, we were absorbing information about the history of the city.

On the second day, we had a module dedicated to branding and urbanism. It all started with a game: we were divided into four teams, and our task was to imagine a situation where we were on a sinking ship, and the team could choose only three items from the available ones. After that, we reflected and discussed why we chose these particular items. During the discussion

phase, we understood that this game was held to show that the attitude towards the modern brand of the city of Sumy is very ambiguous. It never happens that everything suits everyone; there are disadvantages and advantages.

After that, we listened to a presentation about the brand and what it is. We were told that a successful brand is a brand that evokes emotions; a city brand is definitely about residents and not just about management. A brand must be both modern and simultaneously timeless, use simple storytelling mechanisms, and have a legacy and vision. After that, a speech was delivered by the head of the strategic development department of the city of Sumy local council, Oksana Kubrak. She shared their research results before launching a new city brand in 2019. She said that, unfortunately, few locals know the city's history.

The brand was created by the local advertising agency Chocolate (in Ukrainian “Шоколад”). Among the main points of introducing this brand, the head of the strategic development department talked about distributing branded packaged sugar in catering establishments, marking public transport with branded stickers, and hanging banners around the city where we can see the city brand slogan and its different interpretations. The brand has already managed to participate in various all-Ukrainian tourism exhibitions. The Strategic Development Department is also trying to introduce its brand font to various city structures and distribute it among local businesses. For example, the menus in the cafes and restaurants were to use this font, and so were the design of announcements about events in the city, such as theatre plays or concerts. After I conducted several in-depth interviews with representatives of the city administration and entrepreneurs, I realized that the font is not very convenient to use since it lacks capital letters, and when writing the last name of a person, it implies disrespect towards that person, not to use capital letters. These are probably some cultural or even personal patterns, but this is what was heard.

As mentioned earlier, the third day of the School of Ambassadors was dedicated to important people of the city who developed the city and are successful in their professions. Three people were invited to give a presentation in front of the students at the school. The first speaker was Dmytro Buival, the former director of the living statue studio Artel MIF (on August 11, 2023, Sumy artist and public figure Dmytro Buival died in the battle near Kupyansk). His presentation looked impromptu. His most significant contribution to the conversation, made during a 20-minute speech, was that we should perceive the city or village where we live as the capital of

the world, it should be the best for us, and that if one does not love the place in which they live, then it is strange to expect personal success and some feeling of happiness.

The second person invited was Oleksandr Kovalenko, the tour guide and director of the excursion agency. The researcher visited his “Mystic Sumy” walking city tour in 2019. Oleksandr Kovalenko contributed several stories about his professional practice and revealed that he is an internally displaced person from Luhansk as a consequence of the war that began in eastern Ukraine in 2014 in the Donbas region. As a university teacher, Oleksandr began looking for a job at other universities in the country and was offered a position at the Pedagogical University in the city of Sumy. It so happened that the day of his move coincided with his first visit to Sumy. He knew nothing about the city before but liked it very much and began to engage in excursion activities. As a result, he even created his excursion agency called “V Sumah ne sumuyut” (Eng. No sadness in Sumy), which is a play of words in Ukrainian as the name of the city ‘**Суми**’ and the emotion of sadness ‘**сум**’ share the same letters. Alexander also invited groups from other cities in Ukraine for school trips. It was strange to see a touristic group from another city in Sumy in the past because of the city’s proximity to the city of Chernihiv, famous for its ancient history, the city of Poltava, which everyone associates with dumplings, M. Hohol and his “Evenings on a Farm Near Dykanka”. Travellers always bypassed Sumy; in the past, no one thought we could see something interesting here. Nevertheless, Oleksandr began to advertise Sumy as a city for school and family trips, and finally, today, we can already see on the central streets of the city groups of both schoolchildren and adult tourists who come here precisely to travel and explore, and these are the merits of one person who, moreover, is not a native of the city. So, without any doubt, he can be called the ambassador of the city of Sumy.

The third speaker of that evening was also a new guide named Yevhen Murza. He captivated the audience by returning to his hometown after living in Italy. He is a native of Sumy, but at 13, his family moved to Italy, to Rome. After 13 years in Rome, he decided to return to Sumy. Yevhen presents his return in the light of the fact that he sees himself in Sumy, that he missed his homeland so much, and sees his realization right here that in Italy, he will always be a stranger, and in any situation, anyone can say to you “Go back home!”. However, no one will tell you this here because you are already home. After moving back, Yevhen immersed himself in history, and, in the end, it all came down to the fact that he began to lead excursions around the city. He has a commercial and educational project called SumyGard. It began with a page on Instagram, where he covered different periods in the history of the city of Sumy, and then,

after friends and subscribers of this Instagram channel began to hint that it might be worth considering doing all this not only online, but offline, he began to conduct commercial group city tours on weekends.

The main idea of Yevhen's speech was that the Ukrainians have a complex of a lower prime cost because people admire everything abroad; they say that it is so wonderful in Europe, and it is terrible in this country, but at the same time, they do not value what they have. In Sumy, much of the architecture from the late 19th to early 20th century has not been restored. If the local government made a little effort and allocated some funding, they could make a beautiful historical ensemble out of the city centre. If residents were to walk around the city not only in a constant hurry for some business and concerns but were sometimes to raise their heads and look at different balconies, bay windows, caryatids, Atlanteans, and architectural decorations, then the city streets would take on a new meaning.

The fourth day of the School of Ambassadors was dedicated to project management. The founder of the School, Natalia Yaroshenko, was the one conducting it, an employee of the Agency Promotion Sumy. She talked about how to submit projects for the city budget allocation, how to receive funding, how to defend your active citizenship position, what criteria a project must meet to be approved, and that highlighted its need to be important for society. It is essential to calculate the budget in advance. Even if 3000 euros is a considerable amount for an applicant personally, those 3000 euros for a city festival are insignificant. Therefore, it is imperative to understand the scale of activities, reconstructions, or construction of the object in advance.

In order to put into practice the skills we discussed during the presentation, we were divided into teams and acted as 'residents' of a specific area of the city of Sumy. After that, we were randomly assigned a project: someone had a social project, someone had an educational one, and others received an architectural project. We were allocated half an hour to prepare. Following that, we had to make an elevator pitch (a short story about a product, project, or service idea; the term reveals the time constraint: the duration of the presentation should be such that it can be entirely told during a trip by elevator, in one to two minutes). Ultimately, we were given feedback, asked additional questions, and tried to defend our idea and get funding for it as part of the game.

This was the last day of school, and after the project management, the certificates of participation were presented to the participants (Figure 11). Souvenirs of the city of Sumy, such



as cups, hoodies, and stamps, were also distributed. The author's impressions of the school remained the most positive. However, she is knowledgeable about branding and project management; it was still interesting to observe how this information was presented to people unfamiliar with these areas and what mistakes should be avoided in organizing such events.



*Figure 11: Certificate of participation in the School of Ambassadors in Sumy*

*Source: received by the researcher*

Marketing method: Storytelling

Most people love stories with a “real hero”, as the American anthropologist and writer Mary Catherine Bateson said, “The human species thinks in metaphors and learns through stories” (Zimmer, 2015). The essence of storytelling can seem quite simple: you are telling a story with a central hero to a particular person. Ideally, your listener identifies himself/herself with this hero. It helps to convey the necessary messages unobtrusively and evoke an emotional response. As a result, the receiver sees with the help of this example why a product/service is needed and starts appreciating its benefits.

The term “storytelling” is believed to have originated from the head of the Armstrong International concern, David Armstrong. At one of the seminars on management, he learned about the theory of “MBWA or managing by walking around”. The idea of managing his employees outside the box instead of reading them faceless instructions led Armstrong to his

own theory: MBSA – Managing by Storying Around. It turned out that people perceive information much better through the prism of lively, exciting stories than if they read dry instructions.

The storytelling method can be perfectly applied to the city as well. The city consists of the stories of thousands or even millions of its inhabitants; it is like a living library where residents live their lives instead of books on the shelves. Urban marketers' challenge is finding and conveying the most valuable stories to a broader audience. The essence of the story is also essential; of course, if our goal is to build and maintain a positive image, then stories should carry a corresponding message.

The components of a good story are the hero, the problem/task, the plot, the outcome, and the moral. For example, Ukrainians are very emotional people (Yatsenko, 2021). The presence of many epithets and the bright emotional colouring of the story will induce people to relate to the story's main character. Presumably, our target audience is young people aged 16 to 22 who were born and raised in our city but are considering moving away. Our task is to keep the economically active working-age population and show them that this city can offer them enough opportunities for education and self-realization. The hero of such a story can be a reasonably well-known expert or media personality, a native of the city, who, despite the opportunity to develop a career in the capital, chose the option to stay in their hometown and thus lives a successful life, is a recognized specialist and is satisfied with life. The story's moral: *our city is a great place to develop skills and pursue professional growth.*

Marketing method: Smart city concept

Lately, the concept of a smart city has become widespread worldwide and has begun to be associated with the digitalized life of its citizens. A high number of the settlements started to call themselves "smart" (even without possessing the corresponding characteristics of "smartness"), using it as a marketing tool and bearing hope to attract more residents and investors. The next question is how to assess whether the city is Smart. To answer this, we should define the characteristics of the Smart City. Further, we will analyse recognized assessment systems and make the combined criteria for the Smart City.

An urban strategist, Boyd Cohen, created the methodology for Smart Cities benchmarking (Cohen, 2014). It includes six key dimensions of the Smart City and each of them has three subcomponents:

- 1) Environment (smart building, resources management and sustainable urban planning);
- 2) Mobility (efficient transport, multi-modal access and technology infrastructure);
- 3) Government (online services, infrastructure and open government);
- 4) Economy (entrepreneurship & innovation, productivity and local and global connection);
- 5) People (inclusion, education and creativity);
- 6) Living (culture and well-being, safety and health).

Another world rating of Smart cities is the “Cities in Motion Index”, conducted by the IESE Center for Globalization and Strategy. The assessment includes 79 indicators concerning ten dimensions of city life: the economy, technology, human capital, social cohesion, international outreach, the environment, mobility and transportation, urban planning, public administration and governance (IESE Cities in Motion, 2017).

**Table 6: Comparison of Boyd Cohen’s and Cities in Motion Index’s dimensions of the Smart City**

Boyd Cohen’s benchmarking dimensions	Cities in Motion Index dimensions
Environment	Environment
Mobility	Mobility and transportation
Government	Public management
	Governance
Economy	Economy
People	Human capital
Living	Social cohesion
	Technology
	International Outreach
	Urban planning

Source: own elaboration

As we can see from Table 3, in Cohen’s methodology, the number of main dimensions is smaller, but in some cases, his one dimension includes two dimensions of the Cities in Motion Index (for example, Cohen’s Government includes subcomponents that overlap with Public

Management and Governance of the later). Three dimensions from the Cities in Motion Index did not find their analogues: technology, international outreach and urban planning. We strongly support the importance of the technology dimension importance, as a core part of the Smart City definition is devoted to technology support in the improvement path.

To comprehensively understand the last two dimensions, we should look through their indicators. Accordingly, urban planning consists of a percentage of the population with access to sanitation facilities, the number of people within one household, bicycle shops, architects and cycling. The researcher disagrees with including bicycle shops and cycling in the urban planning dimension since they belong to mobility and transport infrastructure issues.

International outreach deals with the number of international tourists, the number of passengers of an airline, hotels, sights, conferences and meetings, and the technologies dimension, which is one of the elements missing in Cohen's methodology. As innovations and creativity are significant for the Smart City, it should attract foreign and internal "brains" and, what is even more essential, provide facilities for them to reach the city most easily.

As a result, the Cities in Motion Index is considered to be more precise with the dimensions of the Smart City, but at the same time, it has some excessive indicators, which can be included in other dimensions or excluded from the assessment.

Therefore, leveraging the mentioned ranking, we can identify the characteristics of the Smart City concept:

**Environment:**

- 1) Use of "green" technologies and renewable sources of energy to secure environmental sustainability;
- 2) Efficient traffic control (decrease of gas emissions);
- 3) Recycling and recirculation (from the grassroots to the manufacturing giants).
- 4) Support of electrically-propelled vehicle owners

**Technology:**

- 1) Wi-Fi city coverage;
- 2) Speedy broadband Internet;
- 3) CCTV and data collecting transducers;
- 4) Digitalization

**Mobility:**

- 1) Public transportation with tracking possibility, electronic schedules and intermodal ticketing systems;
- 2) Bike-sharing systems and cycling infrastructure;
- 3) Traffic supervision and notification system;
- 4) Cybernate parking systems.
- 5) Easily reached from abroad (developed air/rail/road infrastructure);

**Government:**

- 1) Transparency (Open data platform);
- 2) E-banking for community facilities;
- 3) Single-window system;
- 4) E-voting;
- 5) E-governance;
- 6) E-participation;
- 7) Privacy.

**Economy:**

- 1) Start-up platforms;
- 2) Low unemployment level;
- 3) International events conduction;

**Human Capital:**

- 1) A high number of educational institutions;
- 2) Creative Industry Jobs;
- 3) Multiculturalism

There is a tendency nowadays among urban officials to call the concept, as mentioned earlier, a “smart community” rather than a “smart city” to show that the development of the urban environment depends on the bottom-up approach of citizens’ participation, whose start-ups, ideas and ventures play a crucial role in urban advancements (Forster, 2017).

Nowadays, the participation of citizens in public affairs and politics has become more active and visible. The main trigger is the development of ICT and permanent access to online communication and self-expression. People discuss politics and governmental decisions on their blogs, public pages and websites and address authorities through official inquiries. They express their opinions and views, vote and make reasonable proposals to solve everyday and

long-term societal problems. As a result, the task of the municipal government is to “hear” people not only during the voting procedures but on a day-to-day basis.

Considering the development of the public administration system, American scientists noted that it went through three stages: the traditional one, new management and a modern public service (Robinson, 2015). Traditional management relied on bureaucratic procedures and the striving for efficiency. Modern public service focuses on the interests and needs of people and simultaneously involves them in the management process (Демушина, 2017).

Being a part of the Smart City concept, Smart Urban Governance emphasizes the necessity of civic participation in the municipal government’s decision-making processes and the vision of strategic marketing strategy. It is based on open data and an IT-driven approach and is essential for citizen-centric governance. In other words, digitalization allows evaluating and discussing decisions with bottom-up society participation. Furthermore, it is proved that the development of e-government encourages previously politically inactive groups to participate in the governance process (Quintelier & Vissers, 2008).

In this dissertation, a definition provided by Zsuzsanna Tomor is used, which states that Smart Urban Governance consists of “ICT-enabled collaborative arrangements between citizens and governments with the purpose of a sustainable urban existence” (Tomor, 2016). This definition shows the combination of technological facilities with sustainability strategies and innovations to create a coherent socio-technical approach to solving urban problems.

In her “Smart Urban Governance for Sustainable Cities” research, Zsuzsanna Tomor proves the positive connection between e-enabled citizens’ participation and the city’s sustainability. Governmental decisions can be influenced through the different ways of citizen-government cooperation. Moreover, citizens’ involvement in political affairs makes people more responsible and serious about the changes happening in their environment. At the same time, the number of e-participants leaves much to be desired. It can be connected to low political motivation and the municipality’s lack of skills to organize social, economic or/and ecological assets “to use technologies for novel approaches and genuine civil deliberation” (Tomor, 2016). What can be seen today in the e-governance field is not a tool of actual interaction but just a “mirror” of existing offline methods of communication between citizens and government.

Therefore, when analysing the possibilities of e-government as a way of providing public services to citizens through information and communication technologies, what we see is a lack

of attention to feedback in the process of communication between government and society, which is usually referred to as “electronic participation” (Tambouris, 2007). This concept includes the interaction of the population with authorities through electronic technology (Tolbert & Mossberger, 2006). At the same time, as a rule, the initiators of such interaction are citizens who seek to influence the decision-making process.

Evgeniya Lazaricheva divides electronic participation into three main elements: public authorities, citizens and technology. Each of the elements is complex and multifaceted, which allows the assumption that electronic participation is a rather dynamic system that is capable of effectively responding to the needs of society in permanently changing conditions (Лазаричева, 2013). According to her research, the role of the public authorities in providing access to information and guaranteeing the free political will and participation of citizens is probably not only the most important but also the most problematic. In some cases, the availability of ICT equipment does not guarantee its active employment. Often, it depends on the particular public office’s motivation and their team’s engagement in this field. Sometimes, officials do not want to empower citizens on purpose, keeping in mind their vested interests. In the latter case, the connection between societal empowerment and corruption can become the basis for further research.

The second element of e-participation is citizens. In this case, we refer to Diné Bennett’s dissertation on the factors influencing the success of an e-participation project in South Africa (Bennett, 2015). Thus, in her work, she identified the following effectiveness factors of the citizens’ electronic participation:

- 1) Developed information and communication infrastructure of the country;
- 2) Political consensus on the electronic participation of citizens;
- 3) Equal access for all categories of citizens to electronic services (absence of digital inequality);
- 4) Effective management in the field of electronic technologies;
- 5) Involvement of stakeholders in the development of joint projects;
- 6) E-democracy;
- 7) The trust of citizens in government bodies;
- 8) Availability of a conceptual model for the electronic participation of citizens in the country.

We can see that only a combination of political initiative, management, and available digital facilities can ensure electronic civic participation, as Evgeniya Lazaricheva stated.

The third element of this trine is technology. In the OECD handbook “Citizens as Partners” on Information, Consultation and Public Participation in Policy-making, we can find a concrete list of ICT developments that should become powerful tools in the e-participation practice. They include computers or screen-based terminals, applications, software, databases and connecting networks (Gramberger, 2001).

Defining the existing worldwide tools for electronic participation, I will also draw on and follow the study of the EU Directorate-General for Internal Policies, *Potential and Challenges of E-participation in the European Union*” (Lironi, 2016). The group of researchers identified the following e-participation tools: providing information, creating e-participation groups, crowdsourcing, conducting public events and electoral campaigns via the Internet, discussing government initiatives with citizens, influencing management decisions by citizens, urban planning, participating in the formation of the municipal budget, conducting surveys among citizens and online voting.

All the tools mentioned above will help the municipality to maintain an online two-way connection with citizens. It is also essential to keep up with the times and monitor newly developed concepts/models not to lose accumulated achievements. However, ICT will always remain a tool; only human capital can make these tools practical and valuable.

Governments often misunderstand the meaning of the “e-participation” process, defining it as an “informing process”. Nevertheless, it goes much further than that, and according to the study of the OECD Public Management Committee, there are several types of interaction between government and citizens (Uhrhammer, 2001):

- 1) Information: citizens gain the information on their demands, or the government disseminates information through various channels (one-way communication);
- 2) Consultation: government consults with citizens on particular policy-making issues (two-way communication);
- 3) Active participation: citizens enthusiastically participate in decision-making and policy-making (advanced two-way communication).



Thus, the ideas of electronic participation and the Smart City are deeply intertwined and are united in a single space of creating conditions and means to engage all stakeholders in decision-making processes and implementation of strategies for developing a society within a specific territory.

Marketing method: Email marketing

Email marketing is used extensively in commerce to inform its target audience about new products, promotions and great deals. In other words, “to attract interest in, build desire for, and generate sales of your products or services” (Venugopal et al., 2012). Also, mailing recipients can become brand advocates by forwarding letters to their friends and acquaintances, thereby expanding the circle of users. Moreover, email marketing can be a great way to collect information about your audience and then cluster it (Bawm & Nath, 2014). This allows grouping users into clusters of common interests, which will increase the effectiveness of mailings in the future. The first and primary step in email marketing is collecting and converting user emails into subscribers. This can be done through surveys, offers, advertising and PR materials.

We should not consider email marketing as the only method for an effective marketing campaign. It will be a great addition and works best with other methods and techniques. However, in such cases, tracking which methods generate the most tremendous response among the audience is always more challenging since users come from different channels. One of the main dangers in email marketing is getting the email into the spam folder.

For city marketing, the most successful, in the author’s opinion, is a regular newsletter or, an alternative name, a news digest. The person will be interested in constant topical information about what is happening in the city, where to go, and what is new.

Marketing method: Social media

It is no secret that worldwide, social networks have become the most massive information platforms, leaving behind traditional media such as television, radio, and print media. Their advantages include mass character, ease of publication and speed of dissemination of information. The use of social networks does not incur any costs, except for the payment of the social media manager if needed: there are no costs for printing, delivery, studio, or telecommunications equipment. For these reasons, official accounts of administration leaders

in small towns and villages have replaced municipal newspapers and local television news releases.

Facebook has 2.96 billion monthly active users as of the third quarter of 2022, and Instagram has almost two billion (Statista, 2022). Social networks have long ceased to exist as a source of information or a platform for exchanging thoughts, ideas, photos, videos, etc. Social media have become a gigantic virtual market with a vast audience, where brands advertise and promote themselves, sell their services and products, and where the user can make a purchase directly through social networks (e.g. Facebook Marketplace). In some cases, the user contacts the seller directly, but if we are talking about large brands, a post on social networks may contain a link through which the user goes directly to either the checkout page or the brand's website and purchases there.

Influencers, also known as opinion leaders, have significant followings on social media and other platforms. They are often recognized as field experts and trusted for their opinions and lifestyle. As a result, their followers often try to emulate their choices, leading to an association of influencers with products they own and approve of. This association can be especially 'beneficial' for marketers, as endorsements and influencer recommendations can significantly increase sales.

There are several reasons why influencers shape the buying habits of their followers. First, they provide valuable information and ideas about products and services that can help their subscribers make sensible decisions. Influencers may also have access to exclusive products or experiences that can create a sense of exclusivity that can be a powerful buying motivator for consumers. In addition, influencers sometimes create a sense of urgency for a product or service by highlighting its limited availability or the limited time it will be offered.

In general, the impact of influencers on shopping decisions is significant, especially when they are viewed as credible and trustworthy sources of information. Marketers can harness the power of influencers by partnering with them to promote their products or services to a large and engaged audience. Several methods can be used to test the effectiveness of this partnership:

1. Sales data tracking. One way to measure the impact of influencer marketing on sales is to track sales data before, during, and after a campaign. By comparing sales during a campaign with sales at other times, you can determine if a significant increase in sales can be attributed to an influencer's endorsement.

2. Analysis of indicators of social networks. Another way to measure the effectiveness of influencer marketing is to analyze social media metrics such as likes, comments, and shares of an influencer's post about your product. If a post gets a high engagement rate, the influencer's endorsement likely positively impacts their audience.
3. Conducting surveys. Surveys can help collect customer feedback on their experience with your city and whether an influencer's recommendation influenced their visit decision. This can provide more direct evidence of the influencer's impact on sales.
4. Use referral tracking: Referral tracking involves linking sales directly to an influencer's recommendation. This can be done through unique discount codes or influencer-specific tracking links.

Social media platforms, especially visual ones like Instagram or Tiktok, can be an effective tool to attract tourists to a city. This is because many tourists use social media to research and plan their travels. With the help of Instagram's geolocation tool, users can view photos and videos of various places and read descriptions and recommendations from other travellers. These experiences shared on social media can significantly influence a person's decision to visit a particular place. In fact, research has shown that social media play an essential role in shaping tourists' perceptions and decisions about a destination. Thus, using the power of social networks, cities can effectively advertise themselves to potential visitors and increase the number of tourists.

The researcher has valuable first-hand experience in influencer marketing, supported by her status as a content creator on social media platforms such as TikTok, with a significant following of over 6,000 (accessible through the handle @budapest\_insider) (Figure 12). Her content consists of carefully crafted posts exploring Budapest and Hungary, covering a wide range of topics from iconic landmarks, renowned travel destinations, fine dining, and cafes to culturally enriching museums and more.

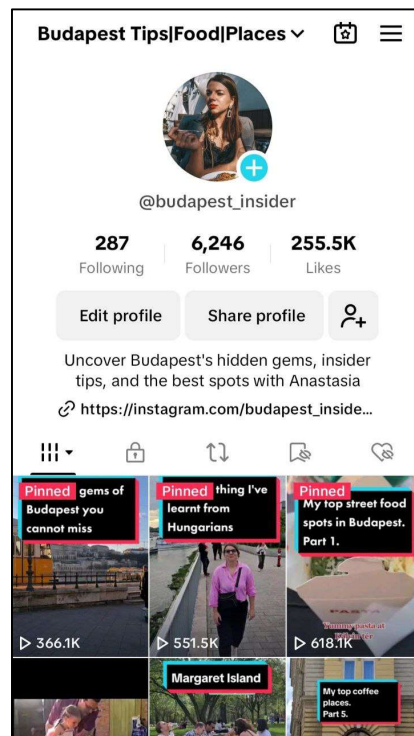


Figure 12: TikTok profile of the researcher

Source: TikTok mobile application

Additionally, her influence has led to her participation in several collaborative projects where she has been approached and engaged by various businesses seeking to leverage her digital media activities to promote their products and services. This fusion of her online presence and strategic partnerships highlights the researcher's unique position as a digital tastemaker, offering insight into the intricacies of modern influencer marketing and its symbiotic relationship with the tourism and hospitality sectors.

Social media has become an essential resource for travellers in their trip planning and research phase. One specific use of social media is weather forecasting. While traditional methods, such as checking a weather forecast website, can provide information about temperature and precipitation, they may not always give a complete picture of what to expect regarding clothing and other personal items to pack. However, by viewing photos and videos in real-time on social media platforms such as Instagram Stories, travellers can get a more accurate idea of what to wear by observing other users' clothing choices in the place they are visiting.

Also, social networks are actively used to promote various kinds of events. An event can have its own Facebook page, organizers may directly send invitations to different users through ad

targeting, or the event can be tied to a specific location. If a user is looking for something to do on the weekend, then it is natural that (s)he will open a location that interests them, and the social network itself will offer this event, even if the organizers did not directly contact this user or the user did not intentionally search for this event on the Internet.

Accounts of city administrations are generally not very popular, but in Ukraine, there was a surge in the popularity of their accounts on a social network called Telegram after the start of the war. From there, people received information about what was happening since television worked intermittently in the first days of the war. The chapter on post-war tourism in Ukraine will discuss this topic in more detail.

Marketing method: Mobile application

App development and mobile apps have become essential to current digital marketing campaigns. In the modern world, a mobile application has become more of a necessity than a choice in digital marketing.

Rocksolid Technologies, a software development company that develops solutions for public sector clients, claims that the adage “the more, the better” does not apply in the case of mobile applications for cities; an example of New York City is provided for justification (Kirk, 2017). When a user visits the city’s official website, (s)he sees an offer to install 23 different mobile applications on the phone. This massive number of applications confuses the user and takes up a considerable part of the phone’s memory. A plan is a must when creating a mobile app for a city. However, this agency also offers to consider the city mobile strategy in general.

What should a mobile application for a city include? A mobile application for a city can serve as a valuable resource for tourists and residents. It should include many features that meet the needs and interests of both groups.

For tourists, a city mobile app can be essential for navigating the city and getting to know local attractions. It should include a city map with marked locations for restaurants, landmarks, and other points of interest. It must also contain an up-to-date schedule of events in the city, including cultural festivals, sporting events, and other events. The app may also offer marketing promotions, such as a city pass with discounts at partner outlets to encourage tourism.

The city’s mobile app can serve as a platform for residents to report concerns to utilities. By allowing users to quickly notify authorities of accidents, breakdowns, and other issues, the app can help improve the quality of life for citizens. The application can also be used to conduct

social surveys to determine the population's opinion on current issues facing the city administration. This can help increase transparency and accountability and help city governments make better decisions. In addition, through the application, it will be possible to send out invitations to citizens for hearings in the city council, where decisions affecting their interests will be made. This can encourage more active participation in the political and social life of the city.

In Barcelona, in 2017, an app called Vincles (Catalan for "bonds") was developed to help lonely pensioners socialize. It was an attempt by the municipality to solve the problem of loneliness among people over 60 years old. According to research, social isolation leads to an increased risk of heart disease, depression and early death ("In Barcelona an App with a Personal Touch Keeps Seniors Connected," 2019). For people who do not have phones or tablets, the municipality provides tablets with a built-in application for use. It is worth noting that the application has a straightforward interface that is easy for low-digital people. When the application was launched, several facilitators worked offline to help pensioners figure out how the application functions.

A city mobile app can also be a valuable resource for businesses as a target audience of the city. It can serve as an advertising platform, allowing businesses to reach their consumers through in-app advertising. It can also promote partnerships between businesses and the city, such as through city pass programs that offer discounts at local establishments. In addition, the mobile app can be used as a customer engagement tool, helping businesses build relationships with their customers and promote special offers or events. Through these various features, a city mobile app can help businesses reach large and engaged audiences, increase sales, and build brand awareness.

A city mobile app can also be an excellent tool for communication and engagement for potential and current investors. One of the advantages is easy access to up-to-date city information, which the application can provide. This may include economic indicators, demographics, and local business and industry information. With access to this information, investors can make more informed decisions about investing in the city.

Another way a city mobile app can be helpful to investors is by promoting investment opportunities in the city. This may include showcasing new development projects or local businesses seeking funding. By highlighting these opportunities for investors, the app can help attract investment to the city and support economic growth.

In addition to providing access to information and promoting investment opportunities, the city's mobile app can also inform and engage investors. Investors can use the app to get updates on their investments and stay updated with what is happening in the city. This can facilitate communication between investors and city officials and help build confidence in the city as an investment destination.

In conclusion, mobile app development and the use of mobile apps in digital marketing campaigns have become extremely important for city marketers. A city mobile application can be a valuable resource for various target groups, including tourists, residents, businesses and investors. For tourists, the application can provide the necessary information and tools to navigate the city and explore local attractions. For residents, the app can serve as a platform for reporting concerns and encourage greater participation in the political and social life of the city. For businesses, the app can be used as an advertising platform and customer acquisition tool, helping to build brand awareness and elevate sales. For investors, the app can offer access to relevant information, promote investment opportunities, and facilitate communication and updates. A city mobile application can improve the quality of life of all who use it and support the city's economic growth.

#### Marketing method: Events

Events can be a powerful urban marketing tool as they can bring many visitors to the city. A large number of people come to the events from outside the area. This can significantly impact the local economy because people spend money on accommodation, food, and attractions in the new city/on holiday. In addition, events can create a sense of excitement and hype in the city, attracting the attention of the media and other potential visitors and investors.

Many events can be used for city marketing, from cultural festivals and sporting events to conferences and trade shows. Cultural festivals and events can attract visitors and promote a city's unique culture and history. For example, the Edinburgh Festival Fringe is a world-famous cultural event that draws over two million visitors annually. In addition to stimulating the local economy, the festival helps promote the city's cultural offerings and creative spirit to a broader audience.

Sports events can also be a powerful urban marketing tool. Major sporting events such as the Olympic Games or the World Cups can attract many visitors and significant media attention. For example, during the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, the city welcomed approximately 1.17 million tourists (Kalvapalle, 2016), resulting in a significant 207% increase

in hotel revenue compared to the previous year. The economic impact is also significant, as evidenced by the 2012 London Olympics, which brought an estimated £9.9 billion to the city through increased tourism, infrastructure development and job creation (“London 2012 to Provide Long-Lasting Economic Benefits,” 2013).

Another example is South Africa, which hosted the 2010 FIFA World Cup that brought in approximately 309 thousand international tourists. The event significantly boosted South Africa’s tourism industry, with a 25 per cent increase in foreign arrivals during the tournament. Besides economic benefits, major sporting events provide a platform for branding and promoting tourism, creating jobs in various sectors and promoting continued recognition on the world stage.

In addition, small sporting events such as marathons or triathlons can also effectively promote the city and its attractions to the target audience. For example, the New York City Marathon attracts over 50,000 runners yearly and over a million spectators (“New York City Marathon Fast Facts,” 2013). This gives a significant boost to the local economy and makes the city famous as a place where sporting events take place.

Conferences and trade shows can also play an essential role in urban marketing. These events can attract many business professionals, providing an opportunity to showcase the city’s business offerings and infrastructure. For example, the Consumer Electronics Show, a significant technology industry conference and trade show, occurs in Las Vegas annually. More than 170,000 people attended the exhibition, significantly boosting the local economy.

However, carefully considering the activities carried out for urban marketing purposes is essential. Not all developments will have the desired impact on the city’s reputation and economic development. It is crucial to consider the suitability of the event for the city’s corporate identity and target market, as well as the potential costs and benefits of hosting the event.

Determining the goals and objectives of city marketing activities is crucial for effectively promoting the city as a destination. Goals and objectives should be consistent with the overall brand of the city and the target market. The success of an event must be measured.

**Plan of City Marketing Strategy Implementation.** In this segment, we will cover the implementation of city marketing strategies. This section explains a comprehensive city marketing campaign plan based on our previous discussions regarding target audiences and



selected marketing initiatives. In this strategy section, it is crucial to outline the exact timing of these activities and the budget allocation. In addition, it is crucial to define the key performance indicators (KPIs) that will serve as a compass in assessing the strategy's effectiveness, ensuring that we can measure its tangible impact.

**Timely execution:** effectively implementing the city marketing strategy requires a well-structured schedule. Marketing activities must be broken down into well-coordinated steps to achieve this goal, ensuring smooth execution. Each phase should be assigned specific start and end dates and responsible individuals/departments/teams.

**Budget distribution:** Successful implementation of the strategy depends on sound financial allocation. The budget allocation plan should categorize expenses, detailing the financial resources allocated to each marketing campaign stage. Clarity, fiscal responsibility, and efficient use of resources are ensured by clearly defining how funds will be distributed among various initiatives.

**Key Performance Indicators (KPI):** Measuring the success of the city marketing strategy requires a set of clearly defined key performance indicators. These metrics will serve as benchmarks to measure progress and overall performance of the strategy. KPIs should cover a range of metrics including, but not limited to:

1) Audience Reach. Evaluating the extent to which marketing efforts have reached the target audience, ensuring that the target audience is effectively reached. For example, we can track impressions or page views for online channels such as social media, websites, and email marketing. Impressions are the number of times the content was shown to users. It is essential to mention that not all impressions reflect unique users. While quantitative data is essential, it is also recommended to consider qualitative data such as sentiment analysis (categorizing opinions of the users regarding a particular topic) and reviews to understand how an audience perceives marketing efforts. Geolocation data can also be used to determine the geographic distribution of the audience.

One of the ways to know the audience reach is to conduct surveys or collect feedback to see if they remember or recognize particular marketing efforts. Ask questions about where they saw the content or participated in the event and how it influenced their perception or behaviour.

We can also calculate the coverage ratio, whether it is an online or offline audience engagement. To calculate the coverage rate, the following formula is used:

$$\text{Reach Rate (\%)} = \frac{\text{number of unique people reach}}{\text{total target audience}} \times 100$$

For example, if we reached 10 thousand unique people out of a target audience of 100 thousand, the reach rate would be 10 per cent.

It is recommended to monitor audience reach metrics and compare them to goals constantly. If it is challenging to reach the target audience effectively, adjusting channels or content to improve reach should be considered.

Transparency and accountability are fundamental principles of any city marketing strategy, which means a commitment to openness and accountability in governance. Regularly creating and distributing detailed reports highlighting audience reach metrics is a tangible embodiment of these principles. These reports serve as a transparent window into the effectiveness of marketing efforts, providing stakeholders with empirical data on how well a strategy is attracting its target audience. Through this practice, stakeholders can evaluate the strategy's alignment with city goals, make informed decisions based on data-driven information, and hold responsible parties accountable for achieving measurable results.

2) Monitoring the conversion of potential visitors into actual tourists will provide insight into the impact of a campaign on the city's tourism industry. To calculate the conversion rate that measures the conversion of potential visitors into actual tourists, the following formula should be used:

$$\text{Conversion rate (\%)} = \frac{\text{Number of actual tourists}}{\text{Number of potential visitors}} \times 100$$

In this formula, under the Number of Actual Tourists, we mean the total number of people who visited the city due to the marketing campaign. These tourists should be identified and tracked through various means such as hotel bookings, event attendance, visitor centre data or surveys. In reality, counting all the actual tourists can be pretty challenging. To track as much as possible, it is recommended to collaborate with local hotels and lodging providers to collect data on bookings. City visitor centres or information centres often serve as hubs for tourists seeking information about the city. These centres can collect data on the number of visitors and inquire about the information source that brought them to the city. To unify this process, a unique database can be created for all the potential data collection points where they can fill in the information on their visitors, avoiding duplicates (the same person registered in the hotel and visitor centre).

Some potential visitors include people exposed to the marketing campaign and who have had the opportunity to consider visiting the city. Estimating the number of potential visitors can be challenging, but it involves determining the campaign's reach. This could include the number of website visitors and social media followers, the distribution of brochures or promotional materials, or attendance at city-sponsored events related to the campaign.

For example, if the marketing campaign reached 100 thousand potential visitors and resulted in 10 thousand of them becoming actual tourists, the conversion rate would be 10 per cent. This means the campaign has successfully converted 10 per cent of potential visitors into actual tourists.

3) Return on Investment (ROI). It is crucial to analyse the financial return of marketing initiatives against the resources invested, ensuring cost-effectiveness. Here is the detailed process for measuring ROI:

First, we must collect comprehensive data on all costs associated with strategic marketing initiatives. This includes direct marketing costs (e.g., advertising costs, content creation costs) and indirect costs (e.g., staff salaries, software subscriptions, design and production costs). It is better to be highly detailed in tracking all campaign-related expenses.

Then, we calculate the financial return or profit generated from marketing initiatives. This may vary depending on the strategy goals. To increase revenue, we need to track the income generated directly from the marketing campaign. This could be sales (tickets, merge, city tour), bookings, or customer orders associated with the campaign. If the goal is to acquire new customers, calculate the revenue generated from those new customers over time. Consider the lifetime value of customers generated by the campaign (represents the total revenue expected from a new customer throughout their entire relationship with the brand). For goals such as brand awareness, it is better to use metrics such as increases in website traffic, social media activity, or changes in brand sentiment to assess the value of increasing brand awareness.

The following formula should be used to calculate ROI:

$$\text{Return on Investment (\%)} = \frac{\text{Net Profit}}{\text{Total Investment Cost}} \times 100$$

The result will be a percentage that represents the return on investment. We subtract total costs from profits to determine the net profit generated by the marketing initiative. A positive ROI indicates that the campaign generated more revenue than it cost, while a negative ROI indicates a loss. A higher ROI indicates greater economic efficiency.

The time frame for measuring ROI should be considered. Some marketing initiatives can bring quick results, while others can have a long-term impact.

Comparing the ROI of different marketing initiatives can give valuable insight to determine which ones are the most profitable and effective. The results can also be compared to industry standards and historical data to evaluate the performance more in-depth.

The following step can often be ignored, but sharing ROI results with stakeholders and decision-makers in the organization is highly important. Transparent ROI reporting helps justify marketing budgets, gain support, receive feedback, and inform future planning.

4) Brand Awareness. Measuring increased brand awareness and positive perceptions of the city will indicate the success of marketing efforts. There are some practical methods and metrics which can help with this assessment:

One way to obtain information is through surveys and questionnaires (some questions in the questionnaire of this research are also related to brand awareness). Social media monitoring is also a powerful approach. Monitoring mentions, hashtags and sentiment around city brands on platforms like Twitter, Facebook and Instagram is a window into an ongoing online conversation. Using sentiment analysis tools to assess the overall mood in online discussions about a city's brand can help to indicate favourable perceptions.

Web analytics are invaluable, such as tracking website traffic and user activity on a city's official website or landing pages. Metrics such as page views, time spent on the site, and bounce rates show user interest and engagement. Assessing media coverage is also essential; paying attention to the number of positive mentions and frequency of coverage in newspapers, magazines, online news sources, and television can help catch and highlight improved brand awareness. Net Promoter Score (NPS) is valuable for assessing brand perception. It measures the likelihood that people will recommend a city to others, which reflects positive perceptions.

5) Interaction on social networks. Monitoring likes, shares, saves, comments, and overall engagement on social media platforms will reflect the online community's response to the campaign. The most popular social media have inbuilt analytical tools to track all the metrics mentioned above (e.g., Facebook Insights, TikTok Analytics, Instagram Insights), or there are also third-party tools (e.g., Hootsuite, Sprout Social, Buffer) to gather data.

**Success Rating:** A robust system for measuring success is critical. Periodic assessments will allow strategy adaptation as necessary, ensuring it remains flexible in response to changing

circumstances. Success should be determined by regular reviews of KPI data and a commitment to continuous improvement.

The implementation plan for the city marketing strategy is an important road map and a part of the strategy. It outlines the practical steps needed to bring marketing vision to life. Through careful timing planning, strategic budget allocation, and vigilant monitoring of key performance indicators, it will be ensured that the city's marketing strategy functions effectively and evolves to meet the dynamic needs of the community and visitors.

**SWOT Analysis.** SWOT Analysis is indispensable for crafting a comprehensive and effective city marketing strategy. It serves as a critical compass for urban planners, government officials, and marketing professionals, helping them navigate the complex landscape of city development and promotion. Here is a more elaborate exploration of how SWOT Analysis plays a pivotal role in this process. The SWOT stands for strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Strengths (S) identify what the city does exceptionally well or what sets it apart. City strengths include natural beauty, historical landmarks, cultural diversity, a robust local economy, excellent transportation infrastructure, a skilled workforce, and a vibrant arts and culture scene.

Recognition of the city's weaknesses is no less critical. Weakness Score (W) involves identifying areas where the city may lag behind or have limitations. Weaknesses may include high crime rates, inadequate public transportation, outdated infrastructure, lack of affordable housing, or negative perceptions. Eliminating these shortcomings is necessary to improve the city's overall image and increase its attractiveness to the target audience.

Cities are dynamic, and opportunities for growth and development are constantly emerging. Opportunity Research (O) identifies these opportunities as they can significantly help with areas the city can develop and benefit customers. Opportunities may include upcoming events, infrastructure projects, investments, or trends such as sustainable lifestyles and technological innovation.

Threats are external factors that can negatively affect the city's image and attractiveness. Threat Assessment (T) can help to identify and mitigate these threats. Threats may include economic recession, natural disasters, conflicts, negative media coverage, competition from neighbouring cities, or changes in government policy. Developing a plan to minimize the impact of these threats can help protect and enhance a city's reputation.

Once the SWOT analysis is completed, city marketers can use this information to formulate strategic plans. For example, they may promote strengths through branding and marketing campaigns, address weaknesses through targeted improvements, seize opportunities through events and partnerships, and mitigate threats through crisis management plans.

For example, we will conduct a SWOT analysis for Budapest (residential city of the researcher) and Sumy. Including an analysis of Budapest in dissertation is critical for several reasons. Firstly, Budapest serves as a prime example of a tourist-attractive city in Eastern Europe. However, its attractiveness is coupled with fierce competition from neighbouring cities such as Prague and Vienna. By identifying its strengths, such as iconic landmarks and cultural heritage, as well as weaknesses, such as infrastructural limitations or overtourism, a SWOT analysis provides valuable information about Budapest's comparative advantages and areas for improvement.

In addition, Hungary's proximity to Ukraine and the shared border between the two countries significantly influence Budapest's role in the attraction arena. Before the conflict, Ukrainian cities such as Kyiv and Lviv represented significant competition to Budapest in terms of investment attractiveness. Thus, conducting a SWOT analysis of Budapest allows us to carefully examine its competitive landscape in a broader regional context, considering geopolitical factors.

Budapest's strengths include historical and cultural heritage. The capital boasts a rich history and cultural heritage, including architectural monuments such as the Buda Castle, the Fisherman's Bastion and the Hungarian Parliament building. Also, the city is a major tourist destination known for its thermal baths, vibrant nightlife and scenic views of the Danube River. Tourism makes a significant contribution to the local economy. Budapest has several prestigious universities, making it an education and research centre. Budapest is an important transport hub with an extensive public transport system, including trams, buses and a well-developed metro network. The city has experienced strong economic growth, attracting foreign investment and multinational companies, especially in the information technology and automotive sectors.

Weakness Score includes the fact that Budapest faces traffic congestion problems, especially during rush hours, due to the high number of vehicles on the road and limited road infrastructure. There is also an income disparity in the city, with some areas experiencing higher levels of poverty and limited access to economic opportunities. Budapest has struggled with air

pollution, mainly during the winter months, which can negatively affect the health of residents and the environment. Despite the existence of high-quality public transport, there are problems with funding and maintaining outdated infrastructure. The tourism sector in Budapest can be highly seasonal, resulting in fluctuations in income and employment in specific industries. The primary weakness is an ongoing war in the neighbouring country, leading to lower tourist flow because of security concerns.

Opportunities include sustainable tourism, investment in infrastructure, technology and innovations, cultural and sports events, and green initiatives. Promoting sustainable tourism practices can help minimize the negative impact of mass tourism and encourage environmentally friendly initiatives. Investments in transport infrastructure, such as expanding metro lines or improving the road network, can solve traffic congestion problems. Budapest can further enhance its reputation as a technology and innovation hub by attracting more start-ups and creating a favourable business environment. Using its cultural and sports assets, Budapest can host international events, festivals and exhibitions to attract a diverse audience. Implementing green initiatives, such as improving air quality and expanding green spaces, can improve a city's quality of life and sustainability.

Threats that can be identified for Budapest include economic downturns such as the global recession, which can adversely affect foreign investment and employment opportunities in the city. Additionally, Budapest is vulnerable to the effects of climate change, including extreme summer heat and storms, which have the potential to disrupt daily life and infrastructure. Moreover, with neighbouring countries experiencing conflict, such as the war in Ukraine, Budapest faces increased geopolitical tensions and potential security risks. Furthermore, other European cities compete for tourists and foreign investment, necessitating Budapest to constantly update its marketing and business strategies to remain competitive amidst evolving market dynamics and geopolitical challenges.

To sum up, Budapest has many strengths, including a rich cultural heritage and tourist attractions, but it also faces challenges such as traffic congestion and income inequality. The city has opportunities to promote sustainability, invest in infrastructure and further develop its role as an innovation hub. However, it must remain vigilant against security threats, economic downturns and political instability to ensure its continued growth and prosperity.

Proceeding with the SWOT analysis of our case city, Sumy, we can state that its strengths include educational facilities, agricultural potential, cultural heritage and a skilled workforce.

Sumy is known for its solid educational institutions, including Sumy State University and Sumy National Agrarian University, attracting students from all over Ukraine and abroad. As a result, universities and technical schools provide a pool of skilled labour that may be attractive to potential investors. The surrounding region is rich in agriculture because of the rich black soil, which contributes to food production and the city's economic stability. Sumy has a cultural heritage, including historical sites (they will be described and discussed in Chapter V), museums and traditions that can be used for tourism and cultural events.

If we discuss the city's weaknesses, we should mention the security threat and the ongoing war as the first. The region also experiences economic problems because Sumy has faced the decline of heavy industry and limited diversification of the local economy. Ageing infrastructure is a huge problem, and the need to modernize areas such as public transport and roads hinders the city's growth. However, as mentioned earlier, the budget is mainly allocated to the military industries and does not have those as a top priority. Like many Ukrainian cities, Sumy is experiencing depopulation, especially among young people looking for opportunities elsewhere and women fleeing the country with kids because of safety issues. As a weakness, we can mention the language barrier for international investors and tourists, as the dominant languages in the city are Ukrainian and Russian (among seniors), and a small proportion of the Sumy population speaks proper English. Unfortunately, bureaucratic obstacles, time-consuming legislative procedures, and administrative corruption can deter potential investors.

Among the opportunities is the export of agricultural products. Sumy can explore opportunities for exporting agricultural products to international markets using the region's agricultural potential. Encouraging technology start-ups and innovation hubs on university campuses or outside can diversify the economy and attract new business. Promoting domestic tourism by showcasing the cultural heritage, historical sites and natural beauty can stimulate the local economy. Simplifying business regulations and providing fiscal incentives can attract domestic and foreign investors. Attracting domestic students can generate income for educational institutions.

We mentioned war as a current main weakness for the city, but there are still many factors that can be considered as threats, and mostly, it is hard to control them – political instability. Growing political tensions and instability in Ukraine may affect investment confidence and partner countries' support. External economic factors, such as a global recession or trade disputes, may affect the amount of financial help currently provided by allies. Continued



depopulation and mobilization can lead to a critical labour force shortage and reduced economic activity. Insufficient infrastructure improvements can reduce the city's competitiveness and attractiveness to investors.

Summing up, like numerous urban areas, Sumy demonstrates its strengths and weaknesses. The city can harness the potential of its educational institutions, agricultural resources and cultural heritage, thereby mitigating existing economic constraints, addressing infrastructure deficiencies and mitigating the effects of demographic decline. Finding prospects in agricultural development, technological innovation, domestic tourism promotion and educational exports can contribute to urban development. However, the city must maintain a state of constant vigilance in response to potential threats caused by war, political instability and fluctuations in the global economic landscape.

Summarizing the whole session about SWOT analysis, we believe it is a valuable urban marketing tool as it provides a structured framework for evaluating a city's internal and external factors. By leveraging strengths, addressing weaknesses, exploiting opportunities, and mitigating threats, city marketers can develop effective strategies to improve a city's image, attract visitors and investment, and improve residents' overall quality of life.

**Brand.** In a city marketing strategy, this section is a critical component that helps define and communicate the city's unique identity and value proposition. This section usually includes several key elements:

- 1) A city branding statement that captures the essence of the city. This statement should convey the unique characteristics, values and aspirations that define the city.
- 2) Brand values can include innovation, inclusivity, sustainability, cultural richness, or other principles that align with the city's identity.
- 3) Brand personality is the traits that a city brand should exhibit. Does the city appear friendly, dynamic, sophisticated or full of adventure? Creating a consistent brand personality helps set the tone of communications across different channels.
- 4) The visual identity includes a logo, colour scheme and visual elements representing the city's brand. Consistency in the design of different marketing materials helps create a solid and recognizable visual presence.
- 5) The slogan/tagline captures the essence of the city. It should be short, effective and easy to remember, highlighting the key attributes of the city.

6) A unique selling proposition (USP) determines competitive advantages. This may be due to economic opportunities, cultural offerings, quality of life, or other factors that set the city apart from competitors.

## 4.2. CITY DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING STRATEGIES

*Strategy is about being different.*

Michael B. Porter

Using the general simplified definition of strategy as a detailed plan for achieving success (Cambridge Dictionary, 2022), the author aims to adhere to its universal nature. The public sector started to borrow managerial approaches from the business field in the 80s and 90s, which the scientific literature calls new public management. It effectively responded to the bureaucratic administration model crisis in many countries (Osborne & Gaebler, 1992). Alongside performance measurement and a result-oriented attitude, public administration began to plan for a long-term perspective. As Gabriela Cecilia Stanciulescu hits the mark, “*Marketing should not be exclusively the advantage of the private sector*” (Stanciulescu, 2009). At the same time, we should not forget the main difference between business strategy and urban goals. In the first case, companies see the result in the profit; in the second case, it is well-being (nevertheless, it is a direct consequence of superior economic performance). It causes enormous difficulties in evaluating urban strategies and their effectiveness, considering the complexity of the “welfare” concept and its numerical representation.

One of the most widespread ideas in the field of business strategic planning belongs to Michael B. Porter. To sum up his keynote speech on strategy at the Institute for Competitiveness in India event, the worst mistake that can be made in strategy is the attempt to compete with rivals on the same dimension (*Keynote on Strategy by Michael Porter, Professor, Harvard Business School, 2017*). If we broadcast it to the urban world, it is impossible to be “the best” among cities, even considering the existence of various ratings, because each settlement serves its audience and has its unique structure. The city’s audience’s components are similar: residents, businesses, migrant workers, students, investors and tourists (in some cases, we can add patients if the city is famous for its therapeutic potential). In each case, the resident or investor’s profile will differ; therefore, conducting research and clearly understanding whom you serve is necessary. The only way to be “the best” is to compete with your performance evaluation by your target audiences through the years.

### Strategies' vision analysis

Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies defines a strategy's vision as “*a dream or picture of what the city wants to look like in the future to achieve its potential. A vision is the overall image of what the community wants to be at some point in the future*”. The main emphasis should be put on the presence of “community” in the provided definition and the importance of its participation in all stages of the planning (Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies & FLMH, 2017).

In Table 7, the semantic kernel of four strategies is presented. When choosing Helsinki, Whitehorse, North Port and Sumy to analyze the semantic kernel of their marketing strategies, several factors influenced the decision. First, the availability of their strategies on the Internet made it easier to access relevant documentation for comprehensive analysis. Second, we sought to study cities from different regions to understand differences in marketing approaches based on cultural, economic, and geographic factors. By including cities from different regions such as Europe, North America and Eastern Europe, we aimed to gain a broader perspective on city marketing strategies. Finally, the inclusion of Sumy was critical as it serves as a case study for this dissertation and allows for an in-depth examination of a specific urban context.

The semantic kernel consists of the most widely used words (keywords) and/or phrases in the text. The author exhibits the first seven keywords in the table.

In the case of Helsinki (population c. 630 thousand), the capital of Finland, we can see that “indicator” becomes the most widespread keyword, which shows us the importance of further analysis of the strategy performance and effectiveness (MyHelsinki, 2020). For example, if we look at the objective “Build our future vision and strengthen local pride”, the performance indicators are composed of image surveys with residents, usability assessment of marketing tools, and media monitoring. Marketing strategy evaluation remains the most challenging stage of the strategy “lifecycle”. Therefore, defining the evaluation mechanisms at the planning stage is necessary.

Whitehorse is a Canadian city in Yukon Territory (population c. 27 thousand). The semantic kernel of its strategy (“community” and “citizen”) highlights the community-oriented approach of the document (*City of Whitehorse Marketing Strategy*, 2013). We can also see the massive emphasis on “access”, which can be explained by the city's remote location from the most vivid (culturally and economically) Saskatchewan, Alberta, Ontario and Quebec provinces and a

relatively small population. As we noted before, Sumy encounters the same geographic issue and, in the same manner, has listed “accessibility” among the significant points.

The strategy of the American city of North Port, state of Florida (population c. 69 thousand) concentrates on community and brand (“2011-2013 Strategic Marketing Plan for the City of North Port,” 2011). The brand advertising was made as a part of the marketing strategy, where the community element shows the importance of “brand ambassadors” (usually locals who share positive messages about the settlement).

The case city of the dissertation, Sumy, shows the most neutral semantic kernel, where the community is left behind the top keywords. Meanwhile, “economics” appeared as a keyword for the first time in this research. The conclusion is that the creators of the Sumy strategy see the economics itself as a source of its improvement while working with the community, accessibility and brand in the other strategies are considered one of the primary layers of economic development.

**Table 7: Semantic kernel of the strategies**

City	Title of the vision block	Number of symbols	Semantic kernel
Helsinki	City marketing objectives and performance indicators	5281	indicator business event marketing organisation performance development
Whitehorse	Objective hierarchy and market positioning	6234	access community citizen government space value wilderness
North Port	Focus, Objectives and Goals	3405	community marketing plan brand strategy help community values
Sumy	Vision and mission	11618	development governance life economics

			necessary level effective
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Source: own elaboration

### Market segmentation comparison





A city marketing strategy relies heavily on market segmentation, a concept similar to its application in business. As with business ventures, understanding the personality, desires and requirements of (potential) consumers is imperative. I. Tózsza (Tózsza, 2011). gives a complex classification of target groups of urban marketing, covering the local population, managers (operators), investors, migrant workers, students, patients and tourists. It is important to note that the principle of priority dictates the hierarchical order of these groups. This hierarchy reflects their role as integral components of the city's competencies and offerings.

In Table 8, we can see the target audiences defined in each researched strategy. The cities of Helsinki, Whitehorse and North Port simultaneously outline residents and tourists as their customers. Whitehorse's strategy is the narrowest in the sense of targeting, as it is explained by the limited resources and the attempt to focus on the most critical customers. Helsinki defines very peculiar target audiences like potential start-ups or business decision-makers, usually part of the "business" audience or "investors". Nevertheless, it gives a researcher a reason to enlarge I. Tózsza's list of the target groups adds start-ups as a unique group, combining features of innovators, businesses and potential investors. North Port has the most classical but short market segmentation (explained by the absence of "students", "investors", and their "operators"). However, the researcher disagrees with the definition of the stakeholder group, as stakeholders of the city, according to Freeman, are the residents, the government and the business. In other words, the stakeholders are the entity's members, whose support and activities make it functional. Therefore, without them, the entity ceases to exist (Freeman & Reed, 1983). In the case of North Port, the stakeholders were limited to municipal officials, staff and community organizations.

The situation is trickier with Sumy's development strategy as there is no concrete market segmentation, but it has the repeatedly occurring term "concerned parties" (зацікавлені сторони). Remembering that stakeholders are a synonym of the latter, it will be substituted hereafter. According to the strategy, stakeholders include city council representatives, business associations, universities and the civilian sector. Interestingly, each target group is perceived as

an institution (“university” instead of “student” and “business association” instead of “business owner”), which gives us a ground to talk about the institutionalization of the Sumy political decision-making processes. Therefore, we need to understand that the strategy perceives the groups mentioned above as the implementors of the document: “All parties concerned in the successful implementation of this strategy need to be ready for cross-sectoral lobbying of decisions of central authorities on the direction of targeted investments needed to increase the level of accessibility of the city of Sumy”. The quote gives ground to assume that the cooperation between authorities and other actors is one-sided. The central government makes decisions and informs, and the other groups lobby them.

**Table 8: Target groups of the researched strategies**

 <p><b>Sumy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stakeholders (Sumy city council, business associations, universities, civilian sector)</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Whitehorse</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residents</li> <li>• Tourists</li> <li>• Yukoners (outside Whitehorse)</li> </ul>	 <p><b>Helsinki</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Citizens</li> <li>• Decision-makers and policy-makers</li> <li>• Potential start-up and entrepreneurs</li> <li>• Travellers</li> </ul>	 <p><b>North Port</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Residents</li> <li>• Visitors and seasonal residents</li> <li>• Stakeholders (officials, municipal staff, community organizations)</li> <li>• Business</li> </ul>
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Source: own elaboration

The vision and market segmentation of Sumy's socio-economic development strategy is quite vague. The semantic kernel of the strategy's vision block and target groups does not clearly understand the strategy's focus. It gives grounds to presume that strategy consists of a standard set of phrases and does not tackle specific city problems or take challenges compared to Helsinki (start-up, business, event management) or Whitehorse (accessibility).

As for the target audiences addressed in the strategy, they are considered as institutions, but not as individuals ("university" instead of "student", "business association" instead of "business owner"), which gives us ground to talk about the institutionalization of Sumy political decision-making processes and governance in general. Real-world experience shows us there are attempts of central and local governments to go over the "institution-based approach" in governance and prioritize communication with real people.

Sumy's development strategy ostensibly perceives the city's customers as the implementors of the document. It is logical to turn stakeholders into partners, but it is mistakenly understood that partnership is about compliance with decisions taken "above". The partnership must be reciprocal and built on cooperation, not orders. In conclusion, the idea of stakeholders partaking in the strategy's implementation should be written in the document's vision.

The emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic has significantly impacted urban dynamics, causing a surge in relocation trends as individuals and businesses seek environments that meet growing demands for remote work and improved quality of life. In response to this paradigm shift, cities are now forced to re-evaluate their marketing strategies, focusing on innovative approaches to carve out new niches that fit the changing landscape influenced by the pandemic. This transformation highlights the importance of adaptability in urban development and the need for strategic marketing initiatives that address emerging preferences and capitalize on evolving urban living patterns. It will be discussed in the following subchapter.



### **4.3. DISCUSSION ON A NEW CITY MARKETING NICHE DUE TO COVID-19 AND THE RELOCATION TREND**

Relocation to small cities is becoming more and more widespread. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, life in big cities was expensive, but more importantly, it has become potentially dangerous with overcrowded public transport, supermarket queues, and narrow streets. Inhabitants of cities have begun seeking to escape from perceived danger, and as an alternative, they are considering short-term or long-term relocation to smaller cities or towns with adequate infrastructure, fresh air and lower prices. Working from home (known as “home office” in Hungary) became a catalyst for this trend as lots of office workers switched to remote working.

Meanwhile, several countries are introducing a new type of visa – a visa for remote work. This type of employment has different names depending on the state: freelance employment, self-employed, virtual working, and global citizen visa. The variety of titles does not change the concept– countries strive to attract members of the affluent creative class to live and conduct economic activity in their territories because people mostly spend money where they live.

This part of the research addresses three questions about relocation: (1) Why do people move from bigger cities to small ones? (2) What does the creative class pay attention to before choosing a settlement for permanent or temporary relocation? (3) How can the governments of small cities reinforce their attractiveness to potential residents and tourists from the creative class?

The author gathers the experiences of people who relocated from cities with over one million residents to small cities (less than five hundred thousand inhabitants) and explores the reasons and motives for their relocation. The research is based on in-depth interviews with migrants, both internal and external, and online published interviews and blogs. From the informants’ responses, it is possible to trace precisely how these people describe their motivation to move. It should be noted that both primary and secondary sources were used for content analysis. In this research, primary sources refer to in-depth semi-structured interviews, whereas secondary sources include blogs, online published interviews and columns. The researcher conducted ten in-depth interviews via Zoom, Skype or with the help of the Instagram and Facebook social networks. The interviewees were personal contacts of the researcher, whose ages varied from 23 to 41 years old. As for the secondary sources, fourteen blogs and online magazine interviews were analysed. The respondents’ occupations include photographer, doctor, owner of

coworking spaces, frontend developer, marketing consultant, editor, graphic designer, software development manager and an owner of an internet shop. The respondents' places of residence were Kyiv, Lviv, Sumy, Mukachevo, Bila Tserkva, Warka, Moscow, and Minsk.

Before conducting the personal interviews, the researcher identified the main categories of expected reasons for the changing city based on the literature search review presented below. These included the cost of living, rental prices, entertainment, ecology, safety, public transport and pace of life. While carrying out the interviews, other topics such as climate, logistics (transport connection with other cities and countries), inner distances, coworking spaces, local intimacy and networking were added as they arose. The "Ecology" block was enriched with the reason for the availability of "farmer's food", which was often mentioned by the respondents.

We used the United Nations classification of the cities' size. According to this taxonomy, megacities have more than 10 million residents, large cities have 5 to 10 million inhabitants, and medium-sized cities have 1 to 5 million. In contrast, cities of 500,000 and 1 million were not assigned a specific category in the World Migration Report (2015), and cities with fewer than 500,000 residents were called small. This research will focus on cities in the last category.

In 2017, the German company Zipjet shared the results of a study that ranked cities from those with the lowest to the highest stress levels (Юлия Томап, 2017). To identify which cities' residents are most or least at risk of being under stress, the researchers outlined several criteria, dividing them into four groups: "City", "Environment", "Finance", and "People". The first group included the following criteria: population density, green areas, passenger traffic (public transport), road traffic (traffic jams, road quality), safety in the streets and number of hours of sunshine. The environmental category involves air and noise pollution levels and the city's illumination. The "Finance" group considered the unemployment level, debt per capita, social security (amount of social payments, insurance), and the average cost of living per family per month. The last group, "People", included criteria of mental health (number of suicides; the number of psychologists), physical health (percentage of GDP allocated to health care), gender equality and ethnic equality.

The relocation criteria defined in this research process partially correspond to those developed by Zipjet. Some criteria, such as gender and ethnic equality, were mentioned only once; however, given that all the respondents and authors of the blogs are representatives of the Caucasian race and Slavic ethnicity (Ukrainians, Russians and Belarusians) and they moved to

the cities where this was the prevailing ethnicity. This could be considered to be a limitation of this study.

While developing the interview blocks, the author also referred to some new city development trends described on the leading city portal of the Finnish capital, “My Helsinki” (MyHelsinki, 2020). Recent world events influenced these, and logically, they mostly correspond to the concept of a slow life (slow living and the green economy) as a counterbalance to stressful and hurried big city life. These included:

1. Safety (hygiene, security)
2. Work-leisure balance. the blurring of the boundaries between work and leisure
3. Space and silence
4. Responsible tourism (includes the impact of our actions on the local population)
5. Digitalization

A considerable academic literature has developed on migration and the reasons behind it. Many years of empirical research have been devoted to these areas using large amounts of statistical information, surveys, as well as qualitative research, including in-depth interviews (Benson M., Clark W.A.V., Lisowski W., Maas R., O’Reilly K., Bobek A., Chen Y., Rosenthal S. S.). However, Vinogradskaya has rightly pointed out that most research on relocation is devoted to migration from villages and towns to big cities (Vinogradskaya, 2019). Meanwhile, studies about migration in the opposite direction, the narrow category of migration from big cities to smaller ones, are much less common. Furthermore, research into this type of migration usually concerns the retirement-aged population, which tends to move to or spend a long time in rural areas and smaller cities while paying almost no attention to the employment opportunities there (Cromartie & Nelson, 2009; Lyu et al., 2021; Williams et al., 2000). It is also worth mentioning the processes of suburbanization that are widely covered in the Central European literature. This tendency has been typical for post-socialist countries since the 1960s, triggered by industrial decentralisation and housing problems (Biolek et al., 2017; Hlaváček et al., 2019; Timár, 1992). The reasons for suburbanization in the 20th century included the opportunity to farm the household land, but it was vital not in the sense of a healthy lifestyle like nowadays, but for survival in times of food scarcity.

#### **4.3.1. CREATIVE CLASS THEORY**

It is often mistakenly assumed that cities predominately increase their revenue due to outsider investors or tourists when the core contributing participants are their residents. Therefore, the local population maintains the city budget by taxes and investments (e.g., into real estate). Keeping in mind the prevailing population trends (June J.H. Lee et al., 2015), the municipal budget of small cities will shrink concurrently with the population decrease. Therefore, cities should plan strategically to retain the local population and attract new inhabitants. This statement can be reinforced by the Creative Class theory developed by Richard Florida.

Until not long ago, urban research focused on institutions as the fundamental object of their analysis. More recently, however, skills have become the core element in societal urban research (Mellander & Florida, 2012). The nature of the economy is changing – the industrial revolution is being replaced by the skills revolution, where the success and development of places are based upon knowledge, innovation and skills.

In studies where the variable is considered to be the creative class, the correlation between it and economic development is positive in the countries of the Western world (Marlet & van Woerkens, 2007; Mellander & Florida, 2007, 2012; Möller & Tubadji, 2009; Naylor & Florida, 2003). Although similar research has not been conducted in the countries of the post-Soviet region, the influence of the creative class on technological development is significant, and it is hard to doubt that.

The notion of “class” was introduced by Karl Marx and refers to a set of people who have common interests and who tend to think, feel and behave similarly (the term “lifestyle” can be used in this regard). These similarities are fundamentally determined by the types of work that provide them with sustenance. Marx’s theory also explains the reasons for social disparity through the existence of class stratification. Even though some contemporary sociologists have announced the death of Marx’s theory and consider its usage in research as “bad manners” (*mauvais ton*), the founder of the creative class theory, Richard Florida, refers to just such a notion of class (Александрова, 2008).

Originally from the United States of America, currently living in Canada, the economist and sociologist Richard Florida, professor of the Rotman School of Management at the University of Toronto, wrote the book “The Rise of the Creative Class,” which was published in 2002. In this monograph, Florida puts forward a hypothesis about the formation of a new social stratum in modern megacities, which not only positively affects the growth of the urban economy and

the quality of life but also represents a prototype of the personality of the future, as well as the main factor of future social progress.

According to Florida, the core of the creative class is primarily composed of people employed in science, technology, architecture, design, education, art, music and entertainment, i.e. people whose work produces new ideas, technology, and products. In addition to these professions, the creative class also includes specialists with sophisticated, independent, and non-standard ways of thinking, although a high level of education is not an integral part of the creative profession. For example, a musician with only a school certificate but involved in the music industry is also part of the creative class. Membership in the class is conferred not by qualification but by pursuing a creative profession.

Richard Florida finds the solution to the riddle of the chicken and the egg (economic development and creative people) on the side of the people. He assumes that the presence of creative people in a settlement makes it flourish and develop (Mellander & Florida, 2012).

In other words, companies and productions will be located in places with a high concentration of talent. The endogenous growth theory supports this argument, stating that large numbers of high-skilled and creative people lead to innovation and knowledge spillovers (exchange of helpful information, sometimes involuntary leakage) (Dumont & Meeusen, 2000). These positive effects, in turn, are caused by inhabitants' close interaction, the high probability of their paths crossing, and low travel costs (Glaeser, 2000). However, Paul Krugman harshly criticizes this hypothesis due to the lack of firm statistical evidence to support it (Audretsch et al., 2014).

At the same time, cities have to compete to attract the creative class and a high-skilled labour force by providing a satisfying and suitable living environment. By this, Florida means not only high-quality infrastructure (which is, of course, extremely important) but also the tolerance level of the members of the community. By tolerance, we mean accepting different ideas, backgrounds, behavioural patterns or appearances by society. It means society does not judge or exclude a person based on their beliefs, nationality, or sexual orientation. Richard Florida investigates the effect of tolerance towards gay people in his research, which positively correlates with the level of technological development and economic prosperity of the cities – the more tolerant a society is, the more prosperous its economy is.

Both human capital and creative class positively influence the economic development of a settlement. Consequently, cities should focus on attracting talented and skilled people who can

be absorbed into the ranks of residents. Cities also have to meet some other criteria to be appealing in the eyes of potential citizens. Tolerance, one of the main criteria for moving, was mentioned. This is especially true for skilled migrants from other countries. Knowing that the local community is xenophobic not only dissuades individuals from moving to a city but also becomes a barrier for international companies wishing to open offices or factories. Secondly, cities should be rich in the aspect of culture. The creative class is very selective regarding their physical environment, the variety of leisure activities available and mobility. Many coffee shops, bars, restaurants, green urban spaces and comfortable public transport are essential components of the “ideal” city for the creative class.

### 4.3.2. REASONS FOR RELOCATION

Raphael Bob-Waksberg wrote an engrossing story, “Move across the Country”, where he describes the process of escape from “Sadness” to another city: “Move across the country and watch the short yellow lines shoot past you down the pavement. ... Settle somewhere fertile, plant a new you and watch you blossom.” (Bob-Waksberg, 2019). These lines perfectly describe the anxious mind of a person who has moved to a new destination, searching for a better life or fleeing undesirable circumstances.

The COVID-19 pandemic has raised many new questions concerning the choice of a place to live. Is it safe enough in a sense of security and hygiene? Do we have the space to find a balance between work and leisure? Are there places to find silence at moments when we need it? Quite apart from their admittedly high housing prices and rising inequality, cities with a million population can offer thousands of square meters of office spaces, entertainment opportunities and non-stop public transport. It may be asked, however, whether this still matters as much as before Covid-19. People have arrived at the point where the “15-minute city concept” of the decentralized city looks much more appealing than a two-hour commute. At the same time, closeness to nature is increasingly appearing in the list of requirements when choosing a residence.

This brings us to the rise of small cities that combine peace and calm with mild hustle and bustle. Metropolises usually attract people because of the career opportunities they offer, bearing in mind that many international companies locate their headquarters there. However, the recent switch to remote work allows employees to visit office spaces only a couple of times

a week or not to visit them at all. This company strategy is called “Remote-first”, which “makes working remotely the primary option for most or all employees” (VMware, Inc, 2021). Not to mention freelance workers, who help companies respond quickly to the changes in the volatile business environment by working under commercial contracts instead of conventional fixed-hours contracts from any part of the world with flexible working hours. This presents a unique opportunity for small cities to attract talent, and therefore, they should develop their communication capacities and reconsider the focus of their promotion activities (or create everything from scratch in case they are absent).

This does not mean that the creative class, which mostly dwells in big cities, will immediately move to the provinces. They may also consider the option of “slow tourism”, meaning that remote workers and freelancers can spend more than a week in one place, bringing economic benefits to the settlement. Consequently, cities and towns need to make efforts to end up on the itineraries of creative professionals. Moreover, there is always a chance that a person might end up settling in the place without the prior intention.

What does the creative class consider before choosing a short-term or long-term relocation destination? Eleven main reasons emerged from the interviews conducted for the research described here. In each respondent’s case, the combination of pull-in motives is unique and prioritized differently. Below each motive, several quotations from the interviews are presented, which can reveal more precisely the vision behind their choice.

1. **Climate.** It was a significant factor, especially in Northern countries, where winter lasts more than three months. People are looking for more sunny days due to suffering from a seasonal affective disorder or even to save on heating expenditure. Nevertheless, Global Warming has created an opposite trend where people flee from the heat to the North in summer.

*Having moved to Kaliningrad, we found a better climate and ecological situation, became calmer, and spent more time at the seaside and in the fresh air. (A., Astrakhan – Kaliningrad, editor) (Воробьев, 2021)*

2. **Lower prices.** The internet website Numbeo allows users to compare living costs in different countries and cities (Figure 13). Receiving the same wage in different cities may be set against the different quality of living conditions. While 250 euros is

only enough to rent a room in one city, this may be sufficient for a three-room apartment in another.

🏠 Rent Per Month	Kiev (Kyiv)	Sumy	
	 Edit	 Edit	
Apartment (1 bedroom) in City Centre	16,026.80 ₾	4,562.50 ₾	-71.53 %
Apartment (1 bedroom) Outside of Centre	9,335.01 ₾	3,312.50 ₾	-64.52 %
Apartment (3 bedrooms) in City Centre	29,421.37 ₾	6,437.50 ₾	-78.12 %
Apartment (3 bedrooms) Outside of Centre	16,315.14 ₾	5,142.86 ₾	-68.48 %

*Figure 13: Comparison of the rental process in the Ukrainian cities Kyiv and*

*Sumy, 2021*

*Source: numbeo.com*

*To find a good studio apartment in Warsaw, you must spend a minimum of 2000 zloty [430 euros]. In Sumy, you can find a one-room flat for 3000 hryvnias [90 euros]. (N., Warsaw – Sumy, 23 years old, software development manager).*

**3. Quality of environment** (farm produce, air, light and noise pollution). In big cities, it is not easy to organize the procurement of fresh food directly from the farmer. Usually, more prominent players organize logistics and distribution. In towns, weekend vending can still be found when farmers pay for a stall in the marketplace only for Saturday and Sunday.

**4. Closeness to nature, landscape, and seaside.** Some decide to move precisely because of the lack of greenery in the city and, in turn, the remoteness of or lack of accessibility to nature (which is over a one-hour trip away). Also, some respondents were haunted by the desire to live by the sea or in the mountains, which is also closely related to the air quality and the environment.

*At any moment, I can reach the forest in 10 minutes. (D., 31 years old, doctor)*

**5. Logistics.** There was no consensus on this issue among the respondents since, for many, it is vital for a city to have acceptable transport connections with the outside world (including an airport) and to be relatively close to the capital. Even five hours by bus to the destination is not an obstacle for others.



**6. Leisure and sports facilities.** Interestingly, most interviewees did not regard the lack of a wide range of entertainment as a reason not to move to a city. The main idea of many was that they could organise their leisure time if necessary. They also claimed that a pair of sneakers is enough to maintain good physical shape. However, the presence of theatres, museums, sports facilities or shopping centres was naturally a plus for the settlement.

*I have everything planned this week: on Saturday, I go to a master class in calligraphy, and on Sunday, I go to a business game. [...] People initiate and organize their own leisure. (R., Kyiv – Sumy, 26 years old, graphic designer)*

*You can establish something new if you cannot find it [type of entertainment] in your city. You need to make up your mind. (N., Warsaw – Sumy, 23 years old, software development manager).*

**7. Public transport quality.** Small towns do not need many public transport units or can even exist without them since reaching any part of the city within half an hour on foot or by bicycle is possible. In small cities, however, public transport is an essential component. Also, the respondents repeatedly raised the possibilities of car and bicycle sharing.

*We do not need public transport in Warka; everything can be reached on foot or by bike. Moreover, excellent cycling infrastructure allows you to do that with pleasure (K., Warsaw – Warka, 41 years old, photographer).*

**8. Coworking space.** Coffee shops can also serve as a place of work in the absence of coworking spaces, and for some of the interviewees, it turned out to be not at all necessary since they prefer to work from home and leave a visit to a cafe for friendly conversations or other events.

**9. The pace of life.** All the respondents agreed on this point, believing that the hectic pace of life in large cities increases stress levels and worsens the quality of interpersonal communication and the ability to maintain relationships. Intimacy is what makes small towns attractive to many.

*In a big city, there are many people, and you do not feel free when you move in the stream. (D., 31 years old, doctor)*

**10. Distances and traffic jams.** Short distances save time, allowing for much more free time, which creates a better balance between work and rest. Respondents appreciated not having to spend money on a taxi at night. If the city is safe enough, they can get anywhere on foot.

*I feel sorry for the time it took me to get somewhere [in Kyiv]. And it does not matter if you have personal transport or not. All the same, you will be stuck in traffic jams. (D., 31 years old, doctor)*

*In Sumy, I can control my pace of life. In Kyiv, because of the distance and transport, it was impossible. (R., Kyiv – Sumy, 26 years old, graphic designer)*

**11. Networking and local intimacy.** This point overlaps with the one about the pace of life. People strive for high-quality interpersonal communication and long-term relationships, which provide a sense of integration and involvement. In a small town, it is much easier to achieve this because fewer events and fewer participants make them more likely to meet again. In turn, albeit indirectly, everyone knows each other, which ensures the absence of discomfort and creates a “homely atmosphere”. Moreover, the “Six Degrees of Separation” theory is reduced to two or three.

*Now, I strive for quality communication, not quantitative. (R., Kyiv – Sumy, 26 years old, graphic designer)*

*In small cities, there is sometimes even more quality entertainment than in large ones: intimate celebrations or events. People get closer there and communicate. [...] I feel that the purpose of events in large cities is simply to make money. (D., 31 years old, doctor)*

### **4.3.3. HOW CAN THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF A SMALL CITY FOR RELOCATION BE REINFORCED?**

After analysing the reasons for relocation given by the respondents and what they pay attention to when choosing a settlement, the author outlined the following points when developing a strategy to attract the creative class for relocation and slow tourism.

1. Urban planning in conformity with the international standards of safety and challenges of sustainable development (Bajnai & Józsa, 2019; National Association of City Transportation Officials, 2020). The shining example of the latest proposed practices in transportation and street design in response to the COVID-19 pandemic is a document entitled “Streets for Pandemic Response & Recovery” developed by the National Association of City Transportation Officials in the framework of its programme called “Global Designing Cities Initiative”. Specific designs for places like markets, school areas, or dining streets can be found there, governed by safety principles, public health, and support for local businesses.

2. Google Maps (adding professional pictures of the city’s landmarks). Google Photos research can be found among tips on moving and relocation. These everyday tips include searching for local Facebook groups and Instagram locations (H. Wise, 2020).

3. Creation and development of participatory budgeting. This allows citizens to have absolute power in allocating the municipal budget through their projects and voting procedures. Moreover, it allows the public administration to see the current demands of society through the thematic scope of the applied projects.

4. Support local farming by giving them space for trade in the city.

5. Development of infrastructure in the natural surroundings of the city’s territory (usually in the outskirts) to save the environment while allowing people to enjoy time outside. This may include wooden pathways, cycle lanes, specialized places for bonfires or barbecues, and pavilions providing shelter from the rain or sun.

6. Investments in the green economy (bicycle sharing system and cycling infrastructure, e-transport, development of the charging station network).

The local councils of small cities should consider short-term and long-term relocation trends as an opportunity for attracting new inhabitants and tourists to their settlement, primarily if their budget previously depended on income from tourism. The main task of the local government is

to create safe conditions for residents because of the new challenges that the pandemic has brought and to continuously research the population's needs.

Respondents to the survey who moved to small towns before the pandemic gave the following reasons for relocation: calmness, a healthy environment, low cost of living, short distances, intimate communication and ease of maintenance. During the pandemic, the list of reasons expanded to include safety, a smaller population, and, consequently, the absence of crowds, a low need for using public transport, the ability to move around the city by bicycle quickly, and the absence of traffic jams. For many, the catalyst for relocation during the pandemic was the transition to remote working. Wages have remained at the same level, but in a small town, they can afford more for the same money.

As noted in the study by Richard Florida, the creative class is, for the most part, quite demanding of urban conditions and its opportunities. According to our study, some pay attention to the climatic conditions and the number of sunny days in the city, while for others, urban landscapes, the sea or mountains are paramount. Undoubtedly, the creative class considers the area's ecology, and during the interviews, farm products and the possibility of purchasing them directly from farmers were mentioned more than once. Closeness to nature is just as crucial for those who move; one of their life problems in a big city was that it took at least an hour to travel to the forest or countryside. One controversial issue turned out to be the topic of logistics, or, in other words, the transport connection of the city with big cities, countries or the capital. For some, this is paramount (some even demanding the availability of an airport), while for the rest, it does not matter because even the prospect of spending five hours on the road to their destination does not scare them. The quality of public transport was a reasonably common criterion among the respondents, as well as the availability of bicycle or car rental/sharing services in the city. It was a surprise for the researcher that the creative class does not consider small cities boring in terms of activities and the availability of entertainment. Most believe people can organize their leisure time if they lack something in the city. Social networking sites make it easy to gather like-minded people in the area. Naturally, not everyone has a high level of initiative, so the latter cannot be generalized for everyone.

Among the main recommendations for the administration of small towns for how to attract a creative class for short or long-term visits, it is worth highlighting urban planning within the framework of new international safety standards, creating or maintaining a participatory budget, thanks to which residents receive financial support for their initiatives and for developing their

networking; supporting farming by providing farmers with points of sale and interaction with urban residents; development of hiking and cycling infrastructure on the outskirts of the city, where people can interact with natural features such as forests, rivers, mountains, and investing in the green economy.

#### **4.4. POST-WAR TOURISM OF UKRAINE IN THE FRAMEWORK OF CITY MARKETING**

This chapter represents a logical continuation of the preceding discussions on city marketing as a theoretical concept, city image, city marketing versus city branding, the city's target audiences in the city marketing framework, and the right-to-the-city concept. Herein, our focus shifts towards investigating the post-war tourism phenomenon in Ukraine and its integration into the city marketing framework. The aim is to elucidate how some cities have strategically positioned themselves as appealing tourist destinations in the aftermath of military conflicts. By scrutinizing the historical context, evaluating the evolution of the city image, and analyzing the utilized strategies, we aim to discern the mechanisms underpinning the promotion and revitalization of these urban locales.

Being in a state of war, the President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy, has announced the creation of funds to restore the country after the war: "We already understand how we will be restoring our country. We are already forming special funds for the restoration of Ukraine. There are already four of them: the Foundation for the Restoration of Destroyed Property and Infrastructure of Ukraine, the Fund for Renewal and Transformation of the Economy, the Fund for Servicing and Repayment of Public Debt, Small and Medium Business Support Fund. (Forbes Україна, 2022). Referring to Ukraine's leadership and the importance of long-term planning, the author considers it appropriate to discuss the perspectives of territorial marketing and tourism activity in Ukraine after the war's end.

After the war, numerous cities in Ukraine will be held hostage by a dark military past and an unstable, blurred future. The devastation that reigns around will shift the focus away from areas such as marketing and tourism. However, the author considers this an erroneous approach since it is strategic thinking, analysis of resources and timely response to target audiences' requests that will drive the country's recovery by leaps and bounds.

This part of the chapter aims to answer the following question: What are the main tasks of post-war tourism in the framework of city marketing in Ukrainian cities after the war, considering the visiting motives of the potential tourists?

The war has become a catalyst for denoting a single cultural identity for all Ukrainians facing one enemy, a crucial component of national branding (Skoko et al., 2018). Before the war, the country was characterized by a split in society between Russian speakers and Ukrainian

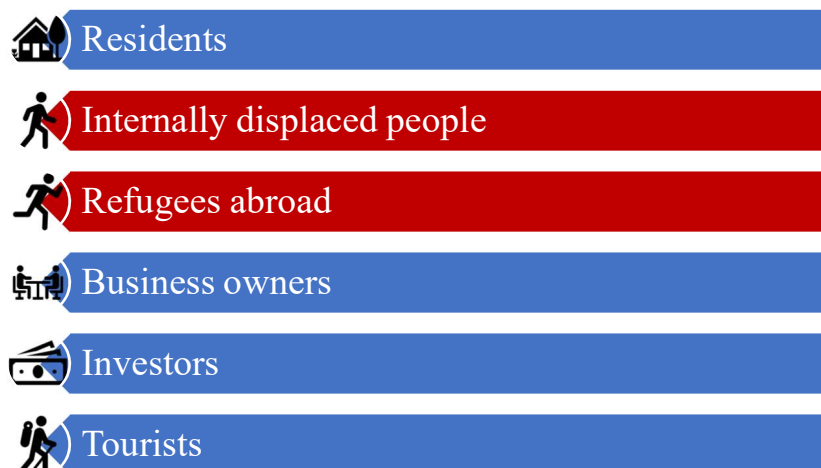
speakers, considering different languages as an element of division. Nevertheless, the war gave the exact answer to many who had problems with self-identification and rallied the Ukrainian people; the language they speak does not matter anymore. What matters is a person's position; Ukrainian society is on the rise.

In the context of the war, it is impossible not to mention how much partner countries help Ukraine. Numerous funds and initiatives are being created (Mlaba & Lowery, 2022), and many cities and states are allocating funds from their budgets for humanitarian assistance within Ukraine and for Ukrainian refugees. For example, in Hungary, free train trips for refugees are available; in Budapest, public transport is free for Ukrainian passport holders until the end of March 2024; tents with free food and water were set up at railway stations, and volunteers help with finding accommodation and laying a route to another country where refugees are heading in transit through Hungary. Some countries also supply weapons (“Which Countries Are Sending Military Aid to Ukraine?,” 2022).

According to the UN vote, the world is united in its recognition of Russia as an aggressor country. The UN General Assembly voted by an overwhelming majority of 141 against 5, demanding Russia immediately withdraw its forces from Ukraine and abide by international law (European External Action Service, 2022).

Based on the definition, the main initial task of the responsible authority is to create a strategy (up to 3 years in the post-war period) aimed at the development that will have an umbrella effect on all other city council departments. By ‘umbrella’, we mean creating a system where everyone is responsible for a specific sector of activity and works for the same goal. Before writing a strategy, it is necessary to analyse the financial and human resources they deal with. The strategy should include the approach for the allocation of the recourses from the Foundation for the Restoration of Destroyed Property and Infrastructure of Ukraine, Fund for Renewal and Transformation of the Economy, Fund for Servicing and Repayment of Public Debt, Small and Medium Business Support Fund. The necessary documents should be prepared for the central government to prove and rationalise the budget allocation for the settlement.

An integral element of city marketing is a target audience. In the case of a post-war city, we consider residents, internally displaced people (IDP), refugees abroad, business owners, investors, and tourists as target audiences. ‘Internally displaced people’ and ‘refugees abroad’ are not part of a typical consumer composition and are therefore highlighted in red (Figure 14).



*Figure 14: The target audiences of post-conflict cities  
Source: own elaboration*

Communication with target audiences can continue post-war through social networks such as Telegram. Many use it to monitor the news, track air warnings and alarms, and communicate with loved ones. Government channels received a significant number of followers during this period compared with the pre-war period (Figure 15). For example, more than thirty-two thousand user accounts are subscribed to the Sumy Regional Military Administration Telegram channel and almost eight hundred thousand to the President's Office channel. People are aware of the spread of fake news. Thus, according to the rising numbers of governmental channel followers, users tend to trust official channels of information, such as the Regional Administration, the city council, and personal channels of governmental officials. English news channels were also created to inform the foreign audience about what was happening in Ukraine. The channel 'Ukraine NOW' was created on the 26th of February; up to the 16th of March, it has more than 100 thousand subscribers. It also alternates in German, Polish, Italian, French, Hungarian and Spanish languages. These channels have an audience of 152 thousand who are considered potential tourists.





Figure 15: Comparison of Telegram publications views in the Sumy Regional Military Administration channel on February 16 (from the left) and March 11 (from the right).  
Source: application Telegram

The main task of these channels is not to lose their relevance after these events and to continue to inform citizens about the news and generate applicable content. It is also possible to conduct surveys among subscribers on various issues. Naturally, they will not be considered official since the subscribers of a particular channel are not limited to the boundaries of one city, region, or even country. However, an approximate public opinion on a particular issue will be possible to obtain. Working through these channels with refugees and IDPs will be especially important. Broadcasting the return to normal of the situation and the restoration of the city will be a significant reason for those who have moved to return to the city.

It is impossible not to mention the increase in the recognizability of many cities in Ukraine that are under heavy attack by enemy troops: Sumy, Chernihiv, Mykolayiv, Okhtyrka, Bucha, Irpin. The author of this article, having lived in Ukraine for 22 years, can argue that even for many Ukrainians, the geographical position of the city of Sumy before the war was unclear. Some even asked in what part of Ukraine this city is located. With the active demonstration of military maps and green corridors in the news, the map of Ukraine for internal and external audiences

no longer seems to be unknown, and therefore, many settlements have become household names lately. For example, in a Google search as of March 16, when we enter the query “Sumy Ukraine”, the news tab gives out more than six million mentions, including in Reuters, The Guardian, Al Jazeera, and CNN.

### **Dark tourism vs. Phoenix tourism**

The term ‘dark tourism’ concept was introduced in 1996 by J. Lennon and M. Foley, and it is about “sites and events that are associated with death, disaster, suffering, violence and killing” (Lennon, 2017). Some literature sources also label it as “thanatourism”.

In the post-conflict tourism opportunity spectrum work, the authors describe three directions for developing post-war tourism: phoenix, hybrid and normalization. The restoration and the emergence of new tourist magnets, sites, goods and experiences characterize the first. The stage of hybrid development “adds in ‘regrowth’ of a predominantly past cultural and heritage base”, and normalization is typical for mature destinations that have not been a territory of conflict for a long time (Boyd et al., 2021).

The adjective ‘dark’ has a negative connotation of evil and harm. If the goal is to attract a tourist who, during and after the visit, will be filled with compassion, empathy and admiration for the country that “is rising from the ashes”, then the concept of phoenix tourism is the most appropriate. Phoenix symbolises immortality and resurrection after death through fire (Figure 16). The name “phoenix” originates from the Greek word, which means red (fiery) colour in connection with the legend of its rebirth in a cleansing flame. The Phoenix gained popularity after being featured in J.K. Rowling’s “Harry Potter” series of novels.



*Figure 16: An example of a touristic campaign logo for post-war tourism in Ukraine. The blue and yellow symbolize the Ukrainian flag, and the red spots represent blood. Source: created by the author on canva.com*

In their work on Phoenix tourism, S. Causevic and P. Lynch write about the cathartic experiences tourists get during their visits to these or other sites accompanied by a guide. The importance of guides cannot be underestimated, as they are like a magnifying glass for the tourist to see the details and read between the lines. Moreover, history knows cases when guides were used as a source of propaganda. For example, starting in 1938, General Franco in Spain used tour guides to promote his political ideas when the country was in turmoil (Causevic & Lynch, 2011). E. Cohen's research identifies two types of guides: the pathfinder and the mentor (Erik Cohen, 1985). The first type is more about accompanying and showing the way to unique places and natural objects (for example, climbing a mountain).

Nevertheless, if we talk about mentors, they provoke tourists to search for meaning; after their excursions, people leave with questions and food for thought. It has a longer-lasting effect than sightseeing; figuratively, this term can be replaced by "sightfeeling" when it comes to mentoring tours. Such knowledge of the city will evoke empathy, self-reflection, and discussions in the online and offline environment of the tourists even after they return home. Therefore, one of the tasks of post-war tourism will be the quality training of guides-mentors, who, in addition to foreign language skills and knowledge of history, are eyewitnesses of events. This activity can be an excellent part-time job for students of geographical, historical and tourism faculties or for people who lost their jobs due to conflict (professional retraining).

In conclusion, the message for potential visitors could be that post-war tourism in Ukraine is about witnessing and helping the revitalization in every aspect. The desire to live is stronger than death, and Ukraine is still alive and welcomes everyone to witness that. Its nation, culture and history are alive, and its spirit is unbreakable. Your visit will be a massive gesture of support for the local community and greatly benefit the Ukrainian economy.

### **Foreign and domestic experiences**

There are many examples in the world of how ongoing and post-conflict countries and cities resumed the flow of tourists to their territories (Germany, Egypt, Israel, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Rwanda). The domestic example is Ukrainian Chornobyl, where there is still a high radiation background (*Radiological Maps in Ukraine Online: Radiation Monitoring - SaveEcoBot*, 2022), but this does not stop domestic and foreign tourists from visiting this zone

to look at the devastation caused by human error (Marton et al., 2020). And this is evidenced by statistical data, which were summed up by the State Enterprise “Center for Organizational, Technical and Information Support of the Exclusion Zone Management” (ДП "Центр організаційно-технічного і інформаційного забезпечення управління зоною відчуження", 2022). According to the enterprise, in 2021, the exclusion zone was visited by 73,086, twice as many as in 2020 – 36,450 people. Tourist trips to North Korea, a closed state from the outside world, are also possible (koryogroup.com; uritours.com; koreakonsult.com) even though it ranks 30th in the fragile states index for 2021 (*Country Dashboard | Fragile States Index*, 2022). The flow of tourists continues to the former German Nazi concentration and extermination camps, such as Auschwitz-Birkenau: in 2019, over two million tourists visited their sites (Memorial and Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau Former German Nazi Concentration and Extermination Camp, 2020). According to Stone, we consider these places as ‘sites of death’, and the second type of site is ‘associated with death’ (Boyd et al., 2021).

If we look at the Hungarian capital, Budapest, there are monuments to the genocide associated with the dreadful events: the shoes on the Danube embankment and the monument to the victims of the Nazi occupation. Also, in Budapest, there are tours of the Jewish quarter, where the ghetto was located from November 1944 to January 1945 (site of death), and there is a cemetery on the territory of the large synagogue where the Jews who died during the Holocaust are buried (Еврейский музей и центр толерантности). It is a neighbourhood with many ruined bars, restaurants, and nightclubs.

Another European capital that is overflowing with dark tourism sites is Berlin. During any city centre tour, you will be taken to the Führerbunker, Checkpoint Charlie, and the Holocaust Memorial. You will also be advised to visit the Topography of Terror, which is an outdoor and indoor history museum located on the site of buildings that were the headquarters of the Gestapo and SS during the Nazi regime from 1933 to 1945. The history of the city is woven into the history of wars, and no story about the capital of Germany can now be told without the Berlin Wall, which memorial is included in the top 10 sights of Berlin (“Berlin's Top 10 Attractions,” 2013; Tripadvisor, 2022).

Bosnia and Herzegovina is at the stage of hybrid tourism since the conflict in the territory of this country took place from 1992 to 1995, which is still a part of the population’s living memory. At this stage, researchers note the importance of separating the country’s image from the conflict and redirecting the attention of a potential tourist from the war to other

achievements of the country and its unique characteristics (Skoko et al., 2018). It can be assumed that the hybrid stage begins 15–20 years after the end of the conflict. A striking example of hybrid tourism is the assortment of souvenir stalls in Sarajevo, where on the same shelf, you can find postcards with the main sights of the city, the 1984 Olympics, and ones depicting the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand, a meeting of the Bosnian army during the siege or coffins burying (Naef, 2012). In Sarajevo, you can easily join dark tours, which bring you to thematic places of the war. The main ‘attraction’ on this route is the Tunnel of Hope, now serving as a museum, which was the only connection between the city and the outside world during the siege (N. Wise & Mulec). It symbolises resistance, like the Road of Life through Lake Ladoga to Leningrad during the Second World War.

Sri Lanka, where the civil war lasted for almost 30 years, reopened to the world in 2009, and the tourism industry has been showing positive results. In the studies about tourism in Sri Lanka, a survey was conducted, where one of the questions was about the acceptance of visiting the military ruins. Most respondents desired a post-war experience (Jayasinghe, 2010), showing visitors’ interest in post-conflict sites. This raises the question of the tourists’ motivation (push factors) to visit such places.

In the bachelor’s work “Tourists’ Motivation for Engaging in Dark Tourism” (Deutsch, 2014), in the process of literature review, the author revealed that people are primarily driven by curiosity, fear and acceptance of the fact that death is an integral part of the life cycle. However, since it is impossible to go through the death stage and return to the previous one, visitors “touch” death through the prism of other people’s destinies. Also, in the process of her research, the author of the latter work states that people visit such places with an educational function to gain more information and knowledge about the events associated with a particular site; it is not only an interest but also a desire to ascertain the veracity of what happened and to recognize it through one’s presence and experience. Visiting Ukraine, tourists will also be able to get this information directly from the witnesses of the war, each of whom has their personal story, unlike the others. These circumstances add emotional depth to the perception of information.

We should mention cinematography to push factors for coming to dangerous sites. The number of foreign visitors to Chernobyl in 2021 was 33914 (ДП "Центр організаційно-технічного і інформаційного забезпечення управління зоною відчуження", 2022). For most of them, according to the survey, the factor that prompted them to come was the release of the series “Chernobyl” on HBO in 2019, filmed in Ukraine and Lithuania.

Also, it is essential to mention the international movement of volunteers to developing countries and its rising popularity. According to researchers in this field, volunteers choose this path as they are driven by push factors like the desire to help others, make a difference, live in another country, learn something new, gain experience and save humanity (Akintola, 2011; Topp et al., 2015; Wearing, 2003). It is worth mentioning that referring to the Ukrainian government, “20,000 foreign nationals have applied to join the fight against Russia” (Petkova, 2022), which also shows interest and concern among the international community. They filled out the applications through the specially created website [ukrforeignlegion.com](http://ukrforeignlegion.com). A similar to the latter platform can be created for volunteers in the period of post-war rehabilitation.

Consequently, restoring Ukrainian infrastructure can become a magnet (a pull factor) for the flow of volunteers from other countries, investments in the funds mentioned above and tourism; people aspire to become a part of history, or at least ‘touch’ it.

The Russian Federation attacked Ukraine and is now in a state of war. The country will need to get out of the crisis and, at the same time, use all possible resources and tools, including city marketing. The world is currently supporting Ukraine, and a similar level of support can be expected after the end of the war. Therefore, the world community should be told what the country needs and what kind of assistance it requires.

First, it must be considered that the consumer composition of urban marketing has changed and now also includes refugees abroad and internally displaced people. Communication is well established with all categories of target audiences through Telegram channels. The main thing is not to abandon them and, after the hostilities, shift the focus of attention from the war to restoration.

In tourist strategies and materials, it is worth abandoning the term dark tourism and giving preference to phoenix tourism. Thus, the mental picture of the consumer will not reflect death and suffering, which depress perception, but rebirth and restoration.

The experience of many countries shows that it is possible to return the flow of tourists to the country. Tourists are driven by many factors that need to be “warmed up” by appropriate actions on the part of Ukraine to encourage potential visitors to make the trip and not just stay as a line on their wish list.

Summing up, we can single out the following motives for tourists to visit Ukraine after the end of the war and the appropriate measures so that motivation turns into action:

<b>Push factors to visit</b>	<b>The tasks to create pull factors and attract the visitor</b>
Interest in post-war life, people who survived the hostilities, and curiosity about the destroyed objects. An individual need to feel the risk and danger.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To ensure foreign media coverage with the right messages for potential visitors.</li> <li>- To maintain the Telegram channel activity.</li> <li>- To facilitate movie creation based on these events.</li> <li>- To provide tour guides training.</li> <li>- To conserve the buildings beyond economic repair as a visiting site (temporary or permanently).</li> </ul>
The manifestation of sympathy and admiration for the people opposing the aggressor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To involve the locals in the communication with visitors.</li> <li>- To collect the war diaries (text/audio/video) with personalized stories and prompt their dissemination.</li> </ul>
Desire to participate in the restoration of infrastructure or community support as a volunteer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To create an online platform with locations where volunteers are needed and the possibility to apply.</li> <li>- To ensure a safe environment.</li> </ul>

**Table 9. Motives for tourists to visit Ukraine after the war's end and the tasks to create push factors.**

The author also considers it necessary to list the questions that have been raised in the process of the study and require further attention from scientists of different fields to find answers:

- How do we bring back citizens of Ukraine from foreign countries?
- How do we bring back an investor?
- How do we advance domestic tourism?

## 4.5. CASE STUDY CITY OF SUMY PROFILE

### **Sumy Historical Profile**

Periods of Sumy development are presented in a few literary sources (Куйбіда et al., 2009; Макухін et al., 1973; Шейко et al., 2010). Sumy has a rich history dating back to ancient times, significant periods of development fall on the 17th-18th centuries. The city was founded in 1655 by colonel Herasym Kondratiev and Cossack settlers from the Stavysk of the Belotserkivsk regiment. It was a key military stronghold on the southern borders of the Russian Empire, defending against the attacks of the Crimean Tatars. Over time, Sumy became the administrative center of Slobidska Ukraine, and later of Sumy Governorate. The name of the city comes from the rivers Suma and Sumka, which flow around it on two sides.

Historians explain the emergence of Sumy by several factors. Economic, national and religious pressure from the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth led to the mass emigration of Ukrainians to the southern and eastern regions of the Moscow State in the 17th century. The tsarist government's policy of strengthening borders against external threats contributed to the further development of cities, and Sumy became a strategic military outpost.

During the eighteenth century, Sumy flourished as an administrative and economic centre, witnessing the growth of crafts, trade, and capitalist activity. By the beginning of the 20th century, Sumy turned into an industrial centre where the machine-building, chemical, construction and furniture industries developed. However, due to the world wars and subsequent political upheavals, economic problems arose.

In modern times, Sumy faced economic difficulties, which prompted efforts to modernize and diversify the economy. Despite these challenges, Sumy remains an important cultural and economic centre in Ukraine, reflecting its enduring historical significance and resilience to changing socio-economic conditions.

### **The Russian Invasion**

The invasion of the territory of Ukraine by the Russian Federation began on February 24 at 5 am Kyiv time. The Russian army began to strike at military infrastructure facilities. In the following days, the attacks were not limited to militarized targets. Shelling and bombardments are also being carried out in residential areas of many Ukrainian cities; thousands of civilians, including children, have been killed (Dan Sabbagh, 2022).



On February 24, the press service of the State Border Service of Ukraine reported that the Russian military crossed the state border of Ukraine, including the territory of the Sumy region, using heavy equipment and artillery. According to the State Border Service of Ukraine, the main hostilities began at 15:10 local time in the cities of Okhtyrka and Konotop (Романенко, 2022). At 18:00 on February 24, according to the General Staff of the Armed Forces of Ukraine, the Russian offensive was stopped on the Uzh River. The Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Ukraine reported that by February 25, the offensive had also been stopped near Okhtyrka (Суспільне, 2022). The Ground Forces of the Armed Forces of Ukraine reported on their Facebook account that the battle ended on Kondratiev Street, where the cadet school and troop bases are located, as a result of which six people were injured, and the first losses appeared (Кизилов, 2022). At 20:00 on the same day, the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation stated that the RF Armed Forces had blocked the cities of Sumy and Konotop. As of April 4, almost the entire territory of the Sumy region was liberated from the occupiers, and only a tiny part of the Russian troops remained in the region, but they were driven out (Новинарня, 2022).

The Russian government refuses to call it a war, and following the lead, all the Russian media name it a ‘military operation’ in Ukraine (Interfax.ru, 2022; Реальное время, 2022; ТАСС, 2022). The main goals of this ‘operation’ are the demilitarization and denazification of Ukraine. The first one has the ground considering the Ukrainian army as 22nd in the Global Firepower ranking of the “available active military manpower by country, from highest to lowest” (2022 *Military Strength Ranking*, 2022). The second aim is quite questionable, and considering it negatively affects the Ukrainian image, the author finds it necessary to provide some counterarguments.

Neo-Nazi organizations, followers of Nazi ideology, operate almost everywhere (Figure 17). The reasons for their occurrence can differ: wars or conflicts on the state’s territory (high level of aggression), poverty, and the desire to join the “strong” to feel part of the group.



*Figure 17: The compilation of the paper titles of various online media on the neo-Nazi Translation of the headings from Russian: In three years, the number of Nazism rehabilitation cases in Russia has increased by 2,5; In Russia, the Federal Security Service reported the exposure of neo-Nazis in three regions*

*Sources: tass.ru, euronews.com, justice.gov, independent.co.uk, interfax.ru*

It is also necessary to understand what the term ‘denazification’ is:

*The process of bringing the leaders of the National Socialist regime in Germany to justice and of purging all elements of Nazism from public life carried out especially between 1945 and 1948 (Lexico Dictionaries | English, 2022).*

Quantitative data that proves the attitude of people towards this ideology in Ukraine does not exist, but some data will disprove the “popular support” for ultra-right sentiments in the country.

In the elections to the Verkhovna Rada (the Ukrainian parliament) of 2019 2.15 per cent of the country voted for the political party All-Ukrainian Association “Svoboda” (euro-sceptic far-right nationalists) (Центральна Виборча Комісія - Вибори Народних Депутатів України 2019, 2021). They got one seat in the parliament. At the same time, the pro-Russian political parties “Opposition Platform - For Life” and “Opposition Bloc” received the support of 13.05 per cent and 3.03 per cent, respectively (49 seats out of 423 in total). In the same year, almost

all Ukrainian nationalist parties and radical organizations joined forces and nominated one candidate, Ruslan Koshulynsky, for the presidency of Ukraine; he got 1.62 per cent of the vote (*Центральна Виборча Комісія України - «Вибори Президента України 2019»*, 2019). It gives ground to state that Ukraine is a victim of territory subjugation and intrusion in an attempt to change the political regime and impose a different ideology.

Thus, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, including the Sumy region, in February 2022 led to military escalation and casualties. The stated goals of the invasion, including the demilitarization and denazification of Ukraine, are doubtful and not confirmed by evidence. The Russian government and the media refuse to call the invasion a war. Instead, they used propaganda to make people think the invasion was a good deed. The Ukrainian government and the military resisted the invasion and put efforts in place to repel the invaders, but the situation remains tense and uncertain. The international society condemned the invasion and introduced sanctions against Russia.

### **Sumy Industrial Profile**

Sumy experienced significant economic growth during the eighteenth century, marked by the expansion of crafts and trade. By 1780, the town had eight stores and a variety of industries, including glass, tannery, and saltpetre factories. It hosted four annual fairs that attracted goods from all over Ukraine, Russia and Europe, which contributed to the spread and territorial expansion of Sumy.

The end of the seventeenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries saw the abolition of serfdom and the establishment of capitalist relations, which contributed to the rapid development of industries such as leather and soap making. By 1846, there were 15 enterprises in Sumy, including leather, candle, brick, and soap factories. The industrial landscape continued to develop with the establishment of an iron foundry in 1859 and 26 factories by 1889.

The economic development of Sumy accelerated after the abolition of serfdom in 1861. The construction of the Pavlovsk Refinery in 1869 and the operation of the Sumy Railway Station in 1878 became a catalyst for industrial growth. By 1896, 28 enterprises worked in the city, including the outstanding Sumy machine-building workshops.

After industrial expansion, Sumy faced economic difficulties at the beginning of the 20th century, exacerbated by the First World War. Despite the setbacks, the industrial base of the

city expanded, and by 1912 38 enterprises were operating. The population almost doubled between 1898 and 1913, reflecting the economic dynamism of Sumy.

The October Revolution and subsequent civil war led to the decline of industry and trade. However, post-war reconstruction efforts rejuvenated Sumy's industrial sector, restoring such key facilities as a machine-building plant, a textile factory, and agricultural machinery enterprises.

The industrial potential of the city continued to grow, the Sumy Machine-Building Plant became a leading medium-sized enterprise in the production of chemical equipment. Until the 1940s, there were numerous state enterprises and industrial cooperatives in Sumy.

The Second World War caused great damage to Sumy, which necessitated large-scale post-war reconstruction. Efforts were focused on the revival of the engineering, chemical, construction and furniture industries, which led to the creation of new enterprises and industries.

From the late 1950s to the 1970s, Sumy saw a surge in industrial construction, with new factories such as electron microscopes and car plants improving the city's industrial profile. By 1978, the industrial production of Sumy compared to 1960 had increased by 289 per cent due to investments and the introduction of new enterprises.

At the beginning of the 21st century, Sumy turned into an industrial centre with more than 3,000 operating enterprises specializing in the production of yarn, pharmaceuticals and packaging. The city prioritizes innovation, diversification and foreign investment to support economic growth.

Sumy's economic history reflects a trajectory of growth, transformation and sustainability, highlighted by its strategic focus on industrial modernization, innovation and global competitiveness in recent years.

### **Sumy Population Profile**

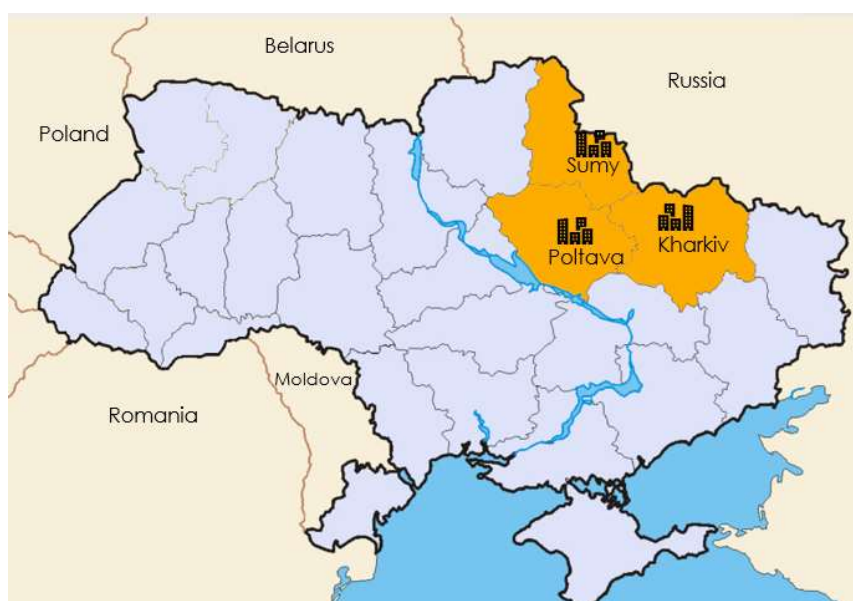
The population of Sumy has changed over time, with periods of growth and decline. According to historical sources, in 1658, about 2,000 people lived in the city. By 1732, the population had grown to about 7,700 inhabitants. During the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the city's population grew, driven by the expansion of crafts and trade and the development of industries such as leather and soap. In 1898, the population of Sumy was about 20,000 people. By 1913, the population had nearly doubled to about 38,000.

During the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the population of Sumy underwent several changes. The economic crisis of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century led to the closure of small businesses and craft workshops, reducing the city's population. The population began to grow again in the 1910s, but the First World War halted this growth. In 1939, the population of Sumy was about 47 thousand people. The Second World War and the city's occupation by German troops led to a significant reduction in the population. After the war, the city began to recover, and the population grew again. In 1959, the population of Sumy was about 87 thousand people.

In recent years, the population of Sumy has continued to grow, albeit at a slower pace. According to official figures, the city's population for 2021 was about 270,000 people. The population of Sumy is diverse; representatives of various ethnic and cultural groups live in the city. Most of the population is Ukrainian, but there are also significant numbers of Russians, Belarusians, and other ethnic groups. The city also has several religious communities, including Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant denominations.

### **Sumy Economic Profile**

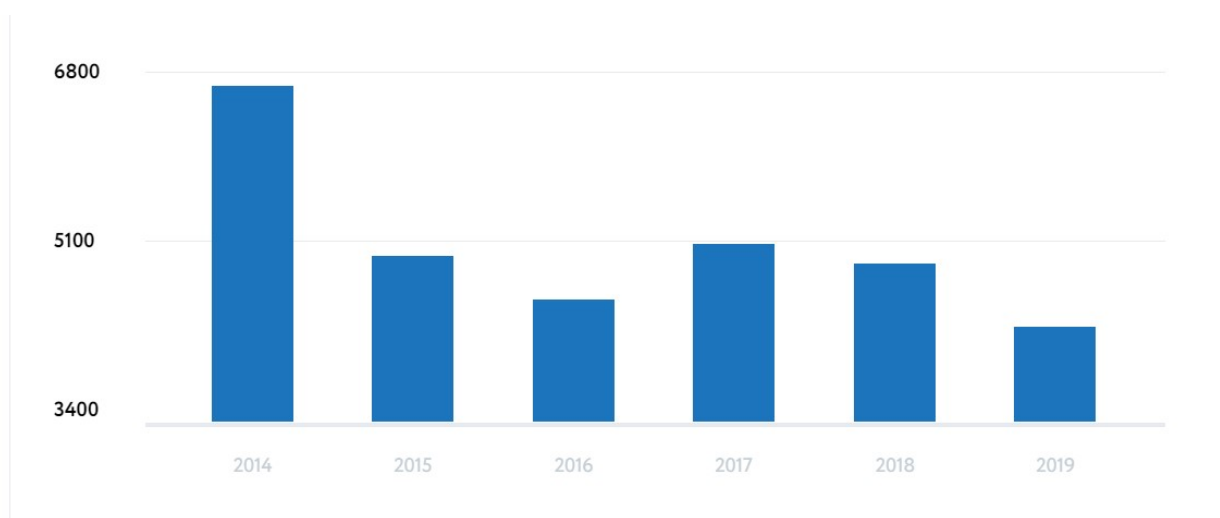
There are nine economic regions in Ukraine. The city of Sumy is part of the North-Eastern economic region, which consists of the Poltava, Sumy and Kharkiv administrative regions (Figure 18). The most developed industries of the North-Eastern region are mechanical engineering and metalworking, a significant share of which falls on the military-industrial complex. The consumer and food industries occupy the second and third places, followed by the chemistry, petrochemistry, and building materials industries.



*Figure 18: North-Eastern economic region of Ukraine*

*Source: uk.wikipedia.org and own inscriptions*

Currently, the main problem for this economic region is the considerable border (over 600 km) with the Russian Federation. The military conflict in the Donbas region and the annexation of Crimea in 2014 became governing factors of the deterioration of trade intercourse. Figure 19 shows Russia's exports to Ukraine between 2014 and 2019. The difference can be easily detected and explained by introducing trade restrictions between Ukraine and the Russian Federation. Moreover, it is considered a potential zone for further conflict development.



*Figure 19: Non-resource and non-energy exports of Russia to Ukraine, mln. \$*

*Source: www.exportcenter.ru*

Risks for the region's economy and budget have increased because of the expected reduction in the revenue base in 2020 due to quarantine, lockdown and changes in legislation as part of the action package aimed at a fight against COVID-19. From the 12<sup>th</sup> of October 2020, Sumy was labelled as a Red Zone. Regular and irregular transportation of passengers by road, rail, and urban electric transport is prohibited; all public events are cancelled except for contests and competitions, but they are held without spectators. Shopping and entertainment centres, beauty salons and gyms should be closed. In other words, the city's economy is stagnating.

Sumy is the regional centre of the Sumy Region located in the North-Eastern part of the country. The population of the city is above 250 thousand, of which 100 thousand constitute the labour

force (40 per cent of the population). Above all, 30 thousand students reside in the settlement (12 per cent) (Департамент фінансів, економіки та інвестицій СМР, 2020).

In 2019, the City Council approved the Sumy Development Strategy 2030. In the foreword, the mayor of the city, Oleksandr Lysenko, mentioned the state of competitiveness: “After all, everyone understands perfectly well that in the XXI century, we are competing not only with cities within Ukraine, we are competing with the whole world. Therefore, it was important to formulate properly our priorities, strategic and operational goals.” (Сумська міська рада, 2019).

The European Union developed the methodology of the strategy creation as an instrument for development strategies planning and their implementation (the researched strategy does not provide a reference to the methodology description). It included opinion surveys, strategic sessions, and public hearings.

The strategy’s paragraph on the investment potential of the city includes project information Сумський Бізнес Хаб (Sumy Business Hub). It intends to help entrepreneurs cooperate, study, and exchange knowledge and experiences. The Hub has no website and can be accessed exclusively through the Facebook group. This project was created under the guidance of Sumy State University, which also explains the presence of the University’s programme promotion in the group’s news feed. The researcher contacted eight owners of small businesses in Sumy, and none had ever heard about this project or participated in its programmes.

In April 2020, the Antimonopoly Committee of Ukraine agreed to allocate about UAH 39 million of state funding over five years for developing the Sumy Industrial Park territory (Figure 20). This concept was approved by the city council of Sumy (Скакун, 2020). The announced period of operation of the park is 30 years. On its territory of 17.5 ha, according to preliminary calculations, up to 1050 jobs will be created. The priority types of economic activity include the production of light metal packaging, components for cars, in particular, electrical equipment and devices, the production of plastic products, and the food industry.

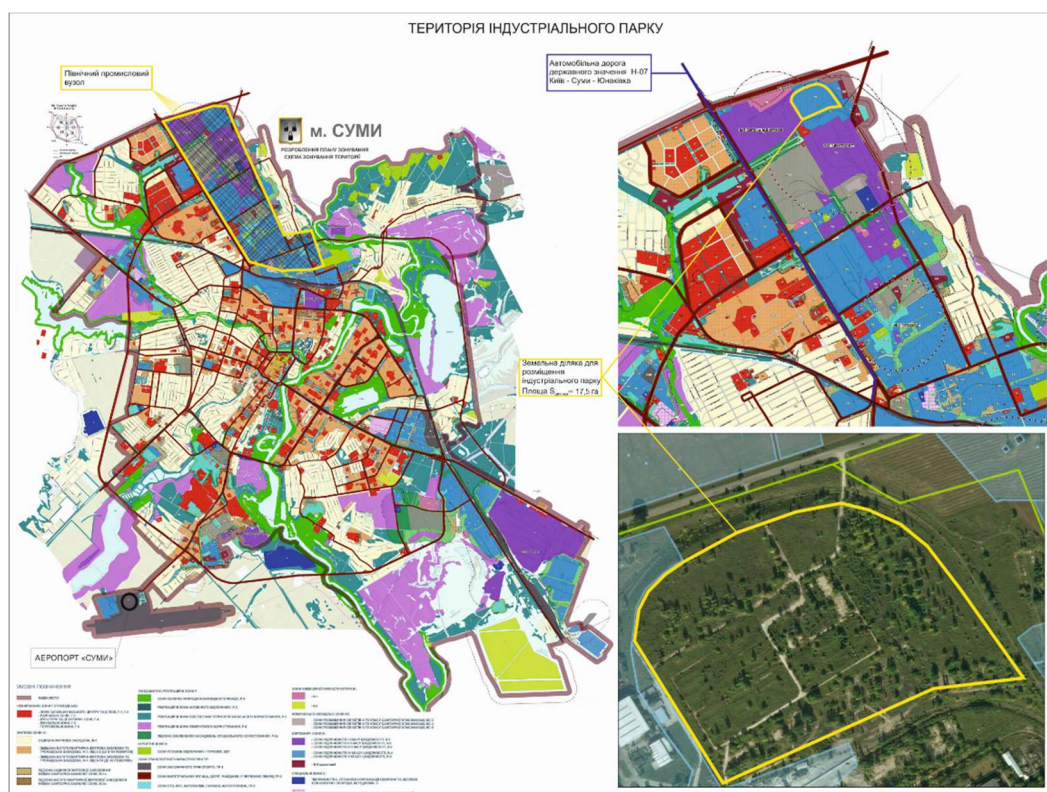


Figure 20: Territory of Sumy Industrial Park

Source: [www.visit.sumy.ua](http://www.visit.sumy.ua)

In conclusion, the city of Sumy faces economic challenges as it is close to the border with Russia and is located in the north-eastern part of Ukraine. The ongoing conflict in the Donbas, which has escalated into a full-scale war, and the annexation of Crimea have harmed trade between the two countries. The city's economy has been hit hard by the coronavirus lockdown. Despite these challenges, Sumy has developed an economic development plan until 2030. This plan includes the development of an industrial park and a business hub. However, the effectiveness of these initiatives is unclear as the business centre has little presence in the community, and the industrial park has not yet been completed. In general, it seems that Sumy is trying to diversify its economy and attract investment but is facing serious obstacles that could hinder its progress.



## **5. CHAPTER V: ANALYSIS OF THE COLLECTED DATA**

### **5.1. IN-DEPTH INTERVIEWS**

It was initially planned to collect 18 in-depth interviews in preparation for data collection. The researcher began conducting interviews in the summer of 2020; these were pilot versions to polish the interview script and hone the interviewer's skills. In the fall of 2021, the researcher returned to Ukraine to conduct the main series of interviews, compile a questionnaire based on them, and collect data. In February 2022, the Russian Federation invaded the sovereign territory of Ukraine; by that time, 11 interviews had been collected, the analysis of which will be presented in this chapter of the dissertation.

With the outbreak of the war, circumstances changed radically. First, from February to March, people ran to shelters every day under the threat of an air strike. Secondly, many have left for Western Ukraine or outside the country. The researcher considers interviewing the city's residents after the invasion inappropriate since the answers to the same questions will be completely different before, during, and after the war. People's value system has changed; security and the desire to survive overshadow all other needs. Therefore, it was decided not to conduct further interviews and to stop at 11 pieces; the same applies to 383 questionnaires. All interview descriptions are made using the past tense since not all of them are relevant today.

Interviews were conducted both online and offline. As a result, representatives of five target audiences participated in the interview: two residents (R), two business owners (B), three students (S), and two employees of the municipal administration (M).

The interview script was mainly the same for everyone, but depending on the time of the interview and the target audience, specific questions were added. For example, business owners were asked whether there was support from the authorities in supporting their business's development. Clarifying questions could also appear in the interview. On average, interviews lasted from half an hour to 50 minutes. The conversation was conducted in Russian or Ukrainian languages. All interviews were transcribed and subsequently translated into English.

The following method was chosen to analyse the interview: tables were created where you can find extracts from the answers to specific questions that contain important information for the study. The research considered it necessary to place these tables in the central part of the

dissertation since the reader needs to see concrete examples immediately confirming one or another conclusion during the analysis.

Before proceeding to a detailed analysis of each question, a brief description of each participant in the in-depth interview is presented. Hence, the reader understands what biographical factors influenced the respondents' answers.

Vlezko Nikolay, 52 years old, is a private entrepreneur who owns a small cereals production business. He was born in Sumy and lived there all his life. He considers the city comfortable for life. There was no governmental support for opening and developing his business.

Anna is 33 years old, a native of the city of Sumy, and a private entrepreneur; since 2015, she has owned a school of foreign languages. She lived in Canada and the USA for some time, which was a positive experience for her. At the time of the interview, Anna stated her desire to move to another country. She never received help from the city authorities in starting a business, only obstacles (due to the uncoordinated work of public utilities, the company did not operate for a week). Anna believed there were very few places in Sumy where you could go for leisure. She often travelled to other cities on weekends to unwind and have fun. She mainly described the inhabitants of the town of Sumy negatively.

The first interview was conducted with Olha, a 56-year-old Doctor of pedagogical sciences professor at Sumy State University. She belongs to a group of residents. She was born and raised in Sumy and has lived in this city all her life, except for the experience of five years living in Kyiv, the capital of Ukraine. Olha was not satisfied with the local administration and its management style. Moreover, she believed that most of the townspeople were ill-mannered and considered their attitude towards the city and other people disrespectful. Regarding her profession, she noted that every year, she notices an increasing motivation and interest on the part of students in education and study.

The following representative of the residential group is Victoria. She is a news and radio presenter, the author of a course on oratory, a native Sumy dweller, and has a higher education. Victoria is a patriot of Sumy, but despite that, she desires to move for professional development. A year after the interview, Victoria gave birth to a girl in a bomb shelter at the maternity hospital in Sumy. She says many life values have changed since the invasion. She escaped the war with her baby and now resides in Switzerland.

Yana Khodun, 28 years old, born in Sumy, is a former student of the Pedagogical University majoring in philology. Initially, from Sumy she could not find a job after graduation; therefore, she moved to Kyiv and has been living there for seven years, working as a freelance translator. Yana loves Sumy very much and calls the city her family; she often comes there to visit her mother and friends. Memories are of great value to her; the people for whom she comes to her hometown she calls “**emotional anchors**”, which the researcher finds a very accurate and apt term for this phenomenon.

At the time of the interview, Taisiya Obod was 16 years old; we talked with her in the summer, a month before the start of her last academic year at the gymnasium. Taisiya lived in Sumy all her life and dreamed of attending university in Kyiv because she believed there were more opportunities. Taisiya led a very active lifestyle and felt that bored people in Sumy lacked imagination and a sense of initiative.

Sas Serhiy moved to Sumy three years ago to start his studies at the Sumy State University with a degree in Physical and Occupational Therapy. Serhiy was born in the Lviv region, in the western part of Ukraine, and chose Sumy for his studies because his older sister had studied and lived here. He observed the city’s development in three years, so Serhiy considered settling down here after his studies.

Ihor Gannenko was 28 years old when he answered the interview questions. Back then, he was the director of the Municipal Institution Sumy City Youth Leisure Center of the Sumy City Council, the balance of which was the youth centre Romantika. Ihor joined the volunteer battalion when the war began and is now at the front line. According to Ihor, the best thing Sumy has is people. He noted that he had all the talented people in his phone book; in this way, everything could be implemented quickly, and any ideas could be realised.

Yevheniia, 24 years old at the time of the interview, was an employee of the city administration and an SMM specialist in the Department of Marketing, promotion and Tourism in Sumy. Now, she has completely switched to freelancing but remained to reside in Sumy. Yevheniia was very proud of the Sumy City brand project and considered it successful. She believed that people dissatisfied with life in the city have nothing to compare with because they have not lived anywhere else and have not travelled much. She always knew what to do in Sumy.

The first table presents the responses of all interview participants. **Questions about the experience of living in other cities and the desire to move were common** to all. From the information collected, we need to highlight the following points:

1. Speaking about people's reaction to the fact that the interviewee is from Sumy, almost everyone said they heard the question "Where is Sumy?". We are faced with a situation where people from other countries and cities have absolutely no idea about the city, and there are no associations and expectations. On the one hand, this is bad, because, without knowing the city, no one will go there. However, from the point of view of the city marketer, this is good news because a lack of image is much easier to work with than a negative one. Building a reputation from scratch and investing in messages that benefit the city is an incredible advantage. We understand that one of the tasks of the city is to increase its recognition, first within the country and then beyond its borders.
2. Respondents' desire to relocate was related to professional development and the opportunities presented in large cities, universities or companies. In this regard, it is difficult for Sumy to compete because the megacities' labour market is more developed, and wages are higher. In this case, people's decision to stay in the city can be influenced by the emphasis on the city's strengths, such as the measured pace of life, greenery, and short distances. These benefits will be discussed in more detail below.

**Table 10: Questions about the experience of living in other cities and the desire to move**

<b>Name of the respondent</b>	<b>Age (at the time of the interview)</b>	<b>Target group</b>	<b>Experience of life in other cities</b>	<b>What is their reaction when you tell someone that you are from Sumy?</b>	<b>Have you ever wanted to move out of Sumy?</b>
<b>Vlezko Mykola</b>	52	Business	None	Usually, it is normal, but sometimes people do not know where it is.	No
<b>Anna</b>	33	Business	Yes. In Canada in Vancouver and the US in Salt Lake City for four months. Those people are more focused on work-life balance. They do everything on time, and they are productive, but at the same time, they manage to slow the pace down.	Many people do not know this city.	Yes, to another country. I want to experience living abroad, to see how they live there. It is interesting to compare. If I like it, then I will stay.
<b>Olha</b>	56	Local	Yes, during graduate school in Kyiv, I also had an internship for five years.	Normal. When I was young, I was asked: where is it? People no longer ask; everyone knows Sumy State University because I mostly meet people from the education sector.	-
<b>Viktoriia</b>	27	Local	Yes.	I am proud that I am from Sumy. I met different people, Russian speakers, for example, they always ask me about the Russian language. They are amazed and say it is very cool to know two languages effortlessly from childhood.	Yes, in terms of professional growth.
<b>Khodun Yana</b>	28	Student	Kyiv	If people are a little older than me, I notice that they often say that I was in Sumy, a fabulous, green city.	I live in Kyiv now. At the time of graduation, there were few opportunities for philologists. Moreover, in Kyiv, there were more employment options. Nevertheless,

					with the development of remote work, moving to Kyiv no longer seems like an achievement to me. When I come to Sumy, I even have an idea to return. Borders are being erased. It does not really matter where you live now.
<b>Obod Taisiia</b>	16	Student	None	It is different. Many react neutrally, and some show curiosity. Once, a person asked, “Where is it?”.	I absolutely love the city at the moment. It is green and comfortable for life. Now I have a challenging year, the 11th grade at school. I must decide where I will go; now, I am at a crossroads.
<b>Sas Serhiy</b>	19	Student	I am originally from the Lviv region.	-	-
<b>Gannenko Ihor</b>	28	Municipality worker	None. I was born and raised in Sumy.	If people are not from nearby areas, some ask: “Where is it?”. I attribute this to a lack of education. For example, I know all the regions of Ukraine, even those where I have not been.	When I was finishing my bachelor’s degree in Sumy, there was an opportunity to move abroad. However, it coincided with local elections. Furthermore, I decided that if I lost, I would go. I was sure that I was the perfect candidate. It turned out that I won and decided to stay.
<b>Holovchenko Yevheniia</b>	24	Municipality worker	None	-	There was a desire—initially, bigger cities, such as Kharkiv and Kyiv. I thought life was in full swing there, with more opportunities for me. However, after several trips there, I realized that not everything is perfect. Therefore, I understood that in the future, I wanted a remote job that would allow me to live in different cities. Freelance.

None of the respondents spoke positively **about public transport in** Sumy (Table 11). This is one of the stains on the city's image, especially in the eyes of tourists, businesses and investors. Public transport is like veins on the city's body, which in Sumy are clogged and need urgent renovation and treatment. The car park has been outdated for a long time, and at the same time, local authorities do not want to go the way of saving energy resources; referring to the interview with Ihor Gannenko, the authorities like to save money and do not focus on the long-term perspectives and savings. An electric bus is much more expensive to buy than a diesel minibus. Only in a generation will the city budget feel the results of energy-saving purchases. Nevertheless, as in many areas, decisions are made based on "here and now" without long-term strategic planning. Moreover, when those close to power have selfish interests in the city's transport business, such changes seem even more impossible.

Sumy Mayor Oleksandr Lysenko came to his post from the business field related to transportation. It was one of the most potent private carriers, controlling several profitable routes. The city's residents hoped that after becoming the mayor, Mr. Lysenko would put all his transport experience and entrepreneurship into developing public transport in the city. Moreover, after becoming the mayor, he immediately gave up his transport business publicly and legally. Nevertheless, after eight years of his service, there were a few new trolleybuses and buses in Sumy, which replaced those that were no longer safe to use on the route from the gate of the depot.

What happened was that the government put the utility company on a general tender together with private carriers. It is worth noting that this is an excellent way to stop all attempts by utility companies to displace private entrepreneurs from the transportation market.

Several years ago, a new transport competition was held in Sumy among carriers under the new transport scheme developed in Kharkiv. This scheme did not undergo any significant changes. The authorities' logic was simple: they chose the most profitable routes, set the most favourable conditions and occupied these routes themselves. Furthermore, they gave all unprofitable routes to private companies. There are no complaints: this usual protectionism is within the law's limits in the community's interests and favour of public transport. As a result, competition exists, but everyone knows the winner, so the private business sector is not strongly motivated by development and improvement. Public transport has no competitors, so we have such negative reviews among the population who do not want to use public transport in Sumy.

The very organisation of a trip by public transport seems stressful to some residents. For example, the minibus does not stop at every bus stop but only on oral request. No stop alert buttons exist, so the passenger must yell to the driver across the vehicle to get out. For some people, this is incredibly difficult due to their introverted nature. Moreover, what to do in such a situation when people do not speak the local language? In other words, public transport is not ready to receive foreign guests, instantly creating the impression of an inhospitable closed city. While stop announcements can be heard on trolleybuses through speakers, they do not have English translations. An alternative solution to this problem can be the installation of screens in the vehicle with a demonstration of stops along the movement of vehicles. However, this solution is even more costly than translating the stop announcement into English.

In recent years, municipal buses and trolleybuses have been equipped with a geo-tracking system. Choosing transport and understanding how long you must wait for the following vehicle has become more convenient. However, these innovations did not affect minibuses.

A particular problem exists regarding night transport, and it is simply absent. Some residents cannot get from the centre to remote areas of the city after eight in the evening. The alternative exists only in the form of a taxi.

Travelling around the city by bicycle is unsafe; some even jokingly call it an extreme sport. Even though only children under 14 are legally allowed to ride a bike in pedestrian zones, older people also choose this option for their safety since the city's cycling infrastructure leaves much to be desired. At the same time, cycling on the sidewalk endangers pedestrians. Therefore, the city needs to develop a network of bicycle paths to strive for an image of environmental friendliness and increase the level of safety both on the road and in pedestrian zones.

One of the positive characteristics of the city of Sumy is its compactness and the fact that a person does not need much time to get to the necessary destination on foot. Many people prefer walking rather than using unreliable and stressful public transport. This idea of walking and the city's greenery can become one of the pillars of the strategy, focusing on health and convenience.

Steps to take:

- Create a reliable scheme of night transportation;
- Develop the cycling infrastructure;



- Shift public transportation system from mini-buses to buses and trolleybuses; explain to private carriers that procurement of mini-buses should be replaced by buses.

Table 11: Questions about transport mode

Name of the respondent	Age (at the time of the interview)	Target group	Do you use public transport in Sumy?	Have you ever thought about cycling?	How do you like people's driving style in Sumy?
Vlezko Mykola	52	Business	Now, I do not. I own a car, so it is more convenient.	-	The culture is improving a bit. However, idiots are everywhere.
Anna	33	Business	No. It is terrible. When I cannot drive, I would rather walk. It is better to breathe fresh air and spend the same time.	-	-
Olha	56	Local	I am not satisfied with the transport. The minibuses have a regular schedule, but the convenience and occupancy are very high. Trolleybuses are more or less good and comfortable but rarely run. Buses are full. After 8 pm, there are almost no public vehicles.	-	Bad, many violations. Now, no one keeps order on the road.
Viktoriia	27	Local	I am not too fond of public transport in the city of Sumy. Because it is uncomfortable and inconvenient, the conditions that entrepreneurs create are disrespectful towards Sumy residents. I walk everywhere. From this point of view, Sumy is a city of a dream, because in 40 minutes you can get from point A to point B. It is very convenient.	I love cycling. I actively use it when I am in the countryside. I love comfort very much; I cannot afford extreme sports. In Sumy, cycling is extreme. When Sumy has a standard infrastructure, I will do it with pleasure.	Complete chaos.
Khodun Yana	28	Student	I rarely use transport, but I noticed that it is awful with transport after 9 pm.	-	-
Obod Taisiia	16	Student	Four years ago, I could not live without transport. However, during Covid-19, it was scary to ride in public transport with crowds of people. Furthermore, when everything calmed down with	I ride only on sidewalks; I do not go on the road, which is scary.	-

			the pandemic, I continued walking; now, I don't use transport.		
<b>Sas Serhiy</b>	19	Student	In the beginning, after I moved, it was not very easy. I could not orient myself at all. In minibuses, it is impossible to understand which stop is where. Moreover, the driver does not stop without the demands of the passengers.	-	-
<b>Gannenکو Ihor</b>	28	Municipality worker	Horror. I have not used it for three years since I bought the car. We have a powerful minibus lobby. We buy everything cheaper. Instead of one electric bus, they would instead buy five diesel ones.	-	Very calm. Nevertheless, it seems that driving is politer in Kyiv.
<b>Holovchenko Yevheniia</b>	24	Municipality worker	I only use it when I see a trolley bus approaching a stop. Minibuses are a big problem. The fare has increased, but the quality has not. They promised that they would operate until midnight, but they did not. I mostly walk. In half an hour, I go from one point to another.	I do not need a bicycle. I would only cycle as a sport and recreation. I do not see the point. It is challenging to park; you constantly fear somebody will steal it.	-

After analysing the answers of respondents on the topic of entertainment and how they spend their free time, we can conclude that the family is the principal value for many because if you look at the answers, then you can see that the interviewees prefer to spend their ideal day or weekend with their families (Table 12). The collected word cloud (Figure 21) shows that family, home, breakfast, and coffee are the most frequently mentioned words and attributes of comfort and cosiness. Consequently, residents of the city of Sumy confirm the characteristics of intimacy, closeness and comfort, which can be an excellent leitmotif for a strategy to promote city interests. For many business investors, their business is a family-run enterprise, or their company is built on the concept of a family. Therefore, this is a potent and advantageous pull factor for attracting these target audiences and resources to Sumy.

Again, we are dealing with the initiative of the residents, who claim that there is no good reason to complain that the city is uninteresting. Each person can change something around them by being proactive and creating. In other words, if something does not suit someone, act.

An important point was the realisation that the young audience of the city lacks extreme sports, which in their answers was embodied in an amusement park. The image of a calm city will not be disturbed by the presence of an extreme park or an amusement park, but on the contrary, it will become an outlet for thrill-seekers and expand the audience of tourists. It is a project worth serious consideration.



*Figure 21: Wordcloud for answers about an ideal day in Sumy.*

*Source: Created on monkeylearn.com*

Steps to take:

- Use strong family values of the residents in the city strategy (example: “In Sumy, it is cosy like at home”);
- Keep a budget for local entertainment initiatives;
- Promote active sports;
- Consider developing the amusement park project from a long-term perspective.

Table 12: Questions about entertainment and free time

Name of the respondent	Age (at the time of the interview)	Target group	They say that nothing is happening in Sumy. Do you agree?	How do you usually spend your weekends?	What is your ideal day in Sumy? (places and activities mentioned)	What entertainment or activities do you miss in the city?
<b>Vlezko Mykola</b>	52	Business	There is something. We go to the theatre. Not often, but we go.	Usually, I work. However, we try to take someone somewhere for a glass of tea. Sometimes we go to a restaurant.	-	Amusement park
<b>Anna</b>	33	Business	Yes, I think we have very few places to go.	We go somewhere with friends to sit or play board games.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to go out for breakfast;</li> <li>- go to the park;</li> <li>- go out of town to Kharkiv or Kyiv.</li> </ul>	The park is missing. Amusement park. Some art centres.
<b>Olha</b>	56	Local	I am not an avid party-goer. I mostly spend my weekends at home.	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to walk in Linden Alley;</li> <li>- near Altanka;</li> <li>- to go out and drink coffee;</li> <li>- to be with the family at home or in a restaurant;</li> <li>- to go to the theatre.</li> </ul>	-
<b>Viktoriia</b>	27	Local	No, I am afraid I have to disagree. If you do not like something, then go ahead and change it.	A trip out of town, a cafe, a meeting with interesting people, acquaintances, a theatre.	It will end at home at dinner with the family. It will start with a workout with my favourite coach.	
<b>Khodun Yana</b>	28	Student	-	I can go for a run. We mostly walk around the city. We also have a tradition of going to the cinema. I love the theatre, going to the river, and organizing a picnic.	-	-

<b>Obod Taisiia</b>	16	Student	No. There is always something going on here.	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- to make cheesecakes, have breakfast with the family;</li> <li>- to go to the city centre for a walk;</li> <li>- to go to a coffee shop, discuss plans for the future;</li> <li>- at home on the couch, turn on a movie, make popcorn, and enjoy time with your family.</li> </ul>	The Kozheduba Park needs to be restored and new amusement rides installed.
<b>Sas Serhiy</b>	19	Student	It may have been so before. However, now everything is fine. In summer, there are always some competitions and events.	We walk around the city with my friends.	-	-
<b>Gannenko Ihor</b>	28	Municipal ity worker	-	At work. We try to spend time actively. However, sometimes, you want to lie on the couch and watch a series all day.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- breakfast out;</li> <li>- to go to the market and drink pomegranate juice, look at people, and buy something;</li> <li>- coffee;</li> <li>- to explore new cafes;</li> <li>- activities in nature;</li> <li>- to ride bicycles, stand-up boards, and kayaks.</li> </ul>	Some extreme things like skydiving and jumping.
<b>Holovchenko Yevheniia</b>	24	Municipal ity worker	No, people are just lazy and do not want to search.	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- breakfast at home;</li> <li>- to go for a run or go to the gym, then to a language lesson;</li> <li>- to meet friends for lunch at a coffee shop.</li> </ul>	-

The researcher was able to interview two tourists, Dmytro and Victoria, who came to the city together for two days at the invitation of a resident. Interviews were conducted separately. Before that, they had never been to the town, and, interestingly, even though Dmytro grew up in the neighbouring region in the city of Chernihiv, he had no idea about the city of Sumy, just like Victoria from Zaporizhzhia. At the time of the interview, the couple lived in Kyiv. They drove to Sumy from Kyiv and stopped at a rented apartment, where they were very dissatisfied with the living conditions.

Nevertheless, the visit exceeded all expectations (Table 13). Dmytro noted that he was pleasantly surprised that many cultural objects were restored and well-groomed. The city seemed to him interesting from the point of view of architecture, not industrial, unlike other eastern towns. Dmytro's rating of Ukrainian cities included Sumy in the top 10. Nevertheless, at the same time, he noted that in Sumy, nothing is outstanding, no grand landmark, for which it is worth visiting Sumy. Victoria mentioned the same thing.

One of the sights mentioned was the central cemetery, which became the last point of the evening walking tour of Mystical Sumy. There is the grave of Kharytonenko, created by the famous French sculptor Crosier. Victoria noted the eclecticism in the architecture of the city, which left a pleasant impression.

Of the entertainment, tourists noted active sports because one day, they went kayaking on the Psel River. At the same time, they highlighted the presence of theatres in the city, hipster places, and the opportunity to fly on an aeroplane and look at the city from a height at an affordable price.

Among the negatives, Dmytro pointed out many outdoor advertising and stalls, unnecessary shops in the city centre, advertising chaos and a lack of design code. In his opinion, this creates the impression of a poor city.

It is essential to mention that both would recommend visiting the city of Sumy to their friends.

Steps to take:

- Create a large architectural or cultural object that will serve as a tourist magnet;
- Develop a design code and get rid of unnecessary advertising and stalls;
- Promote active sports;



- Attract domestic tourists by spreading the word about the city through different communication channels and focusing on the city's eclecticism.

Table 13: Key takeaways from the interview with tourists

Name of the respondent	Age (at the time of the interview)	Target group	Did you have an idea of the city before the trip?	When you talk about Sumy now, what pictures pop up in your head?	How is the service in the city?	What is the best thing about Sumy?
Viktoriia Domska	23	Tourist	Absolutely nothing. I did not even know where it was. I thought it was Western Ukraine in general.	I remember architecture: mansions, sculptures by Croisy, and the Kharytonenko family's grave. I remember kayaking, the atmosphere, people's mood, when we overcame this path together, and how the organisers fed us.	In Sumy, they cook delicious food. I liked everything. Value for money in Sumy is a win-win. In Kyiv, you will not always find a cafe for such money and with such service.	Eclecticism, when just a little bit. Moreover, everyone finds their outlet. In Sumy, both the stadium, the beautiful fountains, and the shopping centre in the form of a needle, you walk two blocks, and there is a place where thousands of people were killed, and then suddenly, hipster bars. I was struck by the architecture of the 19th century, and at the same time, there are Soviet-era high-rise buildings nearby, which is in contrast. I would come to Sumy again; this eclecticism hooked me.
Dmytro Ishchenko	25	Tourist	None. I heard this is not the richest city in Ukraine, a small regional centre, or a touristic city. Expectations were low: destroyed historical buildings. However, the impression was different during the visit. First, I did not find the industrial sites, at least where I walked.	Grave of Kharytonenko, Pokrovskaya Square, Altanka, European Fountain, Romantika Youth Center.	The quality of service is worse than in Kyiv, but still not bad. In general, everything is decent.	People who live there and invited us to visit.

It was imperative within the framework of this dissertation to understand how Sumy residents perceive themselves. The researcher asked each respondent to describe Sumy residents with three adjectives. For some, this was a difficult task; they thought about their answer for a very long time. For example, an employee of the local administration did not know how to answer this question and could not come up with an adjective. However, it is worth noting that the adjectives were mostly negative. People describe part of their psyche and nature by describing the society in which they live and are a part.

Adjectives received in respondents' answers during in-depth interviews will be divided into three categories: positive, neutral, and hostile. We can say that there is a connotation balance among adjectives.

We have collected positive adjectives such as kind (mentioned twice), open (mentioned four times), sociable, enterprising, kindred, and sincere (mentioned twice). Neutral adjectives include simple, different, contradictory, serious, thoughtful, restless, calm, unhurried, and not ambitious. The adjective 'simple' was suggested by tourist Victoria, and she clarified that 'simple' does not mean ninny. She did not see the arrogance in the locals, and according to her, she was drawn to this simplicity; she did not feel the pomp and show-off. We should also look at the detailed answer of another Victoria, a local. She said that the people of Sumy do not understand their happiness, that they live in such a comfortable city. She also clarified that many people talk about injustice and imperfect life, but she compares it with a story about a half-empty glass. She claims she always tries to focus on positive people because there is already enough negativity.

We have adjectives like arrogant, ill-mannered, boorish, selfish, unfriendly, tense, and puzzled if we talk about negative adjectives. Those respondents who had a negative connotation of all three adjectives were asked an additional question about why they have such a perception of locals and does this mean that they constantly find themselves in conflict situations. The answer was such that they were outraged by the inhabitants' attitude toward their city and each other. People communicate with each other rather disrespectfully in an informal setting (on the street, in shops, at the post office). This was also noted by the tourist Dmytro. He used the adjective 'impudent', and when the researcher asked him to elaborate on what an impudent person is for him and why he calls the inhabitants of the city impudent, he clarified that at the first meeting, everyone immediately began to communicate with him using an informal version of 'you' as if they had already known each other for five years. In the Ukrainian language, there are formal

and informal versions of addressing people (“ти” and “Ви” respectively). They use ‘Ви’ to address people they do not know or with teachers and older people. The same rule, for example, exists in German and Hungarian languages. Dmytro does not think it is a lousy characteristic but feels uncomfortable.

It is important to note that the two respondents used all three negative adjectives, which cannot be explained by their low quality of life or dissatisfaction with life. Judging by the personal stories of these people, they are pretty successful in their professional lives, and they also have a positive personal life.

Summarising the adjectives provided to us by the respondents, we can say that Sumy residents are open, ill-mannered, and tense.

It is not a secret that people can adapt well to everything new; thanks to this skill, humanity has existed for a long time. People adjust to a new home, country, city, and society. Each adaptation process is different; for some, it is more accessible, and for others, it is more complicated and takes longer, yet the result will be approximately the same. It is also known that people are capable of conformism, a change in a person’s behaviour or opinion under the influence of real or imagined pressure from another person or group. For the system to accept a new person, they must comply with this system and accept the rules of its game. From this, we can conclude that if, for the most part, the society is rude, quick-tempered, and ill-mannered, then a person, in turn, will also adapt to this system, adopting its characteristics, to comply, not be weak, not be a victim and feel “comfortable”. However, it isn’t effortless to call this state of affairs comfortable.

The researcher considers it appropriate to share her personal experience. Being in the company of rather rude people, one can say that I also feel a manifestation of some aggressiveness and arrogance. Nevertheless, having started working in a new company and felt its corporate culture, the primary value of mutual respect, the researcher notes that such positive things awaken the appropriate qualities of kindness, care, and attention.

For example, when colleagues write a message in a work chat or e-mail, they ask how you are doing or how your weekend went. We know that a colleague is hardly interested in your weekend plan, but the point is that this is a bland courtesy; this is a manifestation of a sign of attention that attracts you. Moreover, if you choose between rabid rudeness and questions of politeness, then I would instead choose the second. Such an atmosphere of friendliness creates

an open environment for discussion in which you feel comfortable and are not afraid to express your ideas. At the same time, when society behaves quite straightforwardly and conservatively, then in the case when it is necessary to show creativity or speak out on some issue, the person is more likely to remain silent because they will consider that their idea will not be accepted or will be condemned. These arguments led to the fact that if the city of Sumy wants to develop in the future and be open to new ideas and exciting projects, attract young people or keep local youth from moving. Then it would be best if you start working with all levels of society, that is, not only try to write high-flown development strategies while doing such banal things as educating residents and making it part of the strategy.

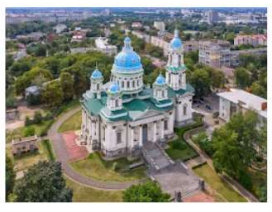



## 5.2. DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRES

The researcher compiled a questionnaire in the Ukrainian language called “Research of wishes of Sumy target audiences”, which includes 23 questions of different formats: closed/open, polyvariant, and questions with gradation (Likert scale). Almost all questions contained a line for a detailed answer or a comment if the respondents did not see a suitable option among those offered or wanted to supplement their answers. A total of 383 respondents took part in the survey. Among the respondents, there were both current residents of the city and those who moved. The questionnaire was created on the Google Forms platform and distributed through social networks such as Instagram, Telegram and Facebook. Four questionnaires were printed out and filled in manually by the respondents over 50 years old, and then the researcher transferred them to an electronic format. It is worth noting that the questionnaire caused a stir among the researcher’s followers: many shared a link in their profiles, urging others to participate. This indicates people’s interest in the development of their city and their desire to help. It can also be argued that the name of the questionnaire itself, which refers to the study of the wishes of city residents, has borne fruit. Residents were open to sharing opinions and were motivated by their views being valuable, which will be the subject of study.

Due to the inability to gather stratified sampling, we used a random sampling methodology where we randomly selected individuals to receive a questionnaire to ensure the diversity of our sample compared to the overall population.

The questionnaire begins with a question about the city’s favourite sights (Figure 22). The author’s decision was based on the visual design of this question: it is accompanied by pictures and, therefore, presumably calls for interest and attracts the respondent’s attention to continue the questionnaire.

Ваша улюблена визначна пам'ятка у місті Суми? (будь ласка, напишіть свій варіант, якщо не бачите його серед запропонованих відповідей) \*

	
<input type="radio"/> Троїцький собор	<input type="radio"/> Скульптури Круазі на кладовищі
	
<input type="radio"/> Спасо-Преображенський собор	<input type="radio"/> Альтанка

*Figure 22: The first question of the online survey “Research of wishes of Sumy target audiences”: What is your favourite landmark in Sumy? (please write your version if you do not see it among the suggested answers)*

*The pictures show the Trinity Cathedral (top left), Aristide Croisy sculptures in the cemetery (top right), the Transfiguration Cathedral (bottom left), and the Altanka (bottom right).*

*Source: Google Forms, own elaboration*

This question was included in the survey because it is vital to understand the residents' favourite attractions. After all, according to the conclusions drawn from the in-depth interviews, Sumy needs a landmark that will serve as a tourist magnet. At the mention of the city, a person must have some visual associations in their mind, even if they have not been there. For example, a person could see these pictures in promo videos or movies. The challenge for marketers here is understanding which attractions serve best as mental pictures and associations and promoting their recognizability through different communication channels.

The leading answers to the first question were the Altanka, the Trinity Cathedral and the Sadko Fountain (Figure 23). Two of these attractions, the Altanka and the Sadko Fountain, are located in the city centre and are within a 5-minute walk from each other. At the same time, the Trinity Cathedral, which took second place regarding the number of votes received, is located in a residential area not far from the railway station. Its history is quite exciting and causes much controversy among residents.

Ваша улюблена визначна пам'ятка у місті Суми? (будь ласка, напишіть свій варіант, якщо не бачите його серед запропонованих відповідей)

383&nbsp;ответа

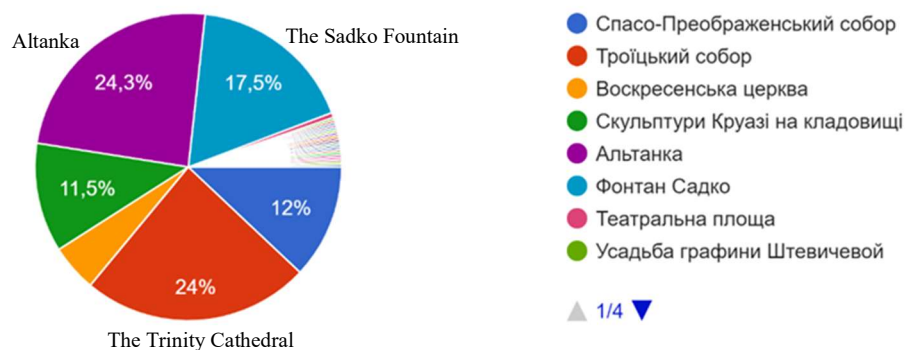
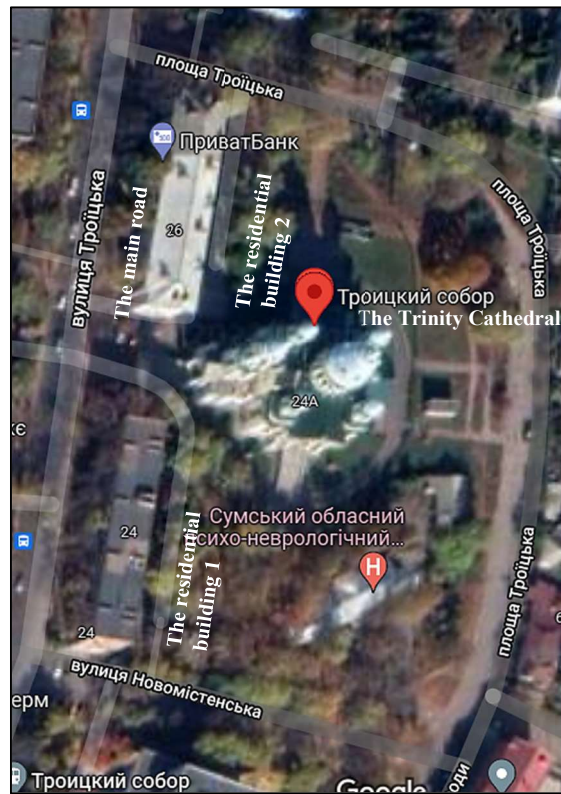


Figure 23: A pie chart for Question 1: What is your favourite attraction in Sumy? (please write your version if you do not see it among the suggested answers)

Source: Google Forms, own elaboration

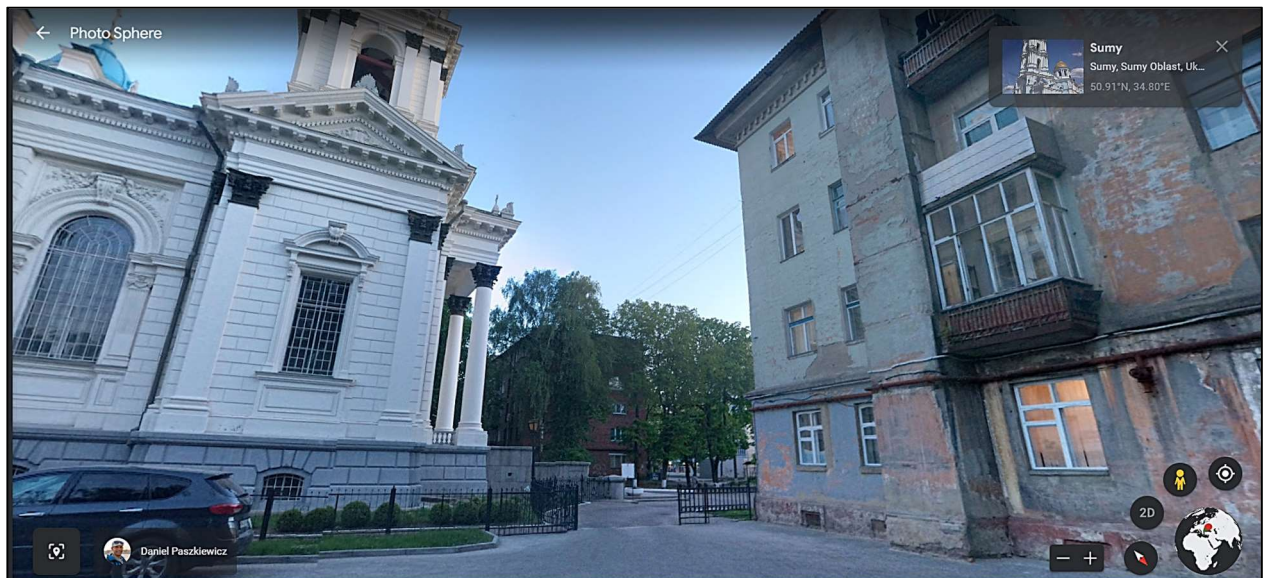
This cathedral was built in 1915 according to the project of the local architect Karl Scholz for the money of the philanthropist Pavel Kharytonenko, who was engaged in the sugar industry. According to the architect and city planners, the cathedral took a strategic place on the square near the station on purpose: its domes could be seen from almost anywhere in the city; Asmolov Park was created nearby for strolls and leisure. The road next to the park and the cathedral was on the way for all visitors who arrived at the railway station, heading to the city centre. The Trinity Cathedral became the hallmark of the city, and at its sight, people who came to the city for the first time assumed the city's success and prosperity. Nevertheless, with the advent of Soviet power, religion was banned, and in many settlements, churches and cathedrals were demolished, as happened with the Church of the Intercession in the city of Sumy. The city council decided not to ruin the Trinity Cathedral, but at the same time, the square on which it is located was built up with high-rise residential buildings from the side of the main road so that they blocked the cathedral and hid it from those passing by (Figure 24, 25).





*Figure 24: The satellite shot depicts the Trinity Cathedral behind two high-rise residential buildings by the side of the main road.*

*Source: Google Maps and own inscriptions*



*Figure 25: The Google Earth picture shows the Trinity Cathedral on the left behind two high-rise residential buildings on the right.*

*Source: earth.google.com*

Even considering the circumstances, the locals greatly appreciate and adore the cathedral. Ideally, the area around it should be realigned and become an open public space with lawns, benches, and gazebos, following the example of the Berlin Cathedral (Figure 26). This landmark can become a tourist magnet if the surrounding area is reconsidered from the urban planning point of view.



*Figure 26: Tourists on the lawn near the Berliner Dom (Berlin Cathedral)*

*Source: pixy.org*

This study aimed to evaluate this concept by engaging Sumy residents in a self-report exercise where they were instructed to select adjectives from a provided list to describe themselves (Sumy residents). The resulting dataset, including 384 responses, forms the empirical basis for subsequent analysis.

The options proposed by the researcher were kind, fussy, hospitable, closed/withdrawn, enterprising, slow, serious, and ill-mannered. Note that the author has suggested eight characteristics for the respondent to choose from, three of which are positive, three are neutral, and two are negative. Also, they were deliberately mixed. Of the options that were entered manually by the respondents in the “other” section, we would like to highlight the following: contrasting, rude and boorish (the word is close to the word ill-mannered, but the respondent preferred its more aggressive form), calm (close to slow), intellectual, sociable, family-oriented, cheerful, inert, hardworking. The above adjectives show that positive ones prevail over negative ones (Figure 27). Despite this, the adjectives “kind” and “ill-mannered” are almost equally chosen by the participants. This speaks to the openness of people, which is reinforced by hospitality, but at the same time, people crave a more respectful attitude towards themselves from their fellow citizens. Let us examine numerical data.

Careful analysis of the collected data reveals specific patterns in how the inhabitants of Sumy perceive themselves in various ways. Notably, 18.3 per cent of respondents attribute the trait of initiative to Sumy residents. A significant 40.5 per cent associate kindness with this demographic, emphasizing the positive aspect of self-esteem. At the same time, 31 per cent of participants attribute hospitality to themselves.

On the contrary, many people evaluate themselves negatively in certain aspects. About 39.7 per cent of respondents characterize Sumy residents as ill-mannered or rude, which indicates a critical plane of self-consciousness. In addition, 31 per cent of respondents consider themselves fussy or constantly in a hurry, indicating an exciting combination of opinions.

The data set also reveals contrasts in the self-perception of Sumy residents. While 29 per cent describe themselves as slow, another 29 per cent describe themselves as serious or grumpy, suggesting a range of emotional self-perceptions.

The data obtained provide a subtle understanding of the self-perception of the Sumy people, emphasizing a combination of favourable and unfavourable characteristics. Recognizing positive qualities such as kindness and hospitality contrasts with recognising unfavourable traits such as bad manners. The coexistence of self-perceived traits such as initiative and fussiness indicates multifaceted self-esteem.

The data set highlights a diverse self-perception covering constructive and unfavourable attributes, suggesting a complex interplay between self-awareness and external perceptions. Further research could explore the underlying factors influencing these perceptions and their impact on individual and societal well-being. After all, everyone who answered this question in one way or another is a representative of this society, and in turn, they described themselves to some extent. We can judge the self-criticism of the respondents and the realistic perception of their surroundings.

How can a situation with negative traits like being ill-mannered or boorish be influenced? There should be a campaign aimed at raising the residents' awareness of modern etiquette and manners. The campaign can also include classroom hours at schools, billboards, local online media articles, and social media posts demonstrating good manners and praising them. The rudeness of the locals is incredibly detrimental to the image tourists will form. It is enough for several conflict situations to occur, and a tourist is unlikely to recommend this city to friends and even more so. to come here again. The opposite effect is expected with a warm attitude and reception from residents.

Оберіть слова, якими можна описати жителів міста Суми (можливі декілька варіантів відповідей):

381 ответ



Figure 27: A diagram for Question 2: Choose words that can describe the residents of Sumy (several possible answers).

Source: Google Forms, own elaboration

The purpose of the next question was to find out the value systems of the residents. The options include family values, personal security, material well-being, personal development and self-realization, society and your place in it, multiculturalism and tolerance, service to the state, spiritual development, and art. The answer scale comprises four indicators: not important, slightly important, important and extremely important.

Among the values that received the highest number of the “extremely important” indicators were personal security (247), personal development and self-realization (223), family values (212) and material well-being (155) (Figure 28). It can be assumed that the society’s majority of Sumy is on the last step of Maslow’s pyramid of needs, “Self-actualization”, since more than half of the respondents identified personal development and self-realization as a crucial life component for them, and “spiritual development” received 173 “important” indicators.

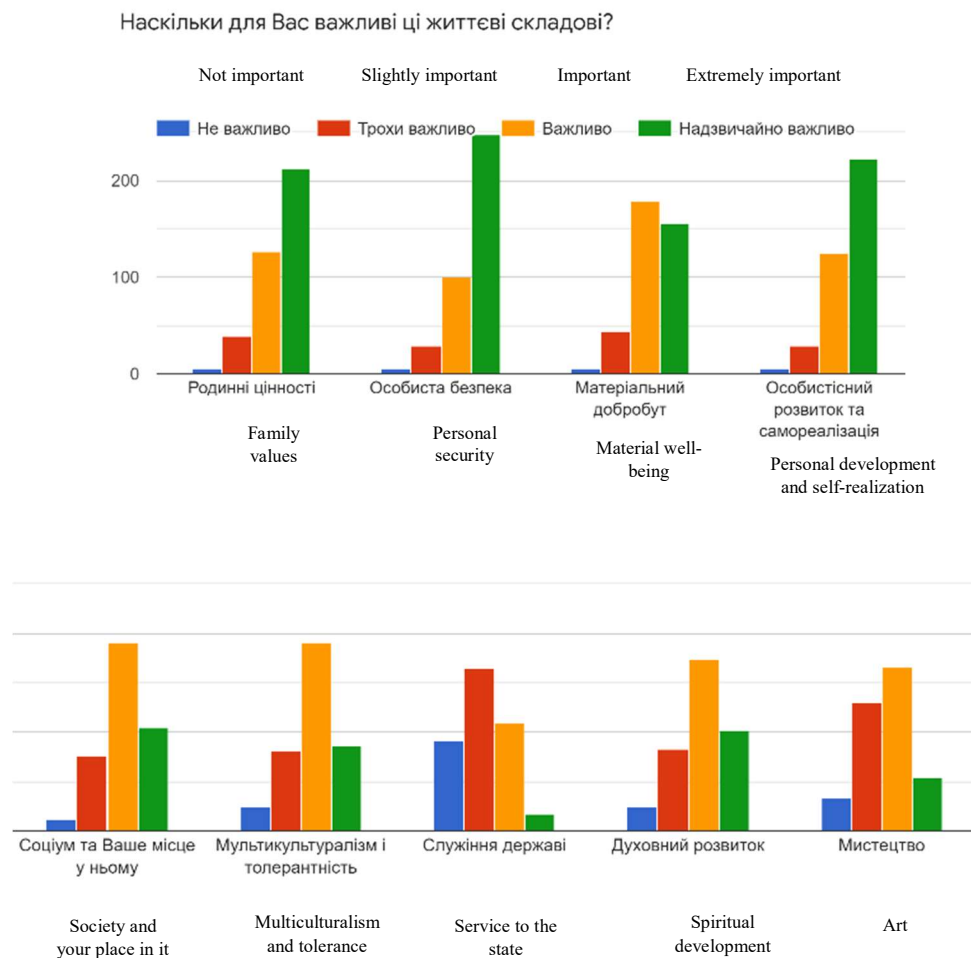


Figure 28: A diagram for Question 3: How important are these components of life for you?

Source: Google Forms, own elaboration

The high importance placed on personal security suggests that people in this society may prioritize stability and safety. This may indicate a society that values order and seeks to minimize potential threats or risks. The significant emphasis on personal development and self-realization indicates that the population strongly desires individual growth and self-realization (a good marker for potential investors). This may indicate a society that values personal achievement, education, and self-knowledge. Recognizing family values as extremely important involves a collective emphasis on interpersonal relationships and support systems. This may indicate a society with strong family ties, where community ties are crucial in people's lives. The importance placed on material well-being suggests that economic factors and resource access are significant concerns for people in this society. This may indicate awareness

of the role of financial stability in overall well-being, which links to the personal security indicator.

It is worth noting that such a component as ‘Serving the state’ collected most of the “not important” indicators. Given the current military defensive actions against the invasion of the Russian Federation on the territory of Ukraine, we can predict that this indicator has changed significantly towards “important” and “extremely important”.

The city of Sumy has significant problems with public transport. The transport system is divided into private and public. Private vehicles consist mainly of mini-buses, commonly called ‘marshrutka’. They are small in size, including up to 18 seats and are mainly characterized by inconvenience, especially during peak hours, as they are not very suitable for standing passengers due to the limited space (Figure 29). As proof of this, one of the detailed answers to the question about moving around the city summarizes it all: “Public transport is impossible to use!”.



*Figure 29: One of the private mini-buses in Sumy*

*Source: suspilne.media*

Despite this, the city is very convenient for moving around on foot. During in-depth interviews, many characterized Sumy as “compact” and noted that the “proximity of everything to everything” makes Sumy comfortable for living. Unfortunately, the number of bicycle users is low due to the lack of developed cycling infrastructure (Figure 30); nevertheless, the city has an active cycling society, and some civic initiatives have been turned into reality with sponsors’

money, such as a mini-service station for bicycles initiated by a local online magazine Cukr (Тіщенко, 2021).

Як Ви в основному пересуваєтеся містом? (можливі декілька варіантів  
відповідей)

383 ответа

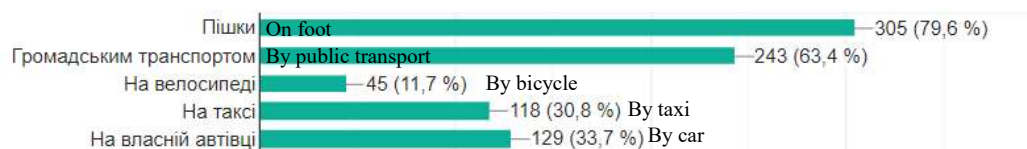


Figure 30: A diagram for Question 4: How do you mostly move around the city? (several possible answers)

Source: Google Forms, own elaboration

Due to the inconvenience of using public transport and the coronavirus pandemic, many residents are acquiring personal vehicles. A third of respondents drive their cars, which will only increase in the future due to rising living standards and the affordability of buying a car. There are also disappointing forecasts of the complications of urban traffic due to an increase in the number of vehicles (Тіщенко, 2020). Residents have already begun to notice traffic jams during peak hours, which just two years ago were not characteristic of Sumy.

When analysing the transportation issues in Ukrainian cities, it is crucial to remember that President Volodymyr Zelensky declared Ukraine's wish to accede to the European Union on February 28, 2022, four days after Russia invaded the country. In June of the same year, in response, the EU leaders unanimously endorsed the European Commission's suggestion that Ukraine enhance its candidate status. This implies that Ukraine should strive to meet European transport standards.

For example, the researcher chose Budapest, the capital of Hungary, where she lives and studies in the doctoral school. After the relocation, the city impressed her with the organization and convenience of the transport system, so it was decided to study this topic in more detail and analyse what goals one of the EU capitals sets for itself and how it corresponds to the concept of a smart city.

The Hungarian population is 9.605 million people (*Hungary Population (2022) - Worldometer, 2022*), while the population of Budapest is about 1.774 million, which represents 18.5 per cent of the Hungarian total, and with 3.314/km<sup>2</sup> of population density (*General Informations About Budapest, 2022*). According to the TomTom Traffic Index, which measures congestion on the road networks, Budapest occupies 83rd place among 404 cities in 2021 and has yellow labelling (*Budapest Traffic Report | TomTom Traffic Index, 2022*).

Regarding transport system management, the BKV (the Budapest Transport Company) was a responsible institution till 2010. That year, the BKK (the Centre for Budapest Transport) was established by a ruling of the General Assembly of the Municipality of Budapest, which is the company's owner. The creation of the management and infrastructure responsible company was caused by the lack of funds, coordination and unified leadership (*About BKK, 2022*). Currently, BKV is the largest public transport contractor of the BKK.

The 2011 White Paper "Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area – Towards a Competitive and Resource Efficient Transport System" concentrates on environmental protection issues, including the reduction of world greenhouse gas emissions, local air and noise pollution, as well as the overall picture of the transportation system by 2050. This can be addressed by the cessation of conventionally fuelled cars, employment of sustainable low-carbon fuels in aviation (at least 40 per cent), and a decrease in the popularity of road transport in favour of rail and water transport. Information and communication technologies (ICT) play a significant role in the framework of infrastructure improvement or even shift and creation of smart managerial systems (White Paper on transport: Roadmap to a single European transport area, 2011). It is worth mentioning that the White Paper constitutes an integral part of the European Commission's "Resource Efficiency" programme.

If we speak about urban public transport place in the White Paper, it relates to further aspects:

- 1) shift to rail and water transport;
- 2) shift to electric cars, hydrogen cars and hybrid cars;
- 3) increase in bicycle usage;
- 4) "last-mile" issue (door-to-door mobility);
- 5) multi-modal travel scheduling;
- 6) integrated ticketing.



Hereafter, we will explore the failures and victories of the recent changes in Budapest's public transportation system towards the Smart City concept. We will also cross-reference them with the goals and tasks allotted by the EU Commission in the White Paper (2011).

Shift to rail and water transport. The following problems of railway were defined in the problem tree of "Balázs Mór Plan": "rail transport has a negligible role in urban transport" and "the railways, the suburban railways and the metro serve separated areas" (*Balázs Mór Plan*, 2014). Five suburban (commuter) railway lines operate between Budapest and its neighbouring cities (not exceeding 20 km from the capital). According to the Hungarian Central Statistical Office, the ridership of suburban railways in Budapest slightly increased from 59.8 million per year in 2012 to 60.6 million in 2019 (24.1.1.21. *Urban Passenger Traffic in Hungary and Budapest by Mode of Transport*, 2022). Even more extensive growth can be observed in passenger throughput of trams (by 7 per cent from 389.7 million to 417.2 million) and underground (by 15.8 per cent from 305.8 million to 354 million). At the same time, the number of bus users increased by 18.7 per cent from 550.4 million to 653.3 million per year within the same interim. These results were achieved by the fourth metro line construction, the connection of transport services operating in the inner parts of the city with services operating in the outer parts of the metropolitan area and the creation of transportation hubs in the city (Baross tér, Széll Kálmán tér, Örs vezér tere and Móricz Zsigmond körtér).

The coronavirus pandemic adjusted the statistics, which decreased all modes of public transport by 35 per cent (24.1.1.21. *Urban Passenger Traffic in Hungary and Budapest by Mode of Transport*, 2022). Given the energetic European crisis caused by the Russian-Ukrainian war and sanctions imposed on the Russian Federation, a rise in the public transport passenger turnout is expected. The price increase on fuel will also ignite rent and food (in some cases by 50 per cent since February 2022) (Woods, 2022), the dropping of the Hungarian forint against the euro and inflation.

Smart City's aim is to protect the environment through the decrease of gas emissions.

Shift to electric cars, hydrogen cars and hybrid cars. First, it should be stated that Hungary accommodates the Evopro Company, which produces the ultra-lightweight electric city bus "Modulo". The first manufactured 20-electric bus fleet was sold to Budapest in 2016 (*History of the Evopro*, 2022).

Since 1 March 2015, twenty-eight diesel-powered hybrid buses started their work in Budapest (*One of the Biggest Articulated Hybrid Bus Fleets in Europe Started to Operate in Budapest*

*This March*, 2015). At 10-20 km per hour, these buses use solely electric power, which leads to a noiseless and smokeless environment at the bus stops.

In the autumn of 2016, the General Assembly of Budapest signed an agreement with the Ministry of National Economy on constructing electric vehicle charging infrastructure. The charging network was supposed to include 1100 charging points plus 100 fast chargers by 2019 (Gergő Panker, 2016). In October 2022, around 356 charging locations operated in Budapest (*Charging Stations in Budapest, Magyarország for Electric Cars*, 2022).

Smart City's aim is to protect the environment through the decrease of gas emissions.

Increase in bicycle usage. In the spring of 2014, the MOL Bubi public bike-sharing scheme was introduced in Budapest. By October 2022, 2060 MOL Bubi bikes were available at 173 docking stations. Bikes can be used around the clock with quarterly, annual, or semi-annual passes or a 24-hour, 72-hour, or 7-day ticket (MOL Bubi Budapest, 2022).

In October 2014, the Eurobarometer survey service of the European Commission presented a study on the transport habits of the EU member states (*Special Eurobarometer 422a.*, 2014). Cars remained the most popular mode of transport, although positive tendencies were identified towards the rise in cycling. Answering the question, “On a typical day, which mode of transport do you use most often?” Twenty-two per cent of Hungarian citizens responded “bicycle”. The Netherlands (36 per cent) and Denmark (23 per cent) were the leaders in this field. Moreover, the survey also showed that Hungary and the Netherlands were the only two countries with relatively small differences between the proportions using a bicycle and a car (Hungarian result: 22 per cent against 33 per cent).

Budapest Transport Development Strategy 2014-2030 looks for the change of proportions in the usage of transport modes by 2030. In 2014, only two per cent of Budapest dwellers were using bicycles; in 2030, it is estimated to become ten (*Balázs Mór Plan*, 2014) (Figure 31).

Smart City aim: to protect the environment by decreasing gas emissions, untie the traffic jams, and promote off-peak travelling.



Figure 31: The share of the usage of transportation modes in 2014 vs. the desired percentage in 2030.

Source: Balázs Mór Plan

“Last-mile” issue (door-to-door mobility). The “last-mile” term traces its roots back to freight traffic activity and stands for the distance from a central depot or another offloading point to the final delivery destination. Later, this term was also implemented in the practice of passenger conveyance.

The main stakeholders of the last-mile problem are people with special needs and seniors. The BKK is tackling this problem by procuring low-floor vehicles (in the timetable of trolleybuses, buses’ and trams’ departure times of low-floor transport mode can be seen; they are underlined).

The European Commission rewarded Budapest with the 2015 Access City Award as one of the best European cities transforming towards a disability-friendly environment (Special Mention for Transport and Infrastructure) (*Access City Award - Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion - European Commission, 2022*).

Smart City aim: an inclusive society, equitable opportunities, the quality and standard of living improvement.

Multi-modal travel scheduling. The FUTÁR (Traffic Management and Passenger Information) system became an integral part of public transportation in Budapest in 2013. It operates with the help of “GPS-based automated vehicle location (AVL) and passenger information system for surface transport” (European Metropolitan Transport, 2015). All on-road vehicles are equipped with a satellite geographical positioning system, making available real-time information for traffic control and passenger information and for service and managerial objectives.

The website and smartphone application “BudapestGO Trip Planner” allows passengers to plan their trips using all available transport modes (except bicycles) in real time. There is a

possibility to plan your journey while considering departure time or desirable arrival time to the final destination.

Many stops and metro stations have electronic displays showing the sharp time of the following vehicle's arrival. Moreover, display screens can be found on board some transport modes. In addition, the displayed information is synchronized with the audio announcements.

Smart City aim: real-time data collection (predictive modelling and analysis).

Integrated intermodal ticketing. The World Road Association defines integrated ticketing as a system that “enables a traveller to complete a journey using several public transport modes with a single, simple to use, cashless payment method at an optimally low fare. Integrated intermodal ticketing helps to smooth switching between transport modes during a single journey” (World Road Association, 2022).

The automatic ticket machines installed in 2014 entailed changes in the ticket tariff system. Monthly passes became available for citizens with the identification of the user. It can be made with the help of student IDs, BKK photo IDs, passports, and driver's licenses.

The transportation system in the capital of Hungary is unified, which is why the exact tickets are valid for all kinds of transport and have a fixed price (except tickets purchased on the spot and suburban trains). Moreover, tourism-oriented tariffs are available: 24- and 72-hour unlimited usage tickets and weekly passes. Discounts are also provided for seniors, students, children, and people with disabilities. Monthly and daily passes allow us to change transportation modes without any validation, giving us grounds to speak about integrated ticketing. Meanwhile, a one-trip ticket can be used only in one transport mode during the journey. If there is a change or more, the passenger can opt for the time-based tickets (30 and 90 minutes) introduced in 2021.

The ticket inspectors can check the validity and proper belonging of the tickets that still operate in Budapest. These transport workers occasionally stand at the entrance of the metro station and rarely inspect your travel documents at the exit. Even less frequently, passengers can meet them in buses, trolleybuses or trams. In the case of a travel ticket absence or wrong document, the passenger will be fined. Moreover, the entrance to the public transport vehicles and metro stations has no physical obstacles (aside from inspectors in the underground and on boats). According to the Hungarian economic daily *Napi Gazdaság*, in 2014, around three hundred sixty-three thousand fare dodgers were caught by inspectors (Christian Keszthelyi, 2015). They

were fined, but at the same time, the questions that have to be answered still exist: “Why is the number so big?” and “How to solve the problem?”.

The other disputable issues of the new ticket system are security, travel tracking and their absence. As mentioned above, an ID card is necessary to buy a monthly pass. Nevertheless, security was not the reason for creating this option; it was to prevent fraud or, to put it in other words, avoid the usage of one pass by several passengers. Travel tracking is essential for travel operators to see which routes are more popular or which parts of the city are in a poor connection. Moreover, it shows the charge capacity of the transport in particular hours, which gives ground for providing more vehicles on the route or vice versa.

The best solution for the city is implementing a smart ticketing system: a single card with contactless ID-based payment systems throughout the journey and multi-access consumer information. This system was successfully implemented in London (Oyster), Bologna (Mi Muovo), and Switzerland (Swiss Pass).

The test phase of the smart electronic ticketing system started in Budapest in 2016 but still has not been implemented. It received the name “Rigo”, which is translated from the Hungarian language as “thrush”; an acronym stands for the Hungarian words flexible, integrated, economical, and smart (Dezse Balazs, 2016). Firstly, the system’s launch was estimated at the end of 2017. In September 2017, electronic gates were introduced at the central metro station Deák Ferenc Square.

Smart City aim: mobility data collection and security.

Budapest’s transport policy and implementation make the city more comfortable for its dwellers and more easily oriented for guests. The policy’s main goals can be the preservation of the environment, ICT mass implementation to facilitate passengers’ travelling and an inclusive society, which corresponds to the Smart City concept. This approach to public transport development can be a good example and, at the same time, a case for learning from the mistakes of others.

Switching back to the Sumy residents’ questionnaire, the answer to the question about doing sports illustrates how much the population takes care of their health and leads a healthy lifestyle. The need to equip the city with sports grounds, running tracks and stadiums for public use also depends on this. The data in the following pie chart (Figure 32) shows that only 7.3 per cent of respondents are not interested in sports. Almost 30 per cent practice sports regularly, and 39.9

per cent do it periodically. The results show that the city has an interest and, in turn, a need for sports infrastructure. Its increase can lead to a change in statistics: people who do not exercise but would like to can move into a group who periodically or regularly engage in sports activities.

Ви займаєтеся спортом?  
383 ответа



*Figure 32: A pie chart for Question 5: Do you do sports?*

*Source: Google Forms, own elaboration*

To understand your audience and communicate effectively, you need to understand the channels through which it gets information. According to our survey, almost 90 per cent receive information about the city and its events through social networking sites (Figure 33). The overwhelming preference for social media as a primary source of information highlights the need for an active online presence. City officials and marketers must prioritize digital platforms to ensure maximum reach and engagement.

In the second place, we have word of mouth. People trust information and recommendations from friends, colleagues, and acquaintances. This shows the importance of an individual approach in everything; people value personal attention, increasing the need for personalized communication strategies. After all, it is said that to make up for the effect of one negative review, you need as many as five positive ones. This applies primarily to the service sector (which includes the provision of administrative services by the city). It also highlights the importance of encouraging positive experiences and interactions within the community, as positive reviews can significantly influence perceptions.

Printed newspapers and magazines are underperforming: only 1.3 per cent of respondents chose them as an information channel. This calls into question the effectiveness of investing in expensive printed materials for city marketing campaigns. Resources are better spent on digital platforms and other more effective channels.



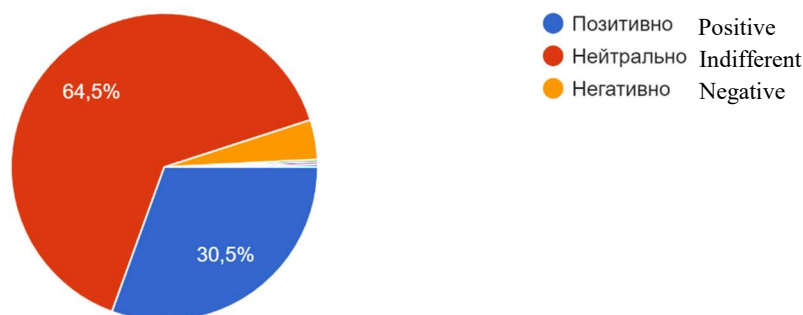
*Figure 33: A diagram for Question 6: How do you find out about events and news of the city? (several possible answers)*

*Source: Google Forms, own elaboration*

As mentioned earlier, the purpose of the question about the attitude of respondents to different nationalities was to assess the tolerance level of the population of the city of Sumy. The data visualised in the following pie chart shows that 64.5 per cent have a neutral stance towards people of other nationalities (Figure 34). At the same time, more than 30 per cent have a positive attitude; only 4.2 per cent have a negative attitude. Of the detailed answers, it is worth noting the following: “Positively, subject to respect for the culture and traditions of my country” highlights the importance placed on cultural respect and understanding. In general, it can be considered that the level of tolerance in the city is high.

In light of these findings, the overall assessment of the city’s tolerance level leans towards positive. The significant percentage of people holding neutral and positive attitudes reflects a generally accepting and open-minded community. The low percentage of negative attitudes once again confirms the idea of a tolerant environment. However, it is crucial to recognize the need for ongoing efforts to develop cultural understanding and respect in order to maintain and improve this positive social climate.

Яке Ваше ставлення до людей іншої національності, що проживають у місті?  
383&nbsp;ответа



*Figure 34: A pie chart for Question 7: What is your attitude to people of other nationalities living in the city?*

*Source: Google Forms, own elaboration*

The question of where the respondents spend most of their free time has been one of the most basic in studying the audience of the city and understanding its needs. The characterization of Sumy residents as hospitable and at the same time closed logically correlates with their favourite pastime place, which is home (Figure 35). In further research, it is possible to set the task of finding out the reason, whether this domesticity is the heart's voice or whether it is caused by insufficient quantitative and qualitative leisure facilities provided in the city. The second most popular answer was "nature and parks". Sumy is famous for its landscaping, as well as the presence of a large number of outdoor recreation areas within the city. While researching the reasons for relocation, we found it significant for the creative class to live close to nature. Therefore, 42.8 per cent of respondents are proof that this value proposition is available in Sumy. The third place was shared by two answers: "at work" and "in coffee houses and restaurants". In personal conversations with the researcher, the respondents repeatedly and jokingly cited the presence of the answer "at work" in the question about free time spending, but at the same time, they stated that they chose it because it corresponds to reality: they often overwork and sit at the office or home at the computer even in their free time. Although this does not play into the hands of employees' work-life balance, and mental health, it is a good selection criterion for a potential investor. Hardworking and talented people are a guarantee of business prosperity.



Де Ви зазвичай проводите більшу частину свого вільного часу? (можливі декілька варіантів відповідей)

383 ответа

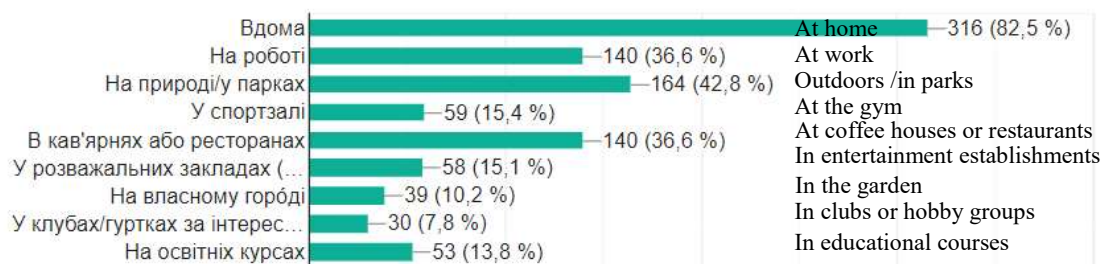


Figure 35: A pie chart for Question 8: Where do you usually spend most of your free time? (several possible answers)

Source: Google Forms, own elaboration

Between 2017 and 2022, Sumy experienced a real gastronomic boom: more than 20 new places have been opened. People are gradually beginning to accept the European way of life concept. It used to be considered wasteful to spend money on takeaway coffee or eating out. Now, gathering with friends or freelancing in the cafe is a part of the younger generation's lifestyle. It also indicates an increase in the population's wealth and ability to spend on more than basic needs.

The next question clarifies to the researcher what the inhabitants miss in the city. From the answers, we see that even though the city stands on several rivers (the main one is the Psel River), it lacks an embankment with infrastructure and any equipped contact with water (Figure 36). Residents can swim in the river, but this is only possible from a few official beaches, where the infrastructure leaves much to be desired. In other places, called embankments, the pedestrian zone is 2-3 meters above the river, and a person does not feel the slightest contact with water. Therefore, improving the embankment according to modern standards should be one of the priorities of the current city government.

Чого Вам не вистачає у місті Суми? (можливі декілька варіантів відповідей)

381 ответ

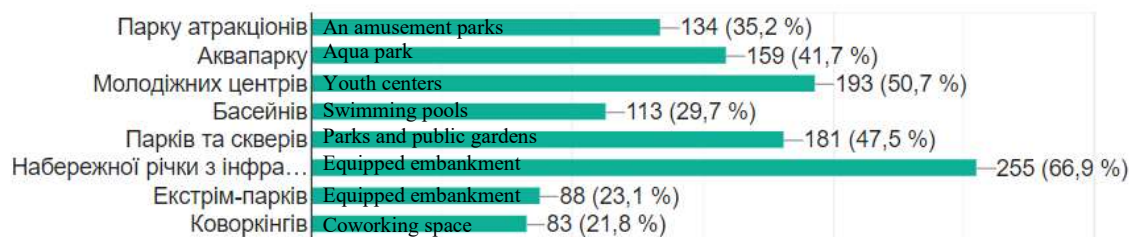


Figure 36: A diagram for Question 9: What do you miss in Sumy? (several possible answers)

Source: Google Forms, own elaboration

Lack of youth centres scored 50.7 per cent of the responses. The reason for such a large number of votes can be caused by the events that came against the background of the questionnaire, namely the closure of the Youth Leisure Center in Sumy (Сумський міський центр дозвілля молоді). Sumy City Youth Leisure Center (YLC) was established in April 2007. It was founded as a “cultural institution” because the concept of a youth centre was not in the Ukrainian legislation at that time (Кошман, 2021). On October 5, 2021, a draft decision on the liquidation of the YLC was published on the city council’s website. The document stated that it would be reorganized by creating two other institutions: the Center for Culture and Leisure and the Romantika Youth Center. On October 27, at the Sumy City Council session, deputies voted to terminate the Sumy City Youth Leisure Center by dividing it into the Sumy City Council Municipal Culture and Leisure Center and the Romantika Youth Center Municipal Institution.

One of the in-depth interviews for this study was conducted with Igor Gannenکو, director of the YLC, a month before the events described above (the full interview can be found in the Annex). He described the work of his centre as follows:

*We have been working since 2007. This is one of the very first youth centres in Ukraine. It was not even in the law. Moreover, a law on volunteering in youth centres appeared just six months ago. We are documented as a Leisure Club—something like a house of culture. Our mission is to work with young people and make life in Sumy exciting and meaningful for young people. We have many different areas that come down to one goal: Young people in Sumy can do something other than drink beer on the benches. We want young people to have a choice. So that they know that after school or university, they could go to a club, attend training, or go on a hike.*

*In many ways, we are an event agency. By the way, in theory, the Department of Youth and Sports should be our curators; they are officials and have specific financial resources. Nevertheless, as it happened, they turned to us, not vice versa: “How can we help you? Can we join your events?”. We have outgrown them tenfold. Moreover, we are trying to recruit people from the student government into our ranks. They are doing the same (as at the university), but they are already representatives of the city authorities. In Sumy, by the way, the activists had no place to gather and work on projects. However, we say all these organizations can meet with us in Romantika.*

The events related to the closure of the youth centre were more like political games and some reprisal against the centre’s leadership for the past. Since it was impossible to get an adequate explanation for the closure of the centre from the authorities. Once again, it is confirmed that without studying the needs of residents, the authorities cannot make decisions that do not favour the interests of residents. This is especially true for working with such a target audience as young people, whose representatives tend to move from the city of Sumy to larger cities to get a high-quality and wide choice of leisure activities.

Also, among the leading answers, we see a lack of parks, squares, aqua, and amusement parks. Although Sumy is a relatively green city, landscaping areas and, most importantly, their gardening remain topical for locals. There is an amusement park in the Ivan Kozhedub park, but, unfortunately, it is obsolete since it has existed there since Soviet times. Focusing on the experience of the neighbouring city, Kharkiv, Sumy residents saw what a public city park can be and what attractions can be there (we are talking about the Gorky Park). The lack of water facilities or their obsolescence is also present. There are several swimming pools in the city, but they often belong to higher educational institutions, and it is pretty difficult for an outsider to get there. Therefore, the private pools and aqua parks niche remains open and is quite promising for investors.

The following question makes us understand the level of satisfaction of the population with various spheres of life: personal life and family, professional development, material well-being, education, sports, health, the comfort of the urban environment, and leisure. The answers show which areas in the city need to be improved and which are successful. For prosperous areas, an analysis should be made of the actions that have proven effective and have led to good results. This strategy can be repeated in the future since it is proven.

Beginning with dissatisfaction, as expected before the start of the questionnaire, more than a quarter of respondents are dissatisfied with the comfort of the urban environment (Figure 37). The leading items in terms of dissatisfaction are also sports and material well-being. The question of sports is supposed to be clarified in subsequent studies: whether it is about personal laziness and unwillingness to go in for sports or about imperfection or lack of infrastructure for this. It is known that just a pair of running shoes is enough to start jogging, but personal safety is also worth mentioning here. A girl jogging in a deserted park in Sumy at 6 am will not feel safe.

If we take the category “slightly satisfied”, we see a slight satisfaction with leisure, the comfort of the urban environment, and material well-being. This category of answers is grey for us because it carries the respondent’s uncertainty. Doubtful answers are not considered during data analysis because they are unreliable.

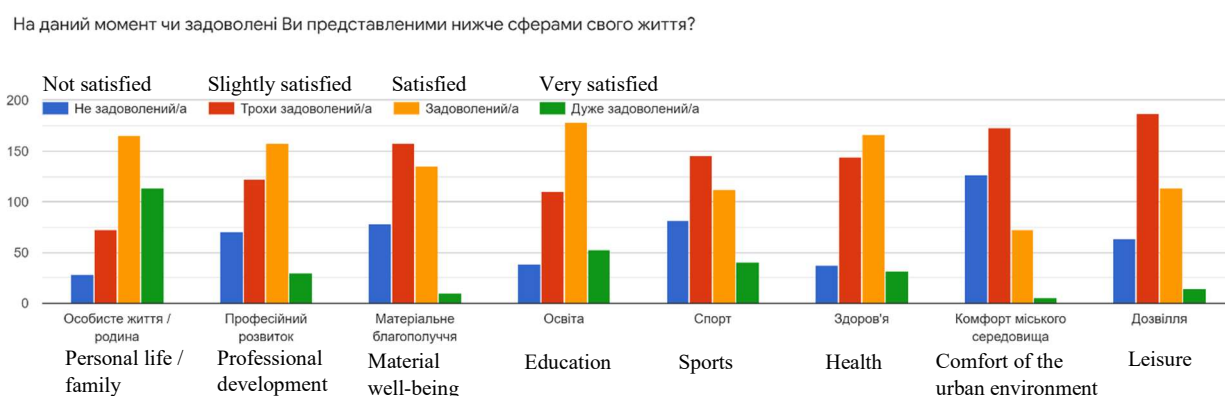


Figure 37: A diagram for Question 10: At the moment, are you satisfied with the following areas of your life?

Source: Google Forms, own elaboration

The answers “satisfied” and “very satisfied” are of greater interest to us. We can observe high satisfaction with education. This is a good indicator since the city is a student city; there are three universities, one of which (Sumy State University) is ranked among the 1000 best universities in the world (Top Universities, 2022). We also see satisfaction with personal life/family, health and professional development. Here, we would like to note that the limitation of the study is the predominance of young respondents, which naturally influenced the question of high satisfaction with health.

Nevertheless, a healthy, motivated and settled workforce is vital for an investor because this is the foundation for general production and business development. Moreover, personal life and family scored the highest “very satisfied” marks. There is a saying in the Ukrainian language: a healthy family is a healthy nation. Family traditions are a kind of stronghold of hospitality, which tourists highly appreciate.

In conclusion, although there are challenges, overall satisfaction with essential aspects such as education, personal life/family, health and professional development reflects positively on the city. The information gained from these findings can support targeted improvements in areas of dissatisfaction while enhancing and promoting positive aspects that contribute to the well-being and attractiveness of the city.

We have also calculated the ultimate satisfaction score, the methodology for calculating which is based on responses to the above question that assess satisfaction across various life areas. These areas include Personal Life, Family, Professional Development, Material Well-being, Education, Sport, Health, Comfort of Urban Environment, and Leisure.

The Ultimate Satisfaction Score is computed using a formula that assigns a numerical value to each response category:

- “Not satisfied” is assigned a value of 0,
- “Slightly satisfied” is assigned a value of 1,
- “Satisfied” is assigned a value of 2,
- “Very satisfied” is assigned a value of 3.

For each respondent, the formula aggregates the values of the satisfaction levels reported for all the life areas. This is done by counting the responses in each category using the COUNTIF function for the range corresponding to the satisfaction responses. The counts are then multiplied by the assigned values for each satisfaction category and summed to produce the Ultimate Satisfaction Score. The maximum possible score is 24. This score provides a quantifiable measure of an individual’s overall satisfaction with their life domains. It can be used for further analysis in studies related to the quality of life, personal fulfilment, and the general well-being of city residents in the context of city marketing.

The following line chart (Figure 38) displays an aggregated satisfaction score distribution related to various aspects of city life, differentiated by gender. The X-axis represents an index

corresponding to survey respondents or a score range. At the same time, the Y-axis shows the percentage of the total satisfaction score attributed to each index point.

### Ultimate satisfaction score of life in the city by gender

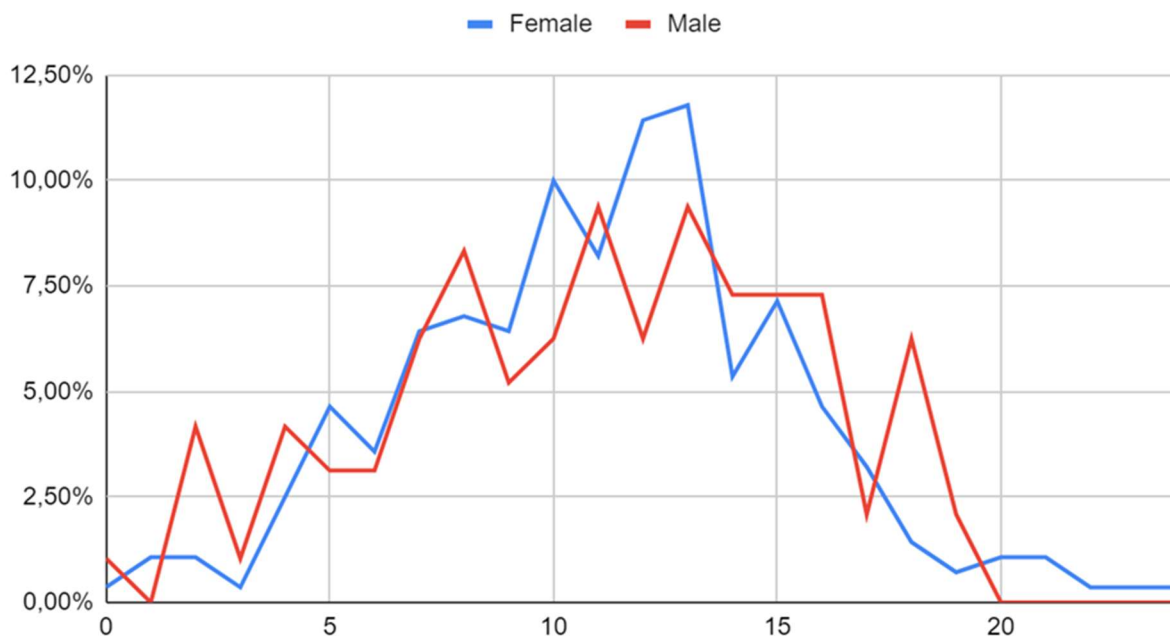


Figure 38: “Ultimate Satisfaction Score of life in Sumy city by gender.”

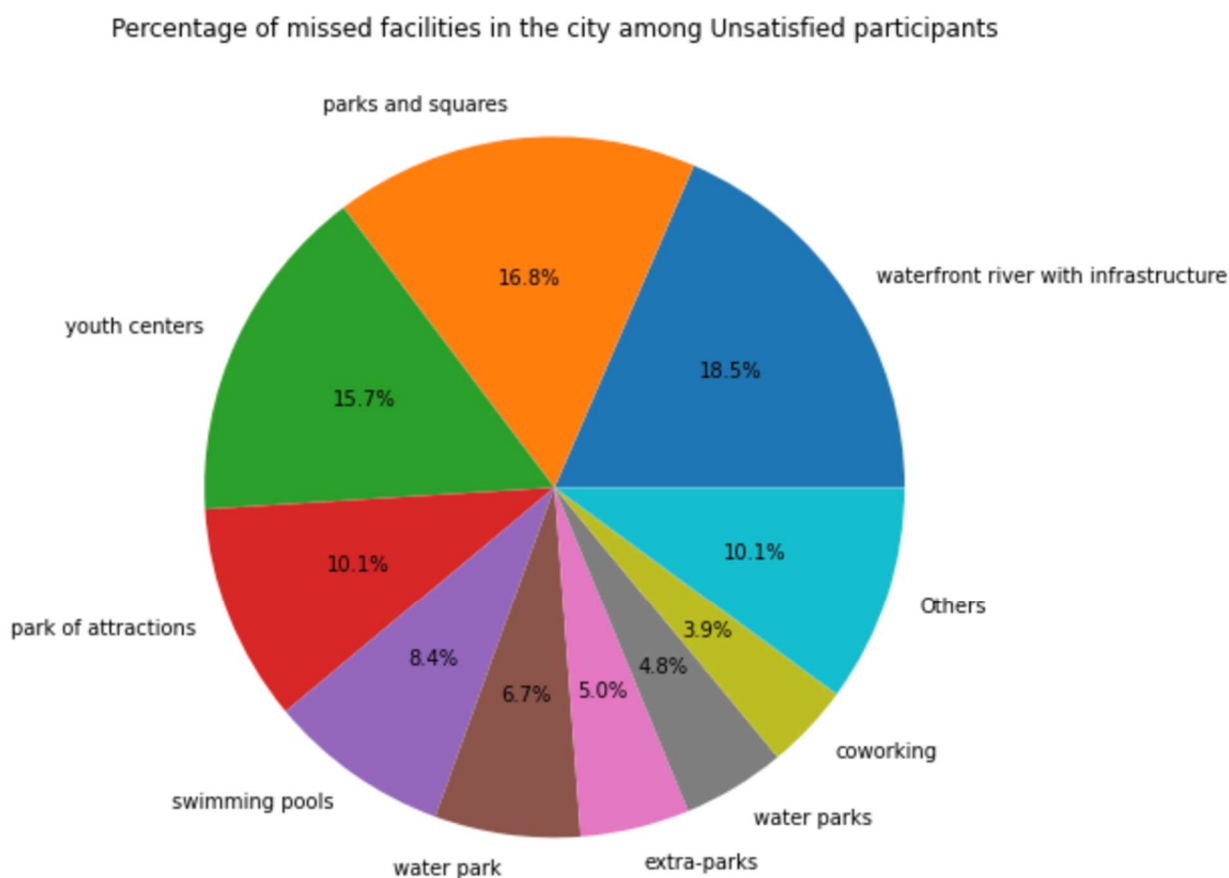
Two lines represent the satisfaction scores for females (in blue) and males (in red). Both lines exhibit fluctuations across the index points, suggesting variability in satisfaction levels. Notably, the satisfaction scores for females and males follow a similar trend, increasing and decreasing at almost the same points. However, the female score consistently remains slightly higher than the male score until it converges and overlaps at the end of the index.

While both genders demonstrate parallel trends in satisfaction with city life, females report marginally higher satisfaction levels than males until the final points, where the satisfaction levels equalise. These insights could inform city marketing strategies to improve urban life quality and address gender-specific concerns.

Based on responses regarding absent amenities within the city (What do you miss in the city?) and overall life satisfaction, we aimed to identify the predominant facilities deemed crucial by individuals expressing dissatisfaction with life. This investigation sought to identify essential lacking amenities among this demographic, intending to devise a strategic focus on these aspects to enhance resident retention.

The provided graphics are pie charts detailing the percentage of facilities that participants in a study feel are lacking in the city, categorised by their level of satisfaction: Not satisfied, Slightly Satisfied, Satisfied, and Very Satisfied.

For unsatisfied participants (Figure 39), the most missed facility is the waterfront river with infrastructure (18.5%), followed closely by parks and squares (16.8%) and youth centres (15.7%). As indicated by lower percentages, water parks and coworking spaces appear to be less of a concern.



*Figure 39: Pie chart “Percentage of missed facilities in responses of unsatisfied respondents”*

Slightly Satisfied participants indicate a more evenly distributed concern (Figure 40), with the waterfront river with infrastructure (17.7%), parks and squares (15.0%), and youth centres (16.7%) being almost equally missed, which is similar to unsatisfied residents.

Percentage of missed facilities in the city among Slightly satisfied participants

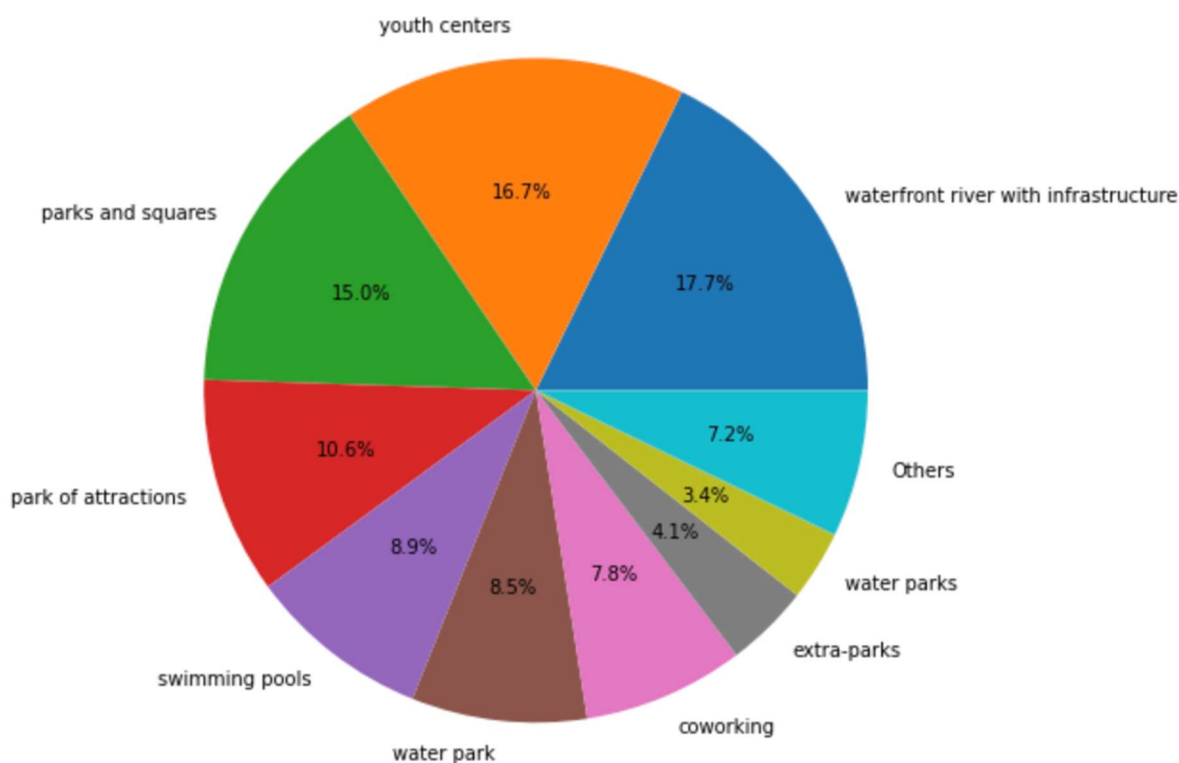


Figure 40: Pie chart “Percentage of missed facilities in responses of slightly satisfied respondents”

The examination of responses from both unsatisfied and slightly satisfied participants provides valuable insights into the nuanced preferences and priorities for city infrastructure development. Key conclusions can be drawn to guide decision-making in enhancing city amenities:

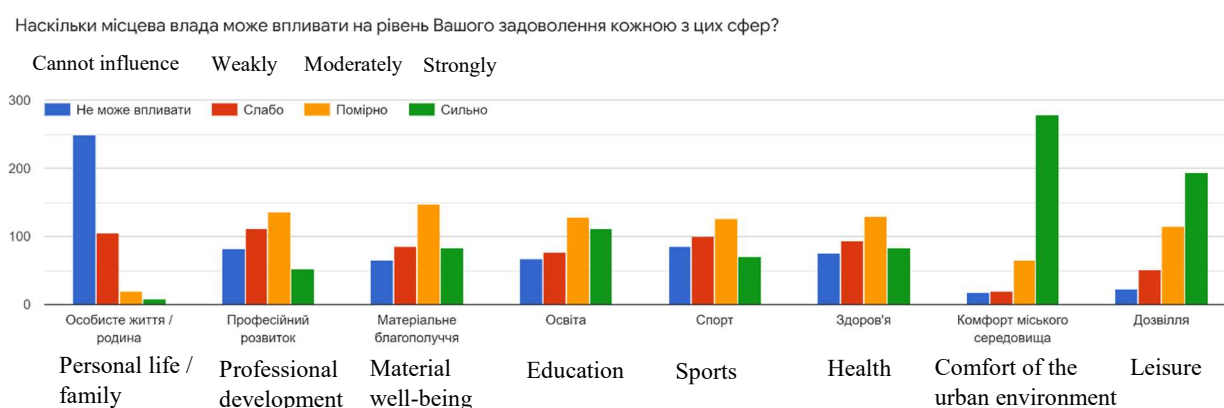
- Consistent Prioritization of Waterfront River with Infrastructure
- Emphases on Parks and Squares
- Development of Youth Centers

In conclusion, across all satisfaction levels, the waterfront river with infrastructure consistently emerges as the most missed facility, suggesting that improving this aspect of urban infrastructure could significantly enhance overall satisfaction.

The question of the degree of local authorities’ influence on the satisfaction level of the respondent makes us understand how much the population shifts responsibility for their well-being to the municipality. The respondent was offered the following indicators: cannot influence, weakly, moderately, strongly. We can distinguish three categories in which the



respondents were practically unanimous in their choice. Most believe that the local government cannot influence the level of satisfaction with personal life and family (Figure 41). On the one hand, this answer is quite logical, but if you look deeper at this situation, a person's desire to start a family and enter into a relationship also depends on financial well-being. The number of jobs and economic development may change depending on the local government's efforts, which can improve the situation through strategic planning, cooperation, and stakeholder interaction. At the same time, we see in the diagram that most respondents believe that the government moderately influences their satisfaction with material well-being and professional development.



*Figure 41: A diagram for Question 11: To what extent can local authorities influence your level of satisfaction in each of these areas?*

*Source: Google Forms, own elaboration*

Two areas that local authorities can strongly influence, according to respondents, are leisure and the comfort of the urban environment. In the question about the satisfaction level of different life areas, it turned out that the city's inhabitants are only slightly satisfied with leisure. At the same time, they believe that the authorities should act and increase its number. In the researcher's opinion, leisure is a rather specific area and very subjective. For some, leisure is hours spent in the garden; for others – parties in nightclubs. When we investigated the issue of relocation to small towns, it occurred that the lack of entertainment infrastructure in the city did not frighten the creative class before relocation. Much more important for them is the presence of initiative and the desire of residents to support it. Opinions were expressed that if someone lacks entertainment, they should create events or clubs of interest and entertain themselves by involving others. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that festivals and city events are a significant part of the city's image.

The festival sets a temporal rhythm for the cultural urban space. City life includes many cultural events and activities, most permanent or one-time affairs. The festival is a remarkable cultural phenomenon, as it is repetitive and large-scale. The festival is a series of cultural events that specially organize urban space, set specific time frames, and reflect on the festival participants who live “a small life” during the festival. The very organization of the festival itself includes specific cycles: preparing, holding the event, and summing it up (Арман Токпан et al., 2020). All this requires a certain amount of time and financial costs. The recurring festival reminds society of the event’s significance, equating it to a holiday. Becoming a constant element of the city’s cultural life, the festival gives birth to or renews cultural meanings important for the city’s image.

Organizationally, the festival has three types of participants: organizers, authors, and audience, whose roles are not strictly fixed and can be changed depending on the format of the festival event; as for the position of city dwellers, festival participants and its audience. A person is forced to create social ties in a communication flow. The festival attracts the attention of urban audiences as it satisfies the need to connect with people and socialise. Thus, personal interest becomes one of the main motives for the participation of the city dweller, which the festival satisfies. A modern viewer is a young person not burdened with household chores and has free time to attend events. They are mobile and, at the same time, have growing and developing personalities, are open to information, and are labile. In many ways, these characteristics heuristically coincide with the attributes of festivals.

When planning a festival, the following principles should be considered, which can significantly increase the effectiveness of the event within the framework of city marketing goals:

- the principle of conformity of the territorial identity with the concept of the festival (e.g., the municipality should not organise a car race if the city’s values are family-oriented and based on safety; at the same time, it can be a relevant event for student city as it brings to the table risk, speed and noise which are in the character of youth);
- - the principle of harmonisation of strategic planning of city marketing and promotion of a mega-event based on the unique features of the territory (e.g. if we try to promote the city as a green destination, we build this concept into the festival. As an example, the theatre festival can include performances in the city’s gardens or forests.);

- the principle of festival marketing segmentation by considering the interests of all target audiences of city marketing (the festival has to include programmes which are enjoyable for different ages and profiles);
- the principle of integration and geolocation contingency between festival events and city attractions, attributes and events representing the brand of the territory (mapping);
- the principle of digitalisation of the festival, which is aimed at increasing the coverage of target audiences by promoting the territorial brand;
- the principle that the festival's investment flows should be transparent and that the city residents should have access to information regarding management decisions;
- the principle of systematic management of a music festival (even a brilliant and unique idea of the festival's concept will not save a poorly organised event from bad reviews);
- developing a method for assessing the festival's performance as a tool for city promotion at each step is the foundation of the control constancy concept.

The festival giant of the Sumy region can be considered the city of Trostyanets, which in the pre-war period gathered people from all over Ukraine for its events (up to 10 thousand tourists every year with a city population of 20 thousand) while managing to focus on different target audiences (Паламарьова, 2016). Trostyanets has an architectural monument of the 18th century, the Round Yard. This arena, like the manor house, was repaired in 2007. The Round Yard hosts such mass events as the East Rock Music Festival, the Tchaikovsky Festival, and the festival of the historical reconstruction “Old Fortress” (Figure 42).



*Figure 42: The Round Yard in Trostyanets hosts the Old Fortress festival*

*Source: <https://sumy.depo.ua/>*

The historical reconstruction festival “Old Fortress: Journey through the Centuries” invites visitors to see historical fencing battles, knight battles, archers, cannons, blacksmiths, costume shows, try medieval cuisine and listen to the music of that time, buy something at the folk crafts fair. The East Rock Music Festival gathers rock music enthusiasts in the same way that lovers of classical music visit the Tchaikovsky Festival.

It is not reasonable for the authorities of the city of Sumy to perceive Trostyanets as a competitor since people heading there for an event will most likely make a transfer to Trostyanets in Sumy. This is an excellent chance for Sumy to show what it has to offer and plant in the tourists’ minds the idea of returning here to explore and spend more time and money. This is not a competition but a real collaboration that Sumy masterfully missed all these years.

According to residents, the comfort of the urban environment is the municipality’s responsibility. Planning begins in the officials’ offices, is approved by councils, and is carried out by contractors chosen by the same officials. Many standards of the urban environment have remained in Ukraine since Soviet times. A striking example is the fences and barriers between the carriageway and the pedestrian.

There are numerous studies on this topic, stating that the presence of fencing and guardrails, on the contrary, creates a danger to pedestrians in the event of a traffic accident and does not protect them as it is expected (Budzynski et al., 2019; Papaioannou & Basbas, 2007; Talamini et al., 2022). This echoes the study on the wearing of a helmet by a cyclist and the behaviours of a driver passing by. According to a study published in *Accident Analysis & Prevention* (Walker & Robinson, 2018), drivers allow those pedalling without helmets broader berths while moving closer to those wearing them.

Additionally, a notable issue highlighted in the questionnaire is the inadequacy of advertising regulations and the city’s lack of signage regulations. This flaw significantly affects the city’s visual aesthetics and overall atmosphere (Figure 43).

The lack of a comprehensive regulatory framework for advertising contributes to visual clutter, inconsistent branding and potential intrusiveness. Without clear guidelines, there is a risk of visual pollution, which negatively impacts the urban environment and reduces the overall attractiveness of public spaces.



Figure 43: Visual clutter in the city centre of Sumy

Source: *cukr.city*

The lack of a sign design code exacerbates these problems by leaving businesses and organizations without straightforward sign design and placement standards. This results in a disjointed visual landscape, affecting the integrity and attractiveness of commercial areas. Well-implemented sign design code not only enhances the visual appeal of a city but also helps create a more organized and easy-to-navigate urban environment.

Solving this problem requires joint efforts of local authorities, businesses and urban planners.

As depicted in the diagram (Figure 44), there is considerable disapproval of the government's actions as of the fall of 2021. The city's local authorities are represented by the mayor, Oleksandr Lysenko, who has been the head of Sumy since 2014. Despite a disagreement with the governor, Mykola Klochko, whom President Poroshenko had chosen, he managed to maintain his reputation as mayor without causing any major controversies. Decentralization allowed for a significant inflow of revenue into the local budget. Compared to 2014, the regional centre's budget expanded five times in 2019, reaching over three billion hryvnias. Sumy is indeed steadily developing.

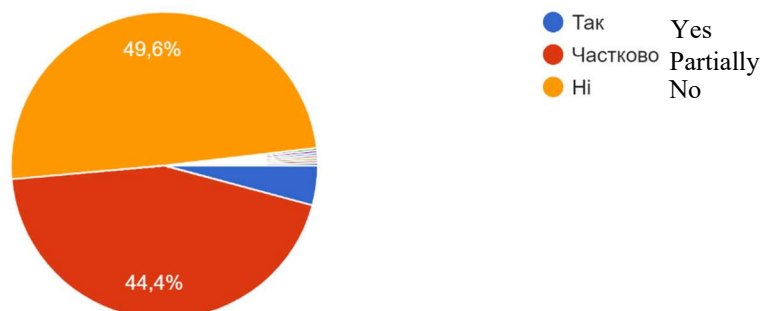
In one of his military interviews (Віталій Кохан, 2022), the mayor spoke about the tasks facing the city authorities at the moment:

*First, the city needs to return to a normal state of work and security, but the war must end for this. To simplify it, finances and tax payments are needed to fill the budget for the restoration of Sumy jobs, and a lot is needed... We hope for new laws that will contribute to the development of the territories and for state programs to restore settlements that were affected by the aggressor, including our city.*

**As of October 2023, there has been a recent development.** On October 2, 2023, the arrest of Mayor Lysenko and the head of the city council's infrastructure department occurred under the auspices of Ukraine's Security Service. The arrest occurred while receiving the last part of a bribe for 2.13 million hryvnia (58 thousand US dollars) (Ostiller, 2023).

The Security Service alleges that the officials extorted a bribe from a local waste removal company by allegedly using coercive measures and threatening to impede the company's operations if the required remuneration was not paid. If convicted, the officials involved could be sentenced to up to eight years in prison with possible confiscation of assets.

Чи задоволені Ви діяльністю місцевої влади міста Суми?  
383&nbsp;ответа



*Figure 44: A pie chart for Question 12: Are you satisfied with the activities of the local authorities of Sumy?*

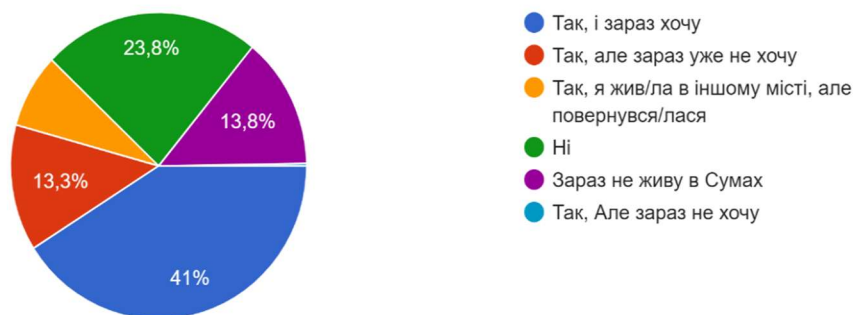
*Source: Google Forms, own elaboration*

One of the critical problems that small and medium-sized cities face is the migration of the population to larger settlements (Figure 45). We said earlier that the primary target audience of the city is residents. Without them, the city ceases to exist, the business does not operate, and the investor is not interested. A tourist will not go to a place that is not loved by a local. Residents are a stable source of replenishment of the city treasury through taxes. After the

decentralization reform in Ukraine, this became an even more weighty statement. For Sumy's population, Kharkiv and Kyiv are magnet cities for relocation.

Чи хотіли Ви коли-небудь переїхати з міста Суми?

383&nbsp;ответа



*Figure 45: A pie chart for Question 13: Have you ever wanted to move from Sumy? Blue: Yes, and I want now; Red: Yes, but I do not want anymore; Orange: Yes, I lived in another city but came back; Green: No; Purple: I am not living in Sumy now*  
*Source: Google Forms, own elaboration*

The central outflow falls on graduates of high school, who enter the universities of larger cities and settle there. Young people explain their desire to move because Sumy has few opportunities for professional development. Large companies choose large cities for their offices because they are interested in a substantial market of highly skilled labour, and highly qualified personnel go to big cities to look for work. Thus, we get into a vicious circle, almost impossible for a small town to break. Thus, strategic decisions should consider the specifics and analysis of your city and its competitors.

As proof of the above, we bring you a piece of an in-depth interview conducted in the summer of 2021 with a student of the 11th grade of the Sumy gymnasium – Taya Obod (in September 2022, she became a student of the Ukrainian Catholic University in Lviv). You can find the full interview in the dissertation supplement.

**Researcher:** *Are you considering Sumy as a city where you will study?*

**Taya:** *Unfortunately, no. I chose the best of the best universities in Kyiv. I know that we have a Sumy State University. Nevertheless, comparing Kyiv and Sumy universities, I prefer Kyiv.*

**Researcher:** *If I am not mistaken, the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy is lower than Sumy State University's ranking in the world universities.*

**Taya:** *I have heard it. However, I know that thanks to Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, students travel a lot and go on exchange trips. I will have the opportunity to travel and visit different cities.*

**Researcher:** *But practically all universities have such opportunities. I have the impression (if it is not valid, please correct me) that you want to enter a university located in Kyiv. You have not compared the possibilities of Sumy and Kyiv universities; you simply have an ambition and a dream to move to Kyiv. You talk about international opportunities, but Sumy University is also full of them.*

**Taya:** *Maybe so. Nevertheless, I know there are more prospects in Kyiv than in Sumy.*

**Researcher:** *What do you mean by these perspectives?*

**Taya:** *(long pause) Opportunity to work in various international companies.*

In Kyiv and the surrounding area, half of the applications are from outside the region. Only five of Ukraine's regions exhibit a favourable "balance" of this interregional migration. This is stated in the study Migration of University Applicants in Ukraine, published on the website of the analytical centre CEDOS (Samokhin & Onyshchenko, 2017).

The authors looked at data from the Unified State Electronic Database on Education on the individuals who entered bachelor's degree programs (or master's programs in medicine and veterinary medicine), as well as statistical data on the participants of the External Independent Evaluation in order to look into the volume of movement of applicants.

The study's authors reached a disappointing conclusion: in some regions, the number of applicants who left is 20-30 times higher than those who arrived to study. Moreover, as a rule, those with the highest scores leave as they want to get into prestigious universities in large cities.

"In many regions of Ukraine, there are a large number of applicants who left this region, and at the same time, there are many who came there to study," the study says.



Kyiv, Lviv, Kharkiv, and, to a lesser extent, Odesa and Chernivtsi regions attract local applicants and applicants from other regions.

According to CEDOS analyst Ihor Samokhin, Ukraine is not unique. This is a global trend. Just as in Ukraine, applicants are attracted by Kyiv, Lviv, and Kharkiv, in Spain by Madrid or Barcelona, and in Italy by Rome and Milan. Applicants from all over France come to such a robust scientific and educational centre as Paris, where more than a dozen large universities are located. However, this happens differently in different states. Educationally decentralized countries like Germany or the US have many scientific and educational centres in different states or states that attract applicants.

This is a natural trend closely connected with education and science development and the economic development of certain territories. The study noted that cities or regions where the best school graduates leave should work on developing this area and creating new jobs. For example, local authorities should create joint projects with regional universities to introduce start-ups and innovative technologies. So, after studying at leading universities, a fresh graduate could find a better job. Therefore, moving to a region with powerful and developed science is a plus for an applicant. For the city where she/he was born and graduated from high school is a minus.

There were even attempts to keep applicants at the place of their address registration. In 2017, the Ministry of Education changed the conditions for university admission. It introduced the so-called regional coefficient, multiplied by the applicant's competitive score. Kyiv had the lowest coefficient, Kharkiv, Lviv and Odesa slightly higher, and the rest of the cities the highest. For example, entering a university in Kropyvnytskyi was more accessible than in Kyiv. Despite this, only a quarter of all graduates of the Kirovohrad region who entered universities in 2017 chose their native region. Individual cities benefited from this, for example, Chernivtsi. This is a somewhat artificial way of regulation; it has its drawbacks. Such preferences can accumulate the worst applicants in regional universities. Therefore, in the long term, local authorities should take care of the development of their territories to preserve human capital and not push out the best from there.

Accurately noted in the study that regional centres and other large cities that suffer from this "brain drain" due to the low quality and corruption of their universities risk forever losing the majority of capable and active young people who could change their region for the better.

It is imperative for us to know not only the push factors of people leaving the city but also the pull factors that will help us write a strategy and determine actions to return and attract people to the city. Although only 30 answers were collected for this question, which is not indicative of statistics, it was still essential to see what respondents chose or wrote (Figure 46). Among the answers proposed by the respondents themselves were studies, circumstances, and quarantine during the coronavirus, “Sumy seemed to be a comfortable city”. As you can see, some were homesick, which can be described as an imaginary comfort. People born here and spent a carefree childhood and youth associate this city with comfort, bearing good memories of their adolescence, like meeting their first love, having a date or a first kiss.

The researcher talked to Olena Ivanova, a psychologist and specialist in the method of trauma-focused psychotherapy, about homesickness and why people return to their hometowns. It depends on how the decision to leave or move was made. If a person left the city of his/her own free will and it was a conscious decision, then it is improbable that (s)he will be strongly homesick. If the reason for the move was external circumstances, such as current events in Ukraine, when millions were forced to flee in panic from the threat of shelling and rocket attacks, then here we can talk about the feeling of guilt of the person who left and about idealization, exaggeration of the value of a home they left. The loss of habitual conditions makes them significant for a person, and there is a change of priorities. Olena also shared the results of a survey of refugees from Ukraine, where they had to choose an object that was important to them in the war.

Moreover, many chose a coffee cup. The fact is that a cup is a symbol of home, warmth and comfort. Moreover, it is a thing that belongs to a person, and it is not for general use. Every day, things have gained value. Homesickness is more of a longing for your personal boundaries, life pace and belongings.

Another comment relates to people who belonged to the middle class before the war and could afford mostly anything in life. They take humanitarian aid especially hard; for them, it equals their helplessness: they used to be able to, but now they cannot. Therefore, it is especially difficult for them.

Understanding human psychology and the value system should become a pillar in the future when developing a plan for returning Ukrainians to their homeland after the end of the war. Many will not return; it is an axiom, but the authorities’ task is to work with those who want

but are doubting. These include, first of all, jobs and housing in case people have lost their homes.

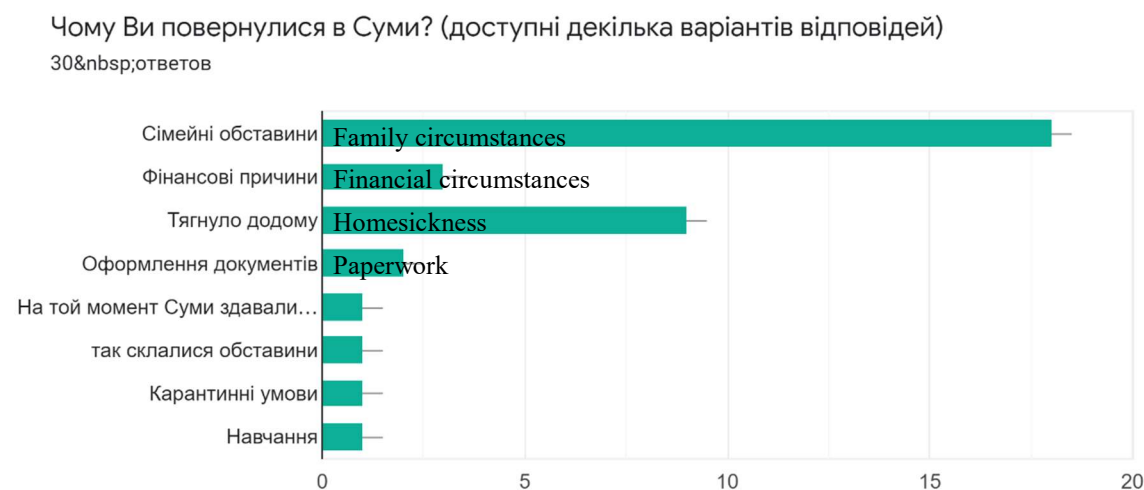
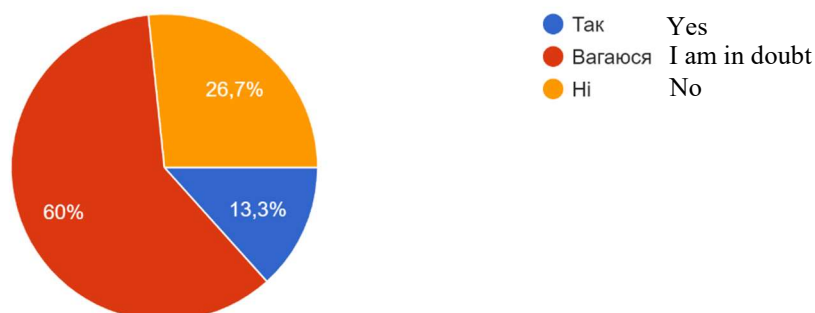


Figure 46: A diagram for Question 14: Why did you return to Sumy? (several answer options available)

Source: Google Forms, own elaboration

We have 30 answers to the question about the intention to move again (Figure 47), but we see that the majority of respondents doubt their choice, and it is essential for us to understand that such a stratum of the population exists and the task of the municipality is to persuade the doubting group to abandon the idea of moving with various tools. Therefore, it is crucial for us to study the audience's desires and understand what they lack in the city. Thanks to this, we can keep the doubters or even return those who have already left.

Маєте на меті знову переїхати при можливості?  
30&nbsp;ответов

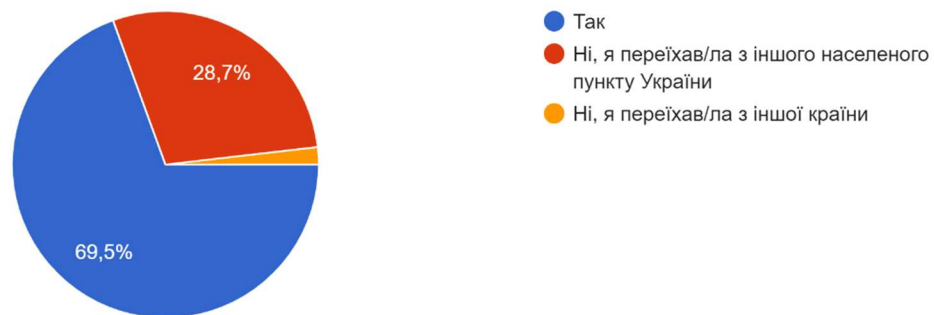


*Figure 47: A pie chart for Question 15: Do you intend to move again if possible?*

*Source: Google Forms, own elaboration*

This question helped us understand the city's demographic picture and was proof of the assertion that the Sumy population mainly comprises indigenous people (Figure 48). However, a third of the respondents are migrants from other settlements of the Sumy region or Ukraine, our target audience for attracting new residents.

Ви народилися у Сумах?  
383&nbsp;ответа



*Figure 48: A pie chart for Question 16: Were you born in Sumy?*

*Blue: Yes; Red: No, I moved from another Ukrainian settlement; Orange: No, I moved from another country*

*Source: Google Forms, own elaboration*

As described earlier, we used this question to understand the financial well-being of respondents without asking them directly. Hence, an investigation was undertaken to ascertain whether residents in the city centre exhibit higher satisfaction levels across diverse aspects of life compared to those residing in more peripheral areas. The objective was to discern any existing disparities in the distribution of entertainment, sports and educational institutions throughout the city.

The degree of satisfaction with Leisure based on the locality

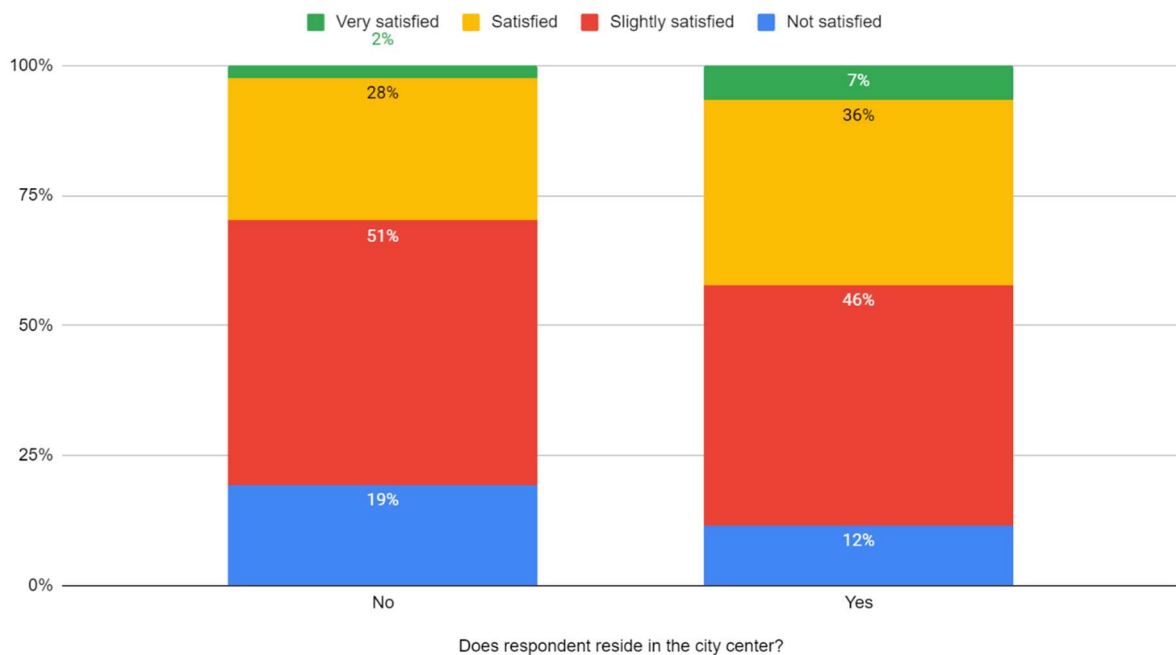


Figure 49: A stacked bar chart “The degree of satisfaction with Leisure based on the locality.”

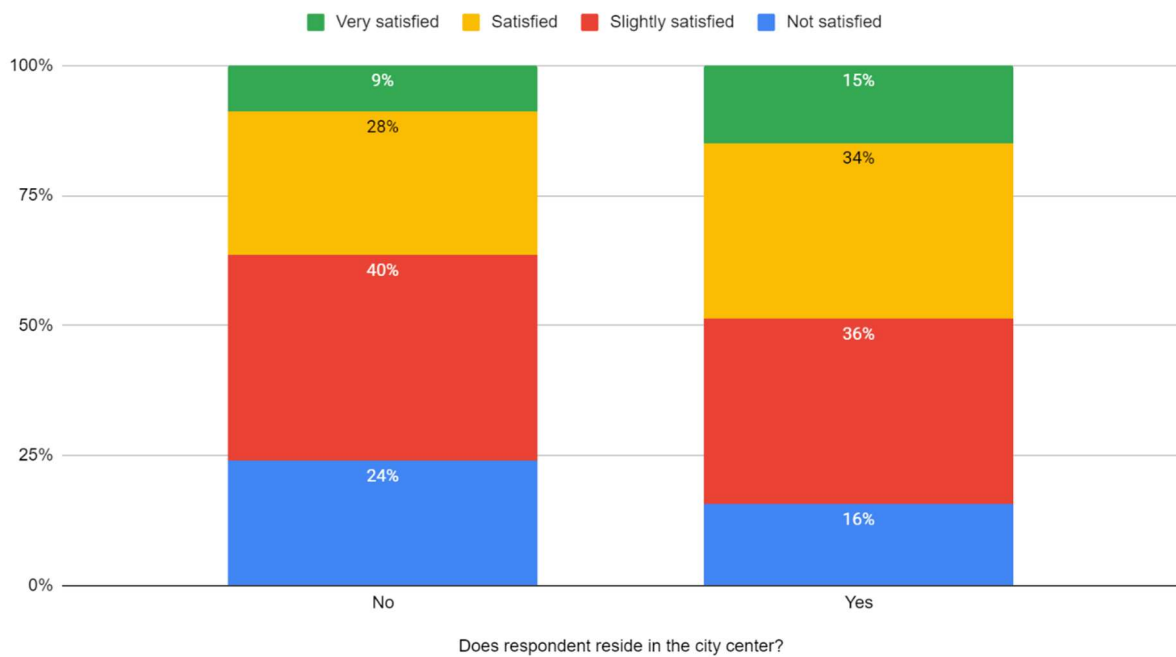
Source: Google Sheets, own elaboration

The graph presents the degree of satisfaction with Leisure based on the locality (Figure 49). It assesses the levels of satisfaction with leisure activities, divided into four categories: “Very satisfied,” “Satisfied,” “Slightly satisfied,” and “Not satisfied.” The satisfaction levels of respondents who live in the city centre (“Yes”) and those who do not (“No”) are compared.

We can suggest that respondents living in the city centre have a higher percentage of both “very satisfied” and “Satisfied” responses than those living outside the city centre. This contrast may indicate a polarization of opinions about leisure activities among city centre residents, which could be valuable for developing targeted leisure enhancement strategies in city initiatives.

The following graph, “The degree of satisfaction with Sports based on the locality” (Figure 50), compares the satisfaction levels with sports facilities or programs among respondents, distinguishing between those who do not reside in the city centre and those who do.

### The degree of satisfaction with Sports based on the locality

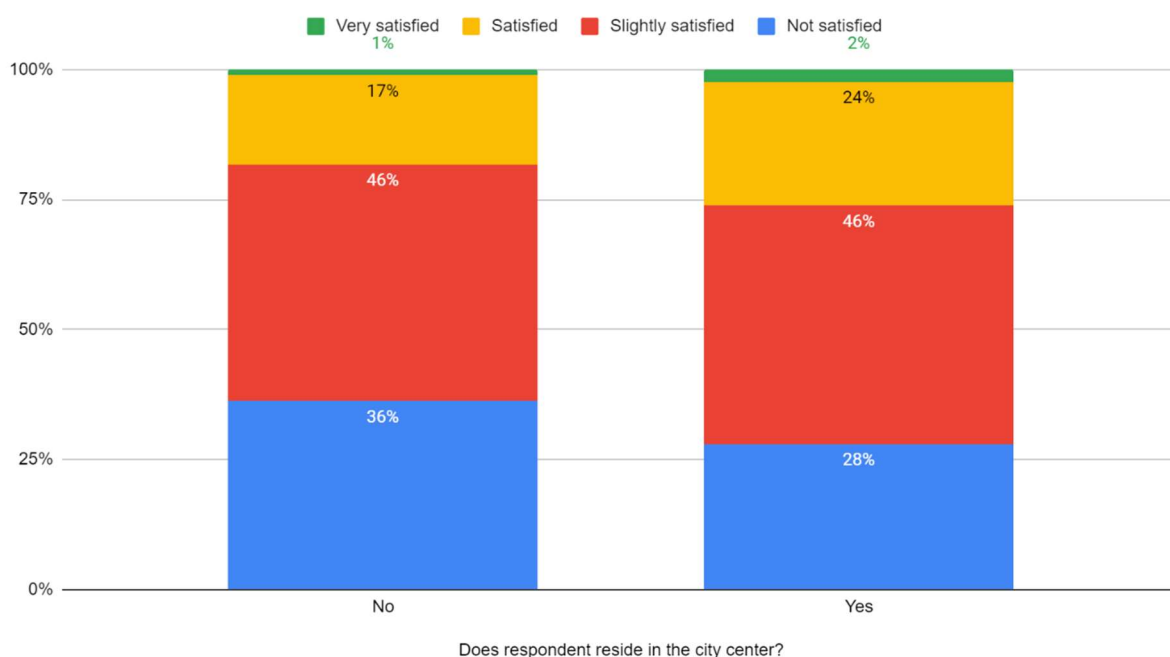


*Figure 50: A stacked bar chart “The degree of satisfaction with Sports based on the locality.”*

In summary, the graph illustrates that respondents living in the city centre report higher levels of satisfaction with sports, with a majority falling into the “very satisfied” and “satisfied” categories. This information could be pivotal for city marketing strategies focusing on sports, indicating potential areas for improvement in sports services within the city’s peripheral areas to increase resident satisfaction.

The following stacked bar graph compares the satisfaction levels of respondents with the comfort of the urban environment (Figure 51).

### The degree of satisfaction with Comfort of Urban Environment based on the locality

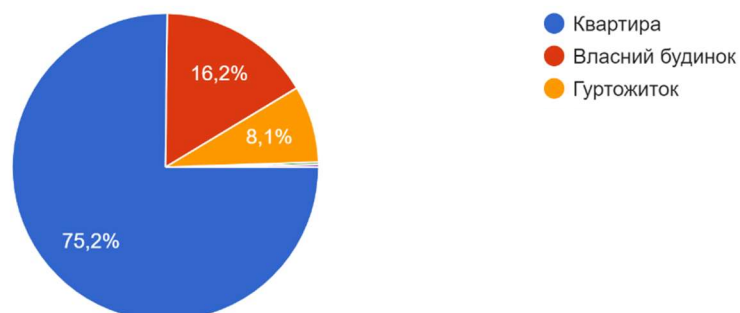


*Figure 51: A stacked bar chart “The degree of satisfaction with comfort of Urban environment based on the locality”*

The graph reveals that a more significant proportion of residents living in the city centre report being satisfied (including very satisfied and satisfied) with the comfort of the urban environment compared to those living out of the city centre. These findings suggest a potential disparity in the comfort of the urban environment between city centre residents and those living outside it, which may be a significant factor to consider in city marketing efforts to improve urban living conditions.

В якому типі житла Ви живете?

383&nbsp;ответа



*Figure 52: A pie chart for Question 18: What type of housing do you live in?  
Blue: Apartment; Red: Detached house; Orange: Dormitory*

*Source: Google Forms, own elaboration*

According to data visualised in the pie chart (Figure 53), more than half of the respondents have completed higher education, which is a good criterion for employers, as the city has a high rate of skilled labour. It affects the results of the survey because the demographic picture of the whole city looks different. It can be argued that the sample, although randomly selected, is not representative. We consider this a limitation of our study.

Ваш завершений рівень освіти:  
383&nbsp;ответа



*Figure 53: A pie chart for Question 19: Your completed level of education  
Source: Google Forms, own elaboration*

Businesses and investors need to understand the composition of the labour market. We see that almost 30 per cent of the respondents are students (Figure 54). Given the city's demographic composition, Sumy has about 60,000 students, which is 24 per cent of the population. Therefore, we can say that concerning students as the target audience, our sample and the results of this survey are valid.



Ваша професія:  
383&nbsp;ответа

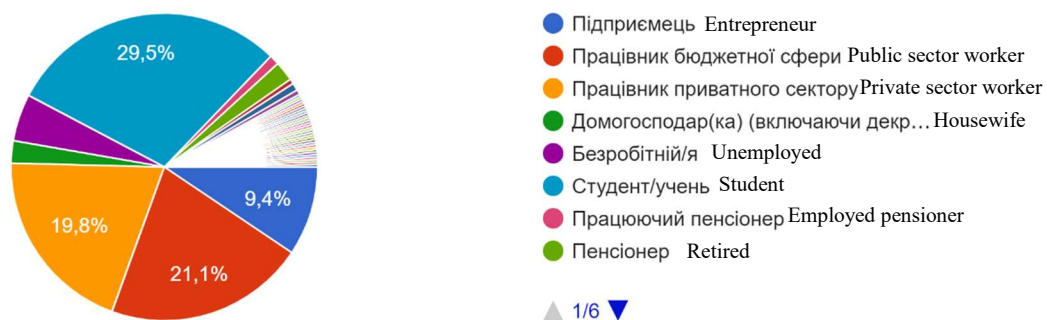


Figure 54: A pie chart for Question 20: Your occupation

Source: Google Forms, own elaboration

Women are more open and proactive when participating in surveys, interviews or events (Figure 55). Women dominate the composition of our sample just as they dominate the population according to the 2014 census, which indicates about 55 per cent.

Ваша стать:  
383&nbsp;ответа

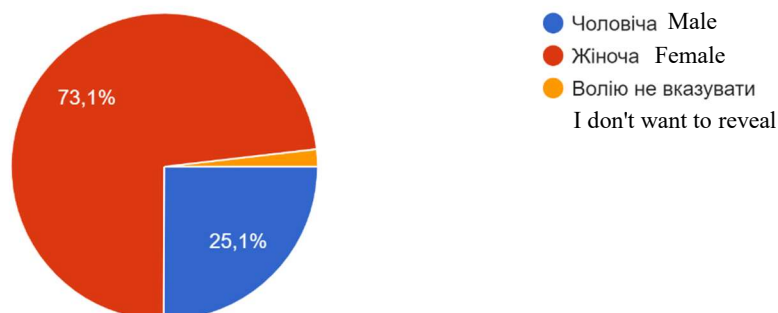


Figure 55: A pie chart for Question 21: Your sex

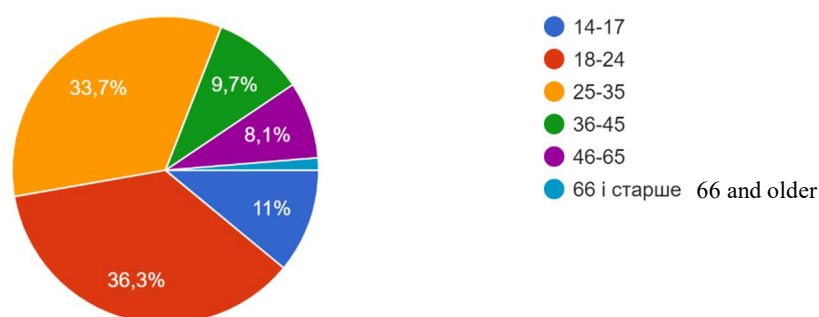
Source: Google Forms, own elaboration

The retirement age and the right to an old-age pension in Ukraine are determined depending on the relevant insurance period acquired, and they are 60, 63, and 65 years, following the Law on Compulsory State Pension Insurance. According to the 2001 city census, 16.9 per cent of people under working age, 64.8 per cent of working age, and 18.1 per cent over working age lived in

Sumy. Looking at our sample (Figure 56), we have 11 per cent of respondents under 18, and in the aggregate, 87 per cent of people are of working age, which is much higher than the actual composition of the city. We consider the small number of respondents older than 66, or, in other words, retirement age, to be a limitation of our survey. Collecting data from people in this age category was challenging since a high level of distrust and conservatism characterises them. When the researcher or even relatives of pensioners asked them to take a survey for our study, they refused because they believed that the data was being collected for some deceptive schemes that would further harm the respondents. Even the fact that the questionnaire did not collect such data as the name and the survey was anonymous did not raise the confidence of the majority.

Ваш вік:

383&nbsp;ответа



*Figure 56: A pie chart for Question 22: Your age*

*Source: Google Forms, own elaboration*

The Descriptive Statistics chapter of the questionnaires serves as a critical examination of the intricacies of Sumy's social structure. By delving deeper into the data collected, we reveal the varied preferences and perceptions of the people surveyed. Through the lens of various statistical indicators, including key trends and variability, we gain a detailed understanding of the factors that shape a city's identity. This statistical study lays the foundation for subsequent in-depth studies to guide the formulation of targeted urban marketing strategies based on distinctive community characteristics.

## CONCLUSIONS

This dissertation delved into the multifaceted field of city marketing, seeking to contribute to a more detailed understanding of its operational definitions, role in public administration, and practical implementation strategies. A study of existing definitions revealed a dichotomy between competitive-oriented and customer-oriented perspectives, prompting the author to synthesise a comprehensive functional definition. As proposed in this study, city marketing is a long-term strategic activity to meet market demands and stakeholder needs and manage the competitive environment.

City marketing is a sustained effort that requires careful consideration of market dynamics. The interweaving of competitive awareness, market demands and strategic planning forms the basis of effective city marketing. The importance of image auditing in strategic planning comes at a critical point, highlighting the need to understand how the city is perceived by different target groups, both internally and externally.

The study highlights the critical importance of city marketing for local governments in today's highly competitive urban environment. The competition dynamics between cities for vital resources such as skilled labour, talent, tourism and investment require a proactive approach to ensure regional leadership.

By acknowledging the varied requirements of the target demographic, the research underscores the significance of meticulous market segmentation. It also argues that effective city marketing requires a detailed understanding of different population segments' unique qualities and preferences.

Moreover, effective city marketing involves not only conveying the image of a place but also strategically emphasising its distinctive advantages, as well as eliminating and actively working on existing shortcomings. The study advocates for transparent recognition of shortcomings rather than simply masking them, highlighting the need for immediate action to improve the city's overall attractiveness.

The study is consistent with the view that branding is a natural extension of marketing, with both playing an essential role in shaping a city's image. While marketing strategies aim to translate the target audience's needs into reality, branding strategies aim to create and develop a positive perception of the brand. The ultimate goal is to increase loyalty, foster positive experiences and encourage people to share them, increasing overall brand awareness.

Empirical evidence strongly supports H1, highlighting the compelling correlation between a city's competitiveness and the presence of a robust marketing strategy. Cities that lack a strategic approach face a significant decline in competitiveness, highlighting the urgent need for city planners and policymakers to prioritise developing and implementing effective marketing strategies as integral components of city management.

Proposition H2, that analysing city marketing strategies reveals a structured structure with interrelated components, finds strong support in the study's comparative analysis. Our research into the city marketing strategies of various settlements, including Helsinki, Melbourne, North Port, Vinnytsia, Kryvyi Rih, Lake Oswego, Richmond, Central City and Avon, has shed light on the core components that together form a solid and effective marketing strategy for the city. The comparative analysis highlighted the key elements integral to a prosperous city marketing strategy. The core components include a comprehensive framework tailored to each city's unique characteristics and needs. These components include:

**Vision and Mission:** Establish a clear vision and mission that aligns with the city's identity and aspirations.

**Description of the city:** Create a compelling narrative that reflects the essence and identity of the city.

**SWOT Analysis:** Conduct a thorough analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to make strategic decisions.

**Goals:** Define specific and measurable goals that will guide the development and growth of the city.

**Target Groups:** Identify and understand the various target groups critical to the city's success.

**Key Messages:** Create effective messages communicating the city's strengths, values, and unique offerings.

**Marketing Methods:** Select appropriate channels and methods to reach and attract the target audience effectively.

**Implementation Plan:** Define a strategic plan for the smooth implementation of marketing initiatives.

**Brand:** Design and develop a city brand that resonates with residents, visitors, and investors.

**Budget:** The judicious allocation of resources to support the implementation of marketing strategies and achieve desired results.

Hypothesis 3 sheds light on the complex relationships between a city's local cultural identity and the perceptions of its residents and businesses. This finding highlights the profound influence of cultural nuances on how people perceive and interact with urban environments. Marketers and policymakers need to recognize and appreciate these cultural subtleties. This increased awareness is needed to create more than just superficial advertising campaigns but to foster genuine and lasting connections between a city and its community.

As cities strive to differentiate themselves in a competitive global environment, understanding and embracing their unique cultural identities becomes a strategic imperative. This involves going beyond traditional marketing approaches and delving into the true essence of the community. Thus, marketers and policymakers are challenged to decipher the local values, traditions and cultural symbols that define a city's identity.

Moreover, the findings support the idea that effective city marketing is multifaceted. This requires a move away from generic, one-size-fits-all strategies in favour of a more individualised and culturally sensitive approach. In this context, city marketing becomes a dynamic process of cultural dialogue in which the unique character of a city becomes a source of inspiration for strategic initiatives, community engagement and the overall urban experience.

Proposition H4, emphasising the importance of comprehensive research on the target audience, is carefully addressed in the multifaceted research questionnaire. The research methodology, covering a variety of question formats and topics, provides a detailed understanding of residents' perspectives, allowing for both quantitative and qualitative analysis. This holistic approach not only identifies the needs of a city's target audience but also paints a rich and complex picture of society, offering invaluable information for strategic decision-making and planning.

Designing and conducting a survey to identify the needs of a city's target audience should be based on a comprehensive and multifaceted approach that uses a variety of question formats and topics. Incorporating a variety of question formats, such as closed/open-ended, multiple-choice, and Likert-scale questions, provides a detailed understanding of respondents' perspectives, allowing for both quantitative and qualitative analysis.

The survey covers various aspects, from exploring residents' favourite attractions to providing insight into the population's cultural and entertainment preferences. A self-report exercise, in which respondents describe themselves using provided adjectives, adds a personal dimension to the survey, contributing to a deeper understanding of the community's character.

Exploring residents' value systems through carefully crafted questions helps identify shared priorities, ranging from family values to personal development. Intra-urban mobility, sports activities and preferences for information channels provide valuable data for urban planning and service delivery, reflecting the lifestyle and health consciousness of the population.

The survey also addresses issues of social significance, such as attitudes towards different nationalities, which allows us to assess the cultural tolerance of the city. Questions about leisure activities, dissatisfaction, and satisfaction with various aspects of life provide essential information about residents' needs and priorities.

Key demographic questions relating to migration, motives for return, place of birth, area of residence, type of housing, education, gender, occupation and age contribute to developing a comprehensive demographic profile. Levels of satisfaction in various areas of life and the perceived influence of local government on satisfaction levels provide an understanding of the dynamics between the population and municipal government.

Finally, examining residents' aspirations and potential reasons for moving out of the city sheds light on the challenges that small and medium-sized cities face, especially concerning population migration.

With its diverse set of questions, this questionnaire not only identifies the needs of the city's target audience but also paints a rich and complex picture of society. The results of this comprehensive study can provide a valuable basis for informed decision-making, urban planning, and the development of strategies to improve the overall well-being and satisfaction of city residents.

The above-described methodology helped us to understand Sumy residents and their needs. Many Sumy residents are associated with kindness and initiative; self-criticism is noteworthy: a significant number perceive ill-mannered or rude character traits. When considering life values, the findings highlight the importance placed by Sumy residents on personal safety, personal development and fulfilment, family values, and material well-being. These values are critical indicators for decision-makers to consider in planning and policy development.

The prevalence of social media as the primary source of information for almost 90% of respondents highlights the importance of digital platforms in communication strategies. This understanding must be used in city communication channels to disseminate information and engage with the community effectively.

In addition, the study identifies critical priorities for improving the city's amenities, including consistent prioritization of waterfront development, an emphasis on parks and public gardens, and the development of youth centres.

The observation that residents of peripheral areas express higher dissatisfaction with recreation, sports and the urban environment than residents of the city centre highlights the importance of targeted interventions. Addressing the specific concerns of peripheral residents can contribute to more balanced and inclusive urban development.

Thus, the comprehensive information obtained from this study serves as the basis for informed decision-making, allowing Central and Eastern European cities to tailor their policies to meet the diverse needs of their residents and promote a thriving and inclusive community.

To sum up, a comparative analysis of city marketing strategies in global settlements provides evidence of the nuanced nature of city marketing. It reinforces the dissertation's argument that a tailored, culturally sensitive approach is needed. City marketing is not a single strategy but an adaptive process that suits each city's unique characteristics and aspirations. This understanding is critical for urban planners and marketers navigating a diverse and dynamic urban landscape.

As such, this study contributes significantly to city marketing by providing a detailed understanding of the interrelated components of effective strategies, the influence of local cultural identity, and the need for comprehensive research on target audiences. It highlights the need for cities to adopt proactive, adaptive and culturally responsive marketing approaches to enhance competitiveness, engage communities and promote sustainable urban development in an increasingly complex and competitive global context.

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## CURRICULUM VITAE

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### EDUCATION

#### **National University of Public Service**

PhD Candidate, Pre-degree certificate, Public Administration (2018 - 2023)

#### **National University of Public Service**

Master's degree, International Public Service Relations (2016 - 2018)

#### **Sumy State 'A.S. Makarenko' Pedagogical University**

Bachelor's degree, Teacher of English and Foreign Literature (2013 - 2017)

#### **Kyiv National Taras Shevchenko University**

Bachelor's degree, International Information (2012 - 2016)

### PUBLICATIONS

- **Budapest Public Transport Transformation Towards the Smart City Concept**, Best of Kheops V. (2006-2018), 2018
- **Solving the Problem of Homelessness in the Framework of the Right to the City: Cases of Hungary and Finland**, TEÓRIA A PRAX VEREJNEJ SPRÁVY, 2020
- **Theoretical Concept and Definition of City Marketing**, Public Administration and Society, 2020
- **Vision and Market Segmentation in Urban Strategy Through Marketing Approach: A Case Study of Sumy City**, Acta Univ. Sapientiae, European and Regional Studies, 2021
- **Relocation of the Creative Class to the Small Cities Due to Covid-19: Discussion on a New City Marketing Niche**, PRO PUBLICO BONO – PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, 2021
- **Post-War Tourism in Ukraine: Should We Go Dark or Phoenix?**, Academic and Applied Research in Military and Public Management Science, 2022

### EXPERIENCE

#### **The Estée Lauder Companies Inc.**

- Analyst, HR Audit and Quality

July 2024 – Present

- Junior Analyst

February 2023 – June 2024

- Regional Data Management Trainee

May 2022 - February 2023 (10 months)

### **Robert Schuman Institute**

- Intern

February 2017 - April 2017 (3 months)

### **LANGUAGES**

Russian (Native)

Ukrainian (Native)

English (Fluent)

Hungarian (Intermediate)

### **SKILLS:**

- Meticulous attention to detail, maintaining precision in the management of substantial data volumes.
- Exceptional communication abilities, enabling effective interaction with stakeholders at all organizational levels.
- Proficiency in Microsoft Office, coupled with advanced Excel skills.
- Self-reliant and a valuable team player, adept at thriving in a fast-paced environment.