

The Role of the Marketplace in the Post-Covid-19 City of Tomorrow



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The analysis of several different city marketplaces put together with the observed changes in consumer trends forces us to reflect on the possibility (but also the necessity) of redefining the functions a marketplace can fulfill in the city. Mono-profile city marketplaces can no longer attract clients. There is an increase in the role (and customer interest) of marketplaces that offer a wider range of services as well as different functions depending on the day of the week. The article is part of the studies conducted at the University of Technology in Katowice regarding the historical and cultural legacy, the potential, and the socio-spatial changes presently occurring in the city, thus anticipating "the city of tomorrow".

The need to meet and exchange goods has always accompanied humanity. Throughout centuries it manifested itself as the crossroads of trade routes. It then evolved in the direction of town squares. Marketplaces (as town squares, and later also as other areas designated for commerce) played a significant role in the spatial development of cities and civilizational development as a whole [1]¹. In post-Communist countries since the end of the XX century due to an increase in the scale of trade connected with the availability of goods and also an increase in purchasing power the traditional commerce function of town squares was often moved to more remote locations, which became specialized areas (marketplaces, fairs). This occurred under the pressure (which was in itself positive) of raising the quality of central areas in cities [2]. Furthermore, it was caused by the increase in the size of such facilities and the need to provide the appropriate infrastructure (e.g. parking, deliveries).

When such a niche developed in the centers and downtowns of Polish cities it was quickly filled by shopping malls offering the opportunity to "meet", and "exchange" in more prestigious and exclusive conditions. This fulfilled (perhaps the vain but justifiable) needs of society after decades of limited access to premium brands. It also lessened the participation of marketplaces in commerce, while at the same time the society became wealthier². A part of the share of the marketplace was taken over by e-commerce often leading to questioning the need for their presence at all.

City marketplaces today

As a result, the role of many marketplaces diminished, although it has stabilized in some cases, based on a good „everyday" location in the surrounding city context, accessibility, as well as price competitiveness. The survival of such marketplaces is a result of the developed brand, interpersonal relations, and social ties. Frequently they support social activity. This, in turn, helps them develop a recognizable brand, the atmosphere of the place [3, 4]. In such a context inner-city marketplaces both large and small have maintained their economic and social status [5]. These are places of local significance, although sometimes because of their well-known brand, they gain national and even international renown. They are accessible "along the way" and offer distinctive goods and services "here and now". That is why their offer is so unique and so difficult to replicate in shopping centers. These marketplaces target certain people as suppliers, vendors, as well as clients. Sometimes the suppliers (farmers/importers) are also the vendors.

The role of the marketplace in the city as a scientific problem

The scientific problem in question is the role of marketplaces inside the city structure as places that build and support local social relations. This is important both for the elderly as well as for the younger generations, also people who follow hipster trends. On one hand, marketplaces play a significant role in the functional and spatial structure of the city and shape local centers. On the other hand

due to not adapting to demand trends and social expectations marketplaces are becoming less and less attractive which directly affects their standard and available offer. As a result, the quality of these places is often substandard, which further influences the quality of city space in their close proximity and frequently the whole district.

The coronavirus pandemic has hurt social behavior and consumer activity. The role of the marketplace takes on a particular significance within the context of the more than a year-long collapse of the social functioning of central areas in cities and their districts, public spaces, as well as main pedestrian routes. In this context marketplaces as a mostly open spaces appear as a kind of alternative to commercial buildings. Even if it is rather psychological factor than Covid-19 transmission factor [6].

The study aims to determine the possible role of the marketplace in the „city of tomorrow", often its change, the improvement of the present role.

The following thesis was put forth: in the context of social and technological changes³ as well as consumer attitudes in the first two decades of the XXI century, marketplaces

¹ A symbolic proof of the influence on the life of society but also the world, in general, is the marketplace in Wu-Han (China) the source of the SARS CoV-2 virus, assuming that the role of this marketplace in the coronavirus pandemic is as big as is commonly believed in the Western world.

² The advertising industry has played and still continues to play a significant role in the creation of needs and demands.

³ e.g. the dynamic development of online services (including purchases).

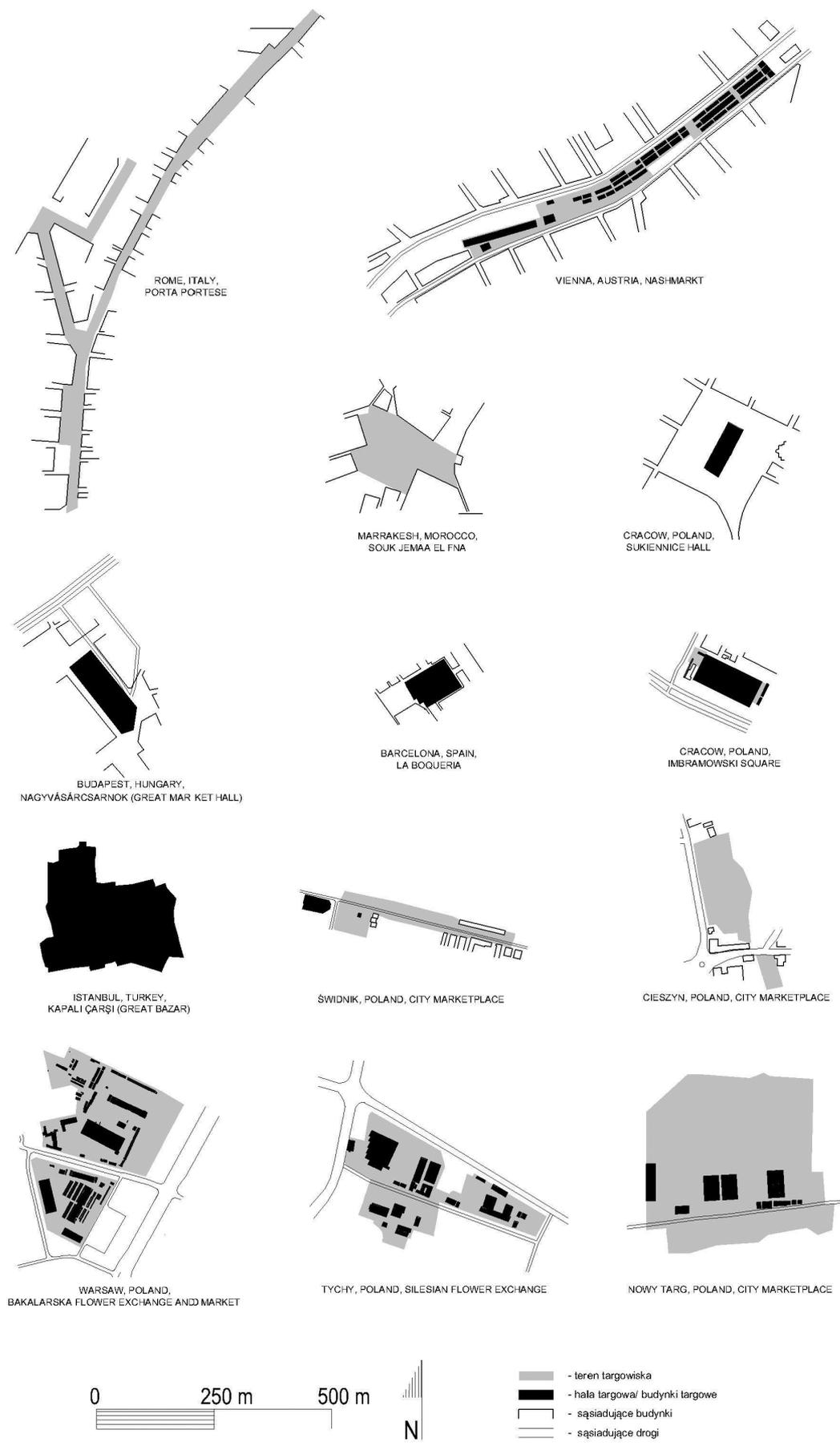


Fig. 1. Comparison of the studied marketplaces with other selected examples. Source: Own study





Fig. 2. Jemaa el-Fnaa in Marrakesh during the day. Source: photo P. Buława, 2017



Fig. 3. Jemaa el-Fnaa in Marrakesh at night. Source: Photo P. Buława, 2017

take on a particular significance in shaping local communities, local centers, or simply the public/semi-public city space [7, 8]. At the same time, their present functioning based on a relatively cheaper form of commerce (in rather modest architectural conditions) is threatened since the demand for such services is decreasing. Therefore, we must pose the question regarding the possible trends of development and transformation of marketplaces. Both in the context in the changes on the market as well as the post-Covid-19 reality of functioning in common, public space (social need for meeting and interaction intertwined with the fear of close contact with other people in a crowded place).

Methods

The research is in the form of a case study [9]. The subject of the study is 6 selected marketplaces that differ from one another in location (Table 1.), size (Fig. 1.), the

extent of their impact, available goods (Table 1). The analyzed marketplaces also differ in quality. The different factors affecting it were described for each location in the following order:

- strengths, brand, recognizability, atmosphere,
- architectural and technological quality,
- social and cultural significance,
- characterization of vendors and buyers,
- cycle of activity, model of impact on the city.

Materials

Diverse marketplaces were selected as the subjects of the study, ones that have global, continental, domestic, regional, or local impact and similar recognizability. Limits: The marketplaces in question were not analyzed in the economic dimension. Furthermore, the study was limited to marketplaces that are connected with the inner-city structure (Ta-

ble 1). Those that were separated from the urban tissue were not analyzed. In addition, areas with only a few stalls, as well as periodical and holiday markets were not analyzed.

Results

The study results concerning the quality parameters of the marketplaces were presented within the context of their potential role in the "city of tomorrow". Each of the marketplaces fulfills a slightly different social, cultural, and brand-creating role in their respective cities, which shows the wide range of potential roles, which a marketplace can play within a city, depending on the size of said city (district) (Table 1), its community, wealth, and culture.

Jemaa el-Fnaa Marrakesh

The marketplace is a part of the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage Lists [10]. Its strength is neither architectural nor technological quality of the facilities, but the prevalent atmosphere. Thanks to this the marketplace is recognized around the world. It is a tourist attraction and a place for meeting and interactions of multiple cultures. It boasts a multi-ethnic character. The vendors are generally local inhabitants while the buyers are tourists from all over the world. During the day the place is rather inactive (Fig. 2.), coming alive in the evenings (Fig. 3.). The marketplace and its protection as intangible heritage is an example of building place brand (and city) not only thanks to material value but above all due to the activity of the users. It is an especially valuable example in the context, that marketplaces are generally spaces of relatively low material quality.

Naschmarkt, Vienna

It is the biggest city marketplace in Vienna, boasting long traditions. The strength of the place is both architectural and technological quality of its facilities, as well as its renown among the inhabitants of Vienna, as a place not only for shopping but currently most of all a meeting place. Thanks to this, it is a place which is appropriate for lunch, for social as well as business meetings. The predominantly commerce function (Fig. 4.) has given way to gastronomy (Fig. 5.). Exclusive groceries can be purchased in the stalls. The place is active during working days, on Sundays, its activity is limited to restaurants. The structure is an example of brand building as a result of maintaining tradition and offering high-quality products. At the same time, the marketplace shows the connection between the quality of space (Fig. 1., Fig. 6.) and the attractiveness of the marketplace.

Targowisko Bakalarska Warsaw

The roots of the marketplace stretch back to the cultural landmark that was the "Stadion 10-cio Lecia" (10th-Anniversary Stadi-

Table 1. Basic geographical information concerning the research subject

Name of Marketplace	Country	City/ population (circa)	Location in relation to the city center	Location in relation to the district center	Commercial assortment	Range of influence
Name	Name / n. of inhabit.	Description	Description	Description	Description	Contractual level
Jemaa el-Fnaa	Morocco	Marrakesh / 911 000	In the city center	In the center of the district	Food, local artists, mix	Global
Nashmarkt	Austria	Vienna / 1911 000	Adjacent to the inner city/city center	On the formal border of the downtown district; it has a downtown / central nature	Food, gastronomy (wide range), mix	Continental, domestic
Targowisko Bakalarska	Poland	Warsaw / 1794 000	In a distant urban district	In the center of the district; it has no central nature	Fashion, food, cosmetic services	Domestic, regional
City marketplace / Jarmark	Poland	Nowy Targ / 33 000	Outside/adjacent to the city	On the edge of the urban fabric; it has no central nature	Fashion, handicraft, food, livestock, mix	Regional
City marketplace	Poland	Cieszyn / 33 000	In a distant urban district	Between the center and suburban district; it has no central nature	Fashion, food	Regional, local
City marketplace	Poland	Świdnik / 39 000	In a distant urban district	On the edge of the city center; it has no central nature	Fashion, food	Local

um), from which after its demolition, part of the marketplace was transferred to the area around Bakalarska St. (Wlochy District). The strength of the place is price competitiveness. At the same time, the marketplace is being modernized transforming itself into a high-quality space [11]. The goods available for sale are of a mixed variety with clothing being the dominant product. The marketplace boasts a multi-cultural, intercontinental character, it is a place where many cultures and nationalities meet and interact. As opposed to the Jemaa-el-Fnaa presented above it is the vendors who are members of foreign societies and cultures, while the buyers are mostly residents of nearby Warsaw districts. Some of the stalls are open 7 days a week, while the work of the marketplace is for some of the vendors a part of their lifestyle. Despite technological deficiencies (prior to modernization) (Fig. 7.), the marketplace developed a brand that allowed it to be seen as a place that is not only beneficial because of low prices, but also one which has cultural significance. An interesting part of the marketplace is "Nail Street"⁴, its part which specializes in very popular cosmetic services, but one that is also a setting for popular music videos⁵. This shows the potential of such places in the construction of place brand and shaping central areas.



Fig. 4. Naschmarkt in Vienna – street view. Source: Google Earth Pro, Accessed on 05 May 2021



Fig. 5. Naschmarkt in Vienna during the day (Sunday). Source: Photo M. Boszko, 2021

⁴ <https://www.architekci.pl/pl/aktualnosci/architektura-cienia-wyklad-aleksandry-wasilkowskiej-w-toruniu> [accessed on 9 May 2021].

⁵ e.g.: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ehXRviq09CY> [accessed on 19 May 2021].





Fig. 6. Naschmarkt in Vienna – aerial view. Source: Google Earth Pro, Accessed on 05 May 2021



Fig. 7. Bakalarska Market – aerial view. Source: Google Earth Pro, Accessed on 10 May 2021



Fig. 8. Market Square Fair, non-trading day. Source: Photo B. Buława, 2021

Town marketplace Nowy Targ

The city fair in Nowy Targ, also known as Nowa Targowica reflects the longstanding commerce traditions of the town as well as quite literally its name (Nowy Targ – New Marketplace). It has only been functioning since 2016 after being moved from its previous location. The marketplace boasts new commerce facilities which architecturally reference the culture of the Tatra Mountains region, emphasizing its identity⁶. It is an example of a trend described in the introduction –

placing marketplaces outside the city center, with good transport infrastructure. However, the marketplace is so large and significant on the scale of Nowy Targ (spatially, economically, and socially), that this is a justifiable solution, especially due to its supralocal impact. Many of the suppliers and buyers come from afar by car, a number of clients come from neighboring Slovakia. Due to the size of the marketplace, it boasts a wide range of services (outside of strictly being a commercial center) and is open several

times a week. Outside of market days, it has a spatial and functional potential that can be used for different functions (Fig. 8.). Targowica is an example of commercial space, which is strategic for the town, continuing its brand and building its contemporary image.

Town marketplace in Cieszyn

The marketplace in Cieszyn is a place that is undergoing transformation. The times of its greatness with a mass influx of buyers from the Czech Republic and Slovakia have passed along with the previous decade. Clients are no longer interested in Czech wicker baskets, folding accordion doors, and artificial Christmas trees bought regardless of the season of the year. The industrial and clothing zone is facing possible modernization due to its low technological standard and the ever-decreasing scale of trade (Fig. 9.). At the same time, the role of and the demand for the food zone is increasing and it was already modernized last year (Fig. 10.). The vendors are Poles, generally local merchants. The buyers are residents of Cieszyn and nearby towns, as well as clients from the Czech Republic and Slovakia. The trans-border and international character of the marketplace has remained but it is now limited to the aforementioned clients from neighboring countries. The marketplace is open 2 days a week on other days the space remains unused. It is located adjacent to the city center (outside it), which makes its stimulation difficult. The current functional and spatial model of the marketplace shows that there is a need to develop its functions, which is also an opportunity for Cieszyn to establish new, model areas of activity and incorporating the marketplace into city space (the quality of space and the forms of user activity).

Town marketplace in Świdnik

The town marketplace in Świdnik is local both in its character and range. It is characterized by moderate architectural and technological quality (Fig. 11.), apart from a fairly new market hall. The vendors are predominantly local merchants, while the buyers are residents of Świdnik and its surroundings. The marketplace is open 2 days a week. On other days it becomes substandard space. Similar to Cieszyn, it is currently changing. The essence of this change is the alteration of the spatial context. Until the works on the revitalization of the area behind the railroad tracks [12] the marketplace was located on the periphery – on the edge of the inner city, immediately in front of the railroad and the expressway (Fig. 12.). Within the context of the revitalization of the area located behind the railroad tracks, this space turned into a

⁶ <http://www.targowica.eu/galeria> [accessed on 19 May 2021].

link between the city center and the planned recreational zone (behind the tracks). This presents an opportunity to raise the standard of this space, connected with the scope and time of its use. It can also be a catalyst for widening the range of functions (adding gastronomy and recreational zones), using the space of the marketplace on non-trading days – due to a larger number of users.

Discussion and conclusion

On one hand, marketplaces are economically at risk because of the change in buyer preferences as well as price competitiveness from chain stores, but on the other hand, they boast a unique offer and it is used to convince subsequent young generations to frequent them.

The center of a district or city of tomorrow which is further and further bereft of physical (non-virtual) functions will be divided between either large commercial facilities (shopping centers) and symbolic and gastronomic centers (often old towns) [13]. A strategically located marketplace provides the opportunity for social integration and the strengthening of social bonds. This can only take place under the condition that marketplaces offer a unique character and will fulfill the demands of “their communities”, offering places to meet, interact, organize events, and provide alternative forms of activity and spending time. In being places of intercultural interaction they become a magnet for subsequent clients. That is why it is key to create and implement a development strategy for marketplaces.

The analysis of 6 very different marketplaces has given rise to the following general conclusions to be detailed after examining a larger number of marketplaces:

1. The inner city marketplace provides a broader offer of a city as a multi-functional space (Jemaa el-Fnaa, Naschmarkt, Targowisko Bakalarska). Marketplaces are complementary rather than a competitive element shaping “the city of tomorrow” in relation to shopping centers and malls. These functions do not compete with each other for clients as their offer varies (or their target clientele is different). However, potentially they do compete for physical space (location) within the framework of the spatial policy of a city.
2. City marketplaces with a longstanding tradition (Jemaa el-Fnaa, Naschmarkt, marketplace Nowy Targ) have the potential to maintain/strengthen their brand and shape the central character/local center [13] based on the following advantages:

– immaterial: “atmosphere of the place”, events, a wide range of services and activities, social relations, interactions be-



Fig. 9. Market square, Cieszyn: clothing zone, non-trading day. Source: Photo B. Buława, 2021



Fig. 10. Market Square, Cieszyn: food zone, trading day. Source: Photo B. Buława, 2021



Fig. 11. Marketplace, Świdnik: trading day. Source: Photo B. Buława, 2017

- between vendors and buyers,
- location: physical surroundings by local communities: city districts, settlements,
- transport: accessibility, transport infrastructure,
- material: technological and architectural quality.

3. The direction of development for threatened marketplaces is widening the scale of their functions, strengthening their identity, and developing their brand. In order to compete against large shopping centers, they must offer different forms of activities as well as a unique



Fig. 12. Marketplace, Świdnik: aerial view in the context of the city and areas behind the tracks. Source: Google Earth Pro, Accessed on 2 May 2021

"atmosphere" alternative to the aforementioned malls (Targowisko Bakalarska, marketplace Cieszyn). They may for example organize breakfast fairs during days/times which presently remain unused [14]. These will not always be spaces of exceptional technological quality. However, one must be careful in tying the development of the marketplace solely with material aspects (modernization, increase of standard). In many cases, the brand and renown are an effect of the behaviors and activities of both the vendors and the buyers (meaning marketplace management as well), and not particular investments or construction. Moreover, the simple development of architectural and material quality of marketplaces is insufficient, and at the same time, it constitutes a barrier that is difficult to overcome in the economic dimension. More important is the role of development strategy in marketplace management. In case of municipal marketplaces it should be a part of city development strategy.

4. Marketplaces based on local / regional demand are dependent upon it, which at the same time contributes to their success (marketplace Cieszyn and Nowy Targ). However, if the conditions change they are no longer able to compete for the client (local)⁷. The greater their range of impact the more stable their economic position.

5. The problem of the marketplaces with lesser renown, which base their activity on small-scale trade is limited activity, characterized by high amplitudes. In the case of marketplaces open every few days there remains the issue of how to utilize this space on non-trading days (marketplace Cieszyn and Świdnik or even Nowy Targ). In the case of marketplaces open daily, the problem is the emptiness prevalent here, after the hec-

tic morning hours⁸. In the city center/inner city the area of the marketplace is valuable, but one that during the lack of activity (days, time of day) is not used taking on a character of an empty, sub-standard place, which can potentially be used.

6. Marketplaces have a great culture-creating potential, under the condition that they develop their activities expanding them to include not only commerce based on stall selling. In building brand and making the multi-functional marketplace attractive for clients, its internationality and multi-ethnicity play a significant social role (Jemaa el-Fnaa, Naschmarkt, Targowisko Bakalarska, marketplace Nowy Targ and Cieszyn).

7. City residents expect a varied offer from marketplaces. In the downtown/central area – meaning in the area that has numerous commercial facilities, marketplaces are of interest to users but not only for shopping but also simply to meet and take advantage of the available gastronomic offer. These are the points often made during social consultations regarding the development of squares and marketplaces in many cities [15]. Here we see the trait which is the very nature of marketplaces: their non-chain character (as opposed to chain stores) builds their local advantage and uniqueness, which cannot be duplicated. Thus, the mood and atmosphere of a given marketplace cannot be carried over elsewhere, which may be the difference between success and failure.

The studies can be continued using the "research by design" method with the inclusion of an design expert team or study group. The subject of a research and design experiment would be the simulation of possible evolutions or revolutions of actual marketplaces and specific areas where they should be located.

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⁷ e.g. the border marketplace in Cieszyn which attracts buyers from Poland, Czech Republic, as well as Slovakia, apart from a general decrease in sales, had a very limited turnover in the previous year due to Covid-19 restrictions in Poland.

⁸ e.g. The Bakalarska Flower Market adjacent to the Bakalarska Marketplace (open daily).

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PRAWIDŁOWY SPOSÓB CYTOWANIA

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Abstract: The role of the marketplace in a city changes from decade to decade. They lose their significance or followings clients' demands they expand their range of services, creating a unique character and brand. These are places of culture-creating potential, not only of fulfilling basic shopping needs. Six marketplaces of distinct character and impact on the community have been analyzed in order to present their development potential as well as occurring problems. The challenge for many marketplaces, especially smaller ones and those in small towns is the effective development strategy, taking into account current social expectations and consumer trends. When left without a clear vision of the future they often succumb to the competition. On the other hand, when properly developed and transformed they influence the identity of a district or city increasing its multi-functionality. Marketplaces may play a significant role in social integration processes and revitalization of the urban environment in the post-Covid-19 city of tomorrow.

Keywords: marketplace, city of tomorrow, city center

Streszczenie: ROLA TARGOWISKA W POST-COVIDOWYM MIEŚCIE PRZYSZŁOŚCI.

Rola targowisk w mieście zmienia się z dekady na dekadę. Tracą na znaczeniu albo podążając za potrzebami klientów, rozszerzają asortyment i wachlarz usług, kreując unikalny charakter, markę miejsca. Są to obszary o potencjale kulturotwórczym, nie tylko miejsca zaspokajania podstawowych potrzeb zakupowych. Przeanalizowano 6 targowisk o wyraźnie zróżnicowanym charakterze oraz skali oddziaływania w celu przedstawienia zarówno możliwości rozwojowych, jak i występujących problemów. Wyzwaniem dla wielu targowisk, szczególnie mniejszych oraz w małych miastach, jest skuteczna strategia rozwoju uwzględniająca aktualne oczekiwania społeczne i trendy konsumenckie. Pozostawione bez wyraźnej wizji na przyszłość, często nie wytrzymują konkurencji cenowej. Prawidłowo rozwijane i przekształcane wpływają na tożsamość dzielnicy, miasta, zwiększając jego wielofunkcyjność. Targowiska mogą odegrać znaczącą rolę w procesach integracji społecznej i rewitalizacji w postcovidowym mieście przyszłości.

Słowa kluczowe: targowisko, miasto przyszłości, city center

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