The Concept of Human Needs in Sustainable Development of Cities

Teoria potrzeb ludzkich w rozwoju zrównoważonym miast

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Abstract

The concept of sustainable development as an idea of a big complexity is very difficult to implement. Cities, despite undertaking the enormous effort, fail to achieve the balance between economic as well as social development and environmental rights. The weakest link of the sustainable management is the social component, because it is more complex and variable than ecological or economic structures and plays a double role: as a beneficiary of the sustainable development and as a key tool for achieving the sustainability goals. That means that social well-being is the objective that needs to be achieved, and, at the same time, it is also a pivotal factor influencing people's approach to nature and to production processes, determining environmental and economic success. In the light of this conclusion, the concept of social capital and resilient communities is gaining significance. The problem which remains still unsolved is how to develop such communities that are able to face challenges and to adapt to new conditions in an active way. The concept of human needs seems to be very useful to maximise potential of people as agents of sustainable development. It leads to the conclusion, that creating a life environment allowing its resident to meet their needs, including needs for social well-being and for the sense of power, resulting in a higher level of their life satisfaction, may translate into stronger relations with the place of residence and willingness to act in the interest of the living environment.

Key words: sustainable development, community, cities, human needs, place attachment

Streszczenie

Koncepcja rozwoju zrównoważonego, ze względu na swoją złożoność, jest bardzo trudna w praktycznej realizacji. Miasta, pomimo dużych starań, mają duże trudności w osiągnięciu równowagi pomiędzy celami ekonomicznymi a racjami społecznymi i ekologicznymi. Najsłabszym ogniwem w całym procesie zarządzania zrównoważonego wydaje się być komponent społeczny. Społeczeństwo jest systemem bardziej złożonym i zróżnicowanym wewnętrznie niż struktury ekonomiczne, czy przyrodnicze, a ponadto występuje w podwójnej roli: jako beneficjent rozwoju zrównoważonego oraz jako kluczowy element w procesie realizacji całej idei. Oznacza to, że dobrobyt społeczny jest zarazem celem rozwoju zrównoważonego, jak i ważnym czynnikiem wpływającym na stosunek ludzi do przyrody i procesów produkcji, a więc warunkującym sukcesy w sferze ekonomicznej i środowiskowej. W świetle tych wniosków znaczenia nabiera koncepcja kapitału społecznego oraz społeczności adaptacyjnych – trwałych i zdolnych do radzenia sobie w trudnych sytuacjach. Powstaje jednak pytanie, jak budować takie społeczności, które stawiają czoła nowym wyzwaniom i przystosowują się pomyślnie do zmieniających się warunków kulturowych, ekonomicznych, politycznych. Wydaje się, że pomocna w rozwiązaniu tego problemu może być teoria potrzeb ludzkich. Pozwala ona zakładać, że stworzenie warunków życia, które umożliwiają mieszkańcom miast realizować swoje złożone potrzeby, włącznie z potrzebami wyższego rzędu, takimi jak dążenie do samorealizacji, do posiadania wpływu na otoczenie, do wartościowych relacji społecznych może skutkować wyższym poziomem satysfakcji życiowej. Jej osiągnięcie może z kolei przekładać się na silniejsze więzi z miejscem zamieszkania i gotowość do działania na rzecz środowiska lokalnego.

Słowa kluczowe: rozwój zrównoważony, społeczność, miasta, potrzeby ludzkie, więzi z miejscem

Introduction

The idea of sustainable development is currently the basic concept determining the rules of life and management of modern societies. Because it refers to the relations between man and the environment, cities, as areas with particularly high pressure on nature sometimes reaching a critical level and simultaneously as structures with transparently organised governance system, are units for which the concept becomes the guiding paradigm, both in the theoretical and practical aspect. Very rich scientific literature is available regarding sustainable development of cities, discussing the issue from different perspectives. The problem is also present in the social debate and planning practice, as evidenced by numerous references to sustainability in official strategic documents determining the directions of development of cities. Specific pro-development activities undertaken for the purpose of improvement of the current and future condition of cities are increasingly common and are conducted in accordance with the rules of sustainable development.

A lot of attention is given to environmental problems, namely the protection of resources, reduction of pollution, and maintenance of environmental parameters on the correct level (Chiesura, 2004; Phdungsilp, 2011; Pincetl, 2010, 2012). In the context of sustainable development, tasks such as management of energy, water, transport, waste, and pollution are of particular importance (Cozens, 2002). It seems to be completely justified, because the idea of sustainable development originates from ecological problems as an attempt to bridge the gap between environmental problems resulting from human activities and concerns about further development of regions (Robinson, 2004). Moreover, cities as settlement units with extremely high concentration of population are very negatively affected by excessive, often uncontrolled transformation of the environment and exploitation of its resources.

The vision of the sustainable city, particularly in the practical aspect, is very often related to the concept of the Eco-city and Green City (Roseland, 1997). The best example of such an approach is The Sustainable City in Dubai, or Masdara City in Abu Dhabi, based on the use of renewable energy sources, rational use of water, reduction of pollution, and organisation of a high amount of green areas in the form of parks and landscaped open spaces. The ecological trend also involves the concept of the Smart City, defined as knowledge-based city that develops different technological solutions to improve the quality of life of the resident in a way that minimises environmental burdens (Hara at al., 2016). Using innovative IT and transport technologies, Smart Cities reduce the nuisances of urban life and ensure the maintenance of high parameters of individual elements of the natural environment (Ramaswami et al., 2012).

The concept of sustainable development is difficult to define precisely and unambiguously, because it refers rather to the process than to the endpoint (Phdungsilp, 2011). Its vague nature allows for different interpretations. Modern literature, however, very strongly emphasises the fact that besides the environmental aspect, sustainable development must consider social and economic elements. Creating a stable economy and providing social wealth are key elements of human development (Barkemeyer et.al., 2014). It is often suggested that one of the elements that makes sustainable development unique and different from the other theories of development or environmental policy is its emphasis on the interactions between the environmental, social, and economic dimensions of development (Lehtonen, 2004). Due to the equal importance of the environmental, economic, and social aspect, sustainable development is even compared to a *three-legged stool* (Dale and Newman, 2010). In order to achieve complete sustainability, all three *legs* must be equally important. The social component is unfortunately considered to be the weakest pillar of sustainable development. Negligence in this dimension, both on the theoretical and practical level, is considered a serious cause of failures in the implementation of the objectives of the whole concept (Dale and Newman, 2008; Lehtonen, 2004). People are a constant element strongly affecting all processes occurring in the natural, business, and cultural environment. People's competences, behaviour, and desires determine the condition of the economy and the state of the environment.

The social component in sustainable urban development

A key question to ask is what is the role of social component in the sustainable development. A multidimensional analysis of the concept and its practical application allow us to perceive social actors both as a beneficiaries of the sustainable development and as a key tool for achieving the sustainability goals. On the one hand, societal progress and evolution towards welfare, safety, equity and social justice is one of the outcomes of the sustainable development which remains to be achieved. At the same time, it is also central to the accomplishment of the environmental and economic sustainability. It is evident that features of social systems have a significant impact on people's approach to nature and the results of production processes. Norms and values shared within a given society shape human behavior, expectations, style of life and attitude towards education and business, so they determine, among other things, the way of management of resources, consumption habits, moral code, job performance and social commitment that compose crucial characteristics of environmental and economic concerns. That is why social capital is considered to act as a pre-condition for economic and environmental health (Boyer et al., 2016).

Social systems are very specific. They are much more complex and variable than ecological or economic structures, because their essential elements are human relationships and interactions (Brown and Dillard, 2006) which are intangible and unstable by its nature. They cannot be exhausted when used, like natural resources, but it is really hard to ensure their high quality. There are no universal patterns or mechanisms applicable on a large, spatial and temporal scale, as in different parts of our globe exist diverse environmental, demographical, political and economic conditions defining social groups and their priorities. Considering that the situation in the contemporary world is very changeable, even the best practices cannot be applied repeatedly without the risk of failure. For example, despite numerous attempts to emulate the path of social and economic revival of Bilbao, called *Bilbao effect,* elsewhere in the world, very few cities succeeded in getting such good results. It is because any success in one place cannot be transferred to another due to different macroeconomic factors, physical and environmental conditions, institutional setting, and political and social terms (Gonzalez, 2006).

In the literature there is a heated debate on the social dimension within the sustainable development agenda, starting from its nature and relations with environment and economy (Hediger, 2000; Lehtonen, 2004; McKenzie, 2004; Vallance et al., 2011), as well as means of sustainability of local communities (Chan and Huang, 2004; Hutchins and Sutherland, 2008). As more than 50% of the world's population reside in cities and towns, a lot of attention has been given to urban areas. Though the viewpoints are still diverse, many scholars agree that it would be appropriate to address sustainability issues at the local level, where most of problems arise (Kildow, 1992; Chan and Huang, 2004). Reduction of ecological footprint requires not only general policies, but also change in daily routines and behavior of people on a mass scale (Callaghan and Colton, 2007). A large part of economic difficulties depends on indigenous citizens' activity and can be overcome locally, due to bottom-up initiatives. Additionally, the local management system is thought to be best suited for the implementation of the principles of sustainable development (Mierzejewska, 2017). In the light of this conclusion, the concept of social capital and resilient communities have gained significance.

The term social capital means a set of relationships that have developed within a given group of people around shared values and norms and trust that enable people to act collectively (Coleman, 1988; Callagan and Colton, 2007; Cochrane, 2006; Roseland, 2000; Woolcock and Narayan, 2000). It encompasses networks at different levels – between individuals and groups, including formalized institutions, like business companies, the government, court system or other community organizations (Coleman, 1988; Danchev, 2005; Lehtonen, 2004). It is considered to be one of the key factors of social and economic development (World Bank, 2002). Comprising such virtues like trust, tolerance and reciprocity, it facilitates working of social structures, both at the individual and institutional levels. It facilitates cooperation, exchange of ideas and goods, or civic engagement and willingness to take collective actions and, finally, enhances the community cohesion (Holman and Rydin, 2012). When a society functions well in its informal dimension, it will reach good performance at its institutional level (Danchev, 2005). Hence, social capital produces beneficial outcomes like well-being of the individuals, families, neighbourhoods and, also, businesses. It contributes to social and economic benefits (Lehtonen, 2004; Putnam, 1993, Flora, 1988) as well as to an effective government. As a conclusion, it can be said that social capital is an important growth factor supporting any development processes and enabling implementation of new ideas and solutions. For this reason, it seems to be a useful tool in sustainable development policies.

The idea of communities has a lot in common with the concept of social capital. Communities are considered to be groups of people who share common values or interests and are subject to either direct or indirect interaction with each other (Lee et al., 2015). Their members form interacting system of networks which plays bonding as well as bridging role (Onyx et al., 2004). It means that communities are cohesive units in which social capital plays a vital role. People are linked by interactions and common interests. They are socially active and supportive, as well as involved in local initiatives. These features make communities powerful and capable of resilience and development. Resilience defines not only the ability to recover, but also to adapt to new conditions, to transform when necessary and to facilitate social and technologically innovative processes. The feature is therefore not limited to persistence or restoration subsequent to natural or man-made disasters, but it also includes adaptation and transformation when needed (Seeliger and Turok, 2013). Resilient communities are strong and aware enough to undertake varied actions in order to implement new ideas improving their existence.

Experts in the fields of sustainable development in urban areas refer mainly to two concepts of communities, namely to classical, place-based communities, as spatial formations with strong feeling of place attachment and to so called *communities of actions* organized around common interests, distinguished in modern sociology (Delanty, 2003). These kinds of communities represent qualities relevant from the perspective of sustainable development of urban areas. Traditional, territorial communities are united around people-place bonds and feeling of rootedness resulting from both, environmental and social values (Lewicka, 2011). Communities of action are built on common goals and cooperative activities (Zack-

lad, 2003). It is widely recognized that along with societal changes the model of communities has transformed. People's mobility, common availability of goods and services, easy access to information and especially, development of means of communications has modified the character of communities and ways they are developed (Hampton, 2016). Such elements like face-to-face interactions, reciprocity, or solidarity become definitely rare. Hence dwelling in the same geographic space does not mean having any ties either to that space or to other people around (Clark, 2007). Community is no longer directly associated with neighborhood to such an extent as it used to be. Instead, social relations exist as a network that extends across multiple sources of activity (Hampton, 2016; Zacklad, 2003). Building communities requires such a social system in which all members of the community are encouraged to participate.

Nature of human needs

Human needs have always been a component considered in the discussion on sustainable development. In the best known definition from the report of the Brundtland's Commission (the World Commission on Environment and Development established by the Secretary General of the United Nations in 1983), the term *needs* is emphasised, and has key importance. It is essential to conduct development of societies in a way that provides the next generations with a chance of satisfying their needs.

The second context in which the term *needs* occurs concerns the issue of social well-being corresponding with the doctrine of sustainable development as one of the key objectives. One of the conditions of achieving it is intragenerational equity, requiring the elimination of poverty and social exclusion. The occurrence of marginalised communities constitutes a barrier for social and economic prosperity of regions, and contributes to their long-term poverty (Barkmeyer et al., 2014). Therefore, the priorities of sustainable development in the social dimension include tasks such as the provision of all communities with the possibilities of meeting basic needs, i.e. access to water, food, energy, good sanitary conditions, basic health care, education, and safety (Vallance et al., 2011).

The concept of human needs understood as *any condition within the person that is essential and necessary for life, growth and well-being* (Reeve, 2009) should be however considered in a wider context, as an impetus for building strong and resilient local communities, which can be used to maximise their potential as agents of sustainable development. It is possible, as human needs and the level of their satisfaction influence the system of behaviours of people as social creatures. They are the factor shaping the motivational and decision-making processes (Maslow, 1954). They affect the level of life satisfaction of the individual and the individual's relations with the living environment. Failure to satisfy needs can lead to serious dysfunctions in the individual, and more importantly, also in social dimension. Long-term deficits can result in the occurrence of negative emotional states of individuals, their alienation, and tendencies for destructive behaviour. J. Galtung (1980) evidences that when basic needs are not satisfied, some kind of disintegration takes place. He identifies two kinds of social disintegration: freezing with typical lack of participation, and boiling marked by overactivity, revolt. Burton (1997) argues that when social structures are not compatible with the needs of individuals, it can result in conflicts. Some scholars argue that the social system not ensuring a proper level of satisfaction of its members ceases to be a system with features of a community. According to M. Buber (after Hallsmith, 2003), *community is defined by ways it meets the needs of its members*. It turns out, what the social system offers to people proves to be more important than who is in the system.

The relations between needs and quality of social life are debatable and any conclusions cannot be perceived as absolute (Park, 2010). It is important not to assume that violation of people's needs always generates destructive conflicts or satisfying them fully always implicates good social effects. Despite the fact that it is difficult to make an unambiguous statement in this matter, it is hard to deny that people's well-being influences their social behaviours. Attitudes towards living environment are not of purely innate character, they are largely based on people's feelings and intentions that undeniably depend on to what extent a given place allows people to live their whole life and satisfy their multiple needs, including the spiritual ones. Social systems seem to be strongly influenced by human perception and experience (Seeliger and Turok, 2013).

Starting the discussion on human needs in the context of sustainable development it is worth emphasising that people are not only biological units. They are complex creatures functioning on the biological, psychological and social level. Therefore, human needs are of multiple character. In addition to physiological needs related to the maintenance of vital functions, man has a number of needs of higher order that result from striving for personal development and satisfying relations with others. For analytical purposes, they are grouped in different categories, depending on the research perspective adopted by particular scientists. A. Maslow, the author of the most recognisable theory of needs (1954, 1968, 1971) dealing with the issue in the context of human motivation, designates 6 groups of needs: physiological, safety and security, belongingness and love, esteem, self-actualisation, and self-transcendence – the need to connect with something beyond oneself. Alderfer (1968) simplified Maslow's structure of needs into three categories: the need to exist, the need for

relatedness, which includes love and esteem and the need for growth. Max–Neef (1991) analysing human needs from the economic point of view designated 9 categories: subsistence, protection, affection, understanding, participation, leisure, creation, identity, and freedom.

In the literature there are a lot of varied classifications using different criteria. For the purposes of the debate on social dimension of sustainable development, the classification proposed by G. Hallsmith (2003) seems to be the most appropriate. It was developed following the research on urban communities, and distinguishes four categories of human needs: physical, social, economic, and governance. This means that what people living in a society strive for can be classified into four categories: physical well-being, social well-being, economic security, and a sense of power.

According to Hallsmith (2003), physical needs constitute a category corresponding with physiological needs in the classification by A. Maslow, and sustenance needs according to Max–Neef. The group includes basic needs such as needs for food, clothing, and shelter. In the context of discussion on sustainable development of communities it is worth noting that these are the needs whose satisfaction considerably burdens the natural environment. Satisfying the needs for food, clothing, and shelter and the related transport services currently requires the consumption of huge amounts of resources and energy. Moreover, it inevitably results in environmental pollution. Such a situation provides the basis for the idea of conducting further socio-economic development in a sustainable way.

Economic needs are needs for ensuring financial security, i.e. employment and revenues. The level of their satisfaction determines reaching physical well-being. In the modern world, where *shelter* is not equivalent to a natural shelter, and *clothes* do not only protect us from cold, but are also a component determining social status, economic needs seem to be of key importance.

Social needs relate to how people care about themselves, what they expect of others, and to the way they form and express values (Hallsmith, 2003). They refer to people striving to enrich their selves, look for the life philosophy, and establish meaningful interpersonal relations in order to share emotions (Max–Neef, 1991). This group includes such needs as the need for peace and safety, recreation, lifelong learning, valued relationships and a sense of belonging, self-expression and self-esteem, beauty, spiritual life, and freedom. Satisfying these needs seems to be particularly important, because it affects the subjective well-being of the individuals and determines their position in the group. Failure to satisfy them for this group in the individual dimension results in low self-esteem, lack of self-acceptance, feeling of social maladjustment, apathy and withdrawal. Therefore, it reduces the efficiency of the individual in fulfilling

different roles. In the social dimension, this may lead to weaker social relations, disintegration, reduced ability to undertake common activities, which also means a deficit of social capital.

The last group of needs related to governance refers to the way people use power and the way they share power and valuable information with others (Hallsmith, 2003). To some extent they are the needs for influence on one's own life and codetermination in the life of the surroundings. On the individual level, this particularly involves the possibility of making choices, the right to being oneself, to govern one's own assets, and equal access to information, goods, and services. In broader terms, the need for governance is manifested as the need to influence others and to control the living environment. Failure to satisfy the need for governance results in reducing the individual to a unit controlled by the external governance system. It lowers the sense of belonging and sense of community and, in result, diminishes the ability to undertake individual or joint action in the interest of common good.

In this approach all groups of needs, contrary to Maslow's theory, are positioned at the same level. They interact and inter-correlate, but with no particular hierarchy, excluding physical needs which must be satisfied at least at the basic level prior to others for an individual to survive.

Human needs in the development of resilient urban communities

The first condition for cities to succeed in sustainable development is to have a policy and an efficient governance system. However, people resist being instrumentalized for even the best reason (Roseland, 2000). So the task for local authorities is to develop communities perceiving the living environment as their homeland and willing to undertake individual and cooperative activities for common good. Scientists argue that in the modern world, place attachment is weakening and territorial communities do not exist or, in the best case, are diminishing (Clark, 2007). However, it is worth noting that mobility which is considered to be a significant factor decreasing social bonds, at the same time, can be perceived as a phenomenon which works for the benefit of development of territorial ties. If people can easily leave one place and choose another one, more appropriate for their needs and ambitions, they become more satisfied and emotionally attached to it. A new place of residence becomes their homeland of choice. There are numerous examples of newcomers rooted in the local communities much more strongly than original inhabitants. The strength of human bonds with place only to some extent depends on whether or not they were born there, or how long they have been living there (Pytka, Rodzoś, 2011). It is the well-being and life satisfaction that can play a vital role in the process of social rooting.

In spite of criticism of theories emphasising the role of human needs in creating social reality (Park, 2010), it is hard not to agree with the thesis that creating a life environment allowing its resident to meet their varied needs can result in a higher level of their life satisfaction, which may translate into stronger relations of people with the place of residence. In environmental psychology it is assumed that people intrinsically attempt to develop a sense of belonging to a place (Lewicka, 2011). Place attachment, due to its social nature (Scannell and Gifford, 2010), may increase willingness to enter into contact with others and to act for the common good. Psychological studies demonstrate that this phenomenon may contribute to civic activity in the interest of a place of residence (Guardia and Pol, 2002; Uzzell, Pol and Badenas, 2002). The principle of reciprocity known in psychology (Bloom and Bloom, 2015) is applied here. A person receiving something has an internal need to reciprocate towards the donor. As a result, a place for whose benefit people took actions become better, more liveable. The inhabitants feel more satisfied and more eager to undertake pro-social actions. As it is claimed, social activity seems to be more likely to take place in a high quality living environment (Dempsey et al., 2011). Hence self-perpetuating, positive mechanism emerges. Psychological research on place attachment prove that place-attached people compared to non-attached ones are more satisfied with their life, demonstrate a higher sense of belonging, trust people more and are less egocentric (Lewicka, 2011). Place attachment correlate especially with environmentally responsible behaviours and engagement in protective activities (Scannell and Gifford, 2010; Vaske and Cobrin, 2001; Clayton, 2003), which seems to be very important for sustainable development. Research undertaken by Lewicka (2005) in Poland shows, however, that place attachment has positive relations with civic activity but through neighborhood ties. It confirms the importance of social networks within a given community and a predictive role of social capital for civic involvement, in general.

If the social system in which people live does not respect their right for satisfaction and the need for successful social relations within a community they live in, they start the process of searching for environments, which will satisfy their needs or/and enable diffusion of their negative emotional states. Such a possibility is very often provided by informal (intentional) groups. In the conditions of the current technological development, social media are also helpful. This, however, occurs to the detriment of the local community, because people feel a connection, first of all, with the group that allows for satisfying their needs.

In the light of the conclusions, the quality of life, including sense of community, plays a pivotal role in the process of development of urban areas. This statement is nothing new. Cities invest huge financial resources in technical infrastructure in order to meet the growing needs of their residents, however they fail to establish communities. They improve living environment and finally obtain gratitude of individuals, but do not achieve the social objective of building strong and resilient communities capable of multiplying the social capital. There might be two reasons for the failure: not all groups of stakeholders are beneficiaries or not all groups of needs are taken into account.

Cities invest eagerly in technical infrastructure which is called public structural capital (Callaghan and Colton, 2007) in order to make people's lives easier. They streamline the transport and communication system and expand their public services. In the developed countries new solutions reducing negative environmental impact are implemented. In the underdeveloped world the effort is focused on systems providing clean water, energy and other basic goods. Urban regions also pursue higher economic environment for their citizens to achieve better job opportunities and higher incomes, which is considered to be crucial in terms of life satisfaction and economic security. This approach seems to be rational, as the development of the economic system is a prerequisite condition for any development. It is convergent with challenges identified in strategic documents related to the sustainable development. However, cities and towns should also make an effort to develop strong bonds between citizens as well as between them and their living environment. It is needed for people to feel attached to the place and to be part of the community in order to get involved in public issues and to start acting collectively for the common good. To gain such a result, on the one hand, they need to feel safe in an emotional dimension, which is connected with their self-esteem and a sense of acceptance, but, on the other hand, they should perceive the place as meaningful and valuable, referring to their needs for positive experiences, emotions, thoughts or social relations (Norberg-Schultz, 1979; Tuan, 1977). Positive experiences and emotions occur when people participate in satisfying interactions with the physical as well as social environment. It can be said that the persistent ties between people and place are possible when the place contributes to people's physical and social well-being, when a given environment ensures conditions for satisfying not only basic needs, but also needs of higher order, like for ongoing development and creativity, for beauty and spiritual experiences, for being useful, admired and loved, for having successful relations with others. If social capital is understood as trust and reciprocal relationships, its development to fulfil these needs is crucial.

To foster people's participation in public life and to arouse their interest in local initiatives it is also necessary to meet their need for governance. At the individual level it starts from tolerance of people's choices and their styles of life, which ensures the

sense of independence and freedom. It refers also to equal access to facilities, institutions and goods. In a collective dimension the key task is to provide such a system of local governance which enables people to express their opinions and to participate in decision-making. People, having their personal goals and expectations, tend, in a natural way, to exert an influence on local practices (Hallsmith, 2003). Excluding people from basic municipal politics lowers the sense of community and, in effect, reduces the chances to involve them in any collective activities. This is the local government that establishes conditions and legal framework for citizen's participation in the community life. However, the cooperation depends on activities of other social actors like institutions, formal and informal organizations, associations or clubs and civic groups, interceding between authorities and citizens. All of them are entitled to organize varied forms of collective projects, so it is important for them to exist and to embrace the whole community.

All of the groups of human needs are important and all of them determine the quality of life. Satisfaction of physical and economic needs influence the standard of living, but meeting social and governance needs determines people's personal development and forms human beings as social creatures. From the perspective of community development the latter seems to be substantial. People's personal capacity and the way they perceive their role in the community they live in define the power of community in terms of integration, solidarity and ability to address challenges.

Conclusions

One of the objectives of sustainable development of urban areas is building strong communities. It is a goal and a means at the same time. Strong communities linked by the network of common interests and activities are in a better position to confront poverty and environmental challenges. The problem is that such communities do not arise spontaneously, particularly in urban areas. The size of population, ethnic diversity and mobility are against intrinsically built integrity and common interests (Lewicka, 2005). In these conditions community development should be part of local policies, like the development of a technical infrastructure. The key to success is the capacity to build the living environment satisfying people's needs. People, as biological, psychological and social constructs, in order to feel safe and fully satisfied pursue economic security, physical and social well-being as well they strive to control their own life and the life of the society they live in. Not satisfying all of these needs decreases social potential of individuals and, in result, constrains the process of community building. Hallsmith (2003) in her comparative study on small towns in terms of the level of needs satisfaction, provides evidence sup-

porting this thesis. Societies deprived of the opportunity to self-express, to develop internal interests and to organize their life in a unrestrained manner remain disintegrated and unable to take bottom-up initiatives. In such societies implementation of new ideas, even of highest importance, remain a tough task.

The concept of sustainable development of urban areas should therefore be completed. It might be defined as a way of managing a city where an important element is the development of the living environment in which people develop in the intellectual, spiritual, as well as cultural dimension and can be incorporated into community structures. It is a more demanding model, representing a higher level of development, not just involving an efficient management of environmental and economic resources, or investment in ecological technologies and modern urban infrastructure. Its implementation requires the development of a truly social space, fostering constant integration of residents with the living environment.

Human needs have proved to be universal, that is, they are the same for people worldwide. What is different among cultures are the means of satisfying these needs resulting from operating norms and values (Max-Neef, 1991). Thus the needs are the same, but there is no one role model for all urban regions how to satisfy them. Any success cannot be directly transferred from one place to another due to different economic environmental and cultural conditions. Cities and towns have to search for their own ideas how to make the living environment valuable from the perspective of community building.

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