

Article

Urban Creative Sustainability: The Case of Lublin

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Abstract: The proposed research aims to investigate the concept of creative urban sustainability. We asked, what are the factors conditioning creativity in spaces where cultures meet in cities and how do they stimulate urban sustainable development. The empirical material analysed are the results of interviews conducted with cultural managers. We introduce philosophical and sociological approaches based mainly on criticism of writing and the analytical and synthetic method. In the framework of the creative city we illustrate Lublin's model of spatial innovations, in which culture and creativity have convergence with economic development. We conclude with a conceptual discussion of the creative urban sustainability problems. In particular, we reveal how these issues could help in shaping a theoretic consensus about the function of spaces planning in sustainable development strategies emphasising the importance of creativity as a social resource and also as an agent of social and economic change.

Keywords: creative spaces; urban sustainability; creative city; social change



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1. Introduction

Creativity is one of the measures of a city's uniqueness and its competitiveness in relation to other networks. Proposed by Landry [1] and Florida [2], the idea of the creative city assumes that the creativity of a city plays an important role in the development of the economy and in improving the welfare of the state, as well as in the competitiveness of the city. Creativity is recognized as a strategic factor in sustainable urban development. Cities that are able to attract creative people are often characterized by a high proportion of professional groups belonging to the creative industries. The creative industry can be defined as a specific business sector that produces goods and services resulting from individual or cooperative creative work and entrepreneurship. The creative industry consists of design, media, and expressive arts professions, as well as distribution, publishing, and business services professions. The creative industry is a growing sector that often involves large financial outlays. Cities with a thriving creative industry are often economically prosperous, which is why there is now such a 'rush' and cities are desperately seeking ways to become creative. An aspect of a creative city is planning and constructing innovative university science and technology parks, which are facilitated on the basis of urban reconstruction and sustainable development of the country [3].

However, there are also problems of the creative economy in the context of sustainable development. First of all, creative initiatives provide a competitive economic advantage. However, creativity means uncertainty in respect to the final product and the demand for it in the free market [4]. Caves [5] calls it the principle of 'nobody knows,' i.e., nobody knows about either the impact on a product to be created or the future success of this product. This uncertainty also covers the sphere of urban (un)sustainable economic development. Beside this, creativity is associated with disequilibrium and even destruction [6]. Yet, how to harmonize the dramatic economic and social transformations with the agenda

of sustainable development remains an open question. Moreover, it seems that social sustainability is the reverse side of social capital which involves an aspect of termed as *Gemeinschaft* [7]. If so, what about creative sustainability in the context of a conflict between social capital and creative capital [8]?

Some scholars argue that if we are to protect the green environment, we need creative performance [9] which is associated with an innovative and holistic approach [10]. Yet, it does not always follow that creative activity is necessarily ecological and/or sustainable. The ‘culture-centric’ and ‘economic-centric’ [11] approach does not ensure the ecological perspective of sustainability. As a result, the question about synergies between creativity and greenery [12] is still open. Although learning and education are crucial for sustainable development [13,14], creativity is not formed in the process of education, despite the importance of creative schools in different areas [15,16]. On the one hand, scholars [14] acknowledge the contradiction between a constantly expanding urban environment and urban natural and human resources. On the other hand, researchers [17,18] stress that the creative industries accelerate economic growth in general. Does this mean that creative industries contribute to the exploitation of urban resources?

According to some scholars [19–23], society is endangered by the risks associated with the process of urban modernization. If creative industries are accelerators or even the results of modernization, does this mean that we must manage even greater risk with the merging of technologies and culture in a city? Some authors consider that “it is very difficult to provide sustainable development in those cultural industries because of their dynamicity” [24]. In the context of internationalisation and globalization, we are confronted with the following paradox: creative industries are called to intensify the global economic system, yet they lose their uniqueness and creativity under the conditions of global unification that not only touch upon economic, but also cultural and political, aspects of the unified system.

In this paper, we analyze the case of the city of Lublin (Poland) in respect to the aforementioned problems emerging in the context of urban creative sustainability.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Empirical Contribution

The analyses presented are based on the results of semi-structured individual in-depth interviews (IDI) conducted in Lublin in November 2020 among cultural managers. The sample consisted of 10 respondents. Individual interviews lasted from 30 to 45 min on average. Intentional sampling was performed. The research was mainly concerned with the description of a given phenomenon (the way of perceiving, experiencing, and interpreting creative spaces of meetings of countercultures in Lublin by people organising cultural events in various urban spaces). During the current analysis of our interviews with managers, it turned out that we managed to identify around 90% of all codes at the seventh interview. We explain this fact as data saturation, i.e., a situation in which the implementation of additional interviews would not contribute significantly to solving the research problem [25]. We therefore assume that the size of the sample was not a limitation of the research objectives that were assumed when analyzing and describing the chosen phenomenon.

2.2. The Design/Methodology Approach

Using these data, we wanted to recreate the existing translation networks related to the experience of creativity in the meeting spaces of countercultures in Lublin. Our research analyses have been theoretically grounded. They were based mainly on criticism of writing and the analytical and synthetic method, i.e., a constructive approach which goes beyond the paradigm of cause and effect thinking and facilitates the introduction of idealistic ontological solutions, such as referring to the category of urban imagination. The autotelic case study has become a tool for idiographic understanding of the phenomenon of ‘creative spaces’ in Lublin. We focused in particular on three research problems: How is creative

urban space understood? How do new technologies affect urban creative sustainability? Are the inhabitants of Lublin, in the opinion of respondents, open to the experience of meeting cultures (multiculturalism) in creative spaces?

2.3. Research Limitations/Implications

Our findings display some limitations due to the research method applied. The qualitative research does not provide data enabling a holistic and systemic approach to the problem. However, the chosen method seems to be the most appropriate for identifying a different perspective on the cognition of the sustainable urban creativity phenomenon of interest to us. The most appropriate approaches to this research are those associated with the humanistic stream, i.e., ones in which emphasis is placed on taking into account, while studying reality, the way it is seen by the people involved in it. The perspective of those responsible for innovation in the management of spaces where cultures meet is to interpret differently the reality they create, whose primary function is to bring together in dialogue diverse audiences who enter spaces characterized by unique symbolism. In the future, we plan to conduct analogous comparative studies among Lublin's authorities and artists.

2.4. Originality/Value

The study is the first analysis of the impact of urban spaces where cultures meet in Lublin on the economic outcomes from the creativity perspective. It was the first research based on interviews with cultural managers which emphasizes the humanistic stream. We suggest a theoretical framework for studying the model of creative innovations and (un)sustainability, in which culture and creativity have convergence with economic development.

3. Creative Urban Sustainability Transition

A traditional assumption is that creative endeavour may guide the sustainable development of a city. Creativity is considered to be an intrinsic property of novel, appropriate, and innovate actions. This reasoning has limitations. Innovativeness and creative deviation are context dependent. External aspects of urban creativity extend to the entire socio-economic system of a city. While arguing there are no objective criteria for creativity assessment, one should point to the important function of cultural development strategies as the key factor of a sustainable city transition. The social consensus concerning the estimation of the potential of the creative urban spaces has provided a platform not only for meetings of countercultures, but also for developing a sustainable city [26].

An overview of theoretic approaches to urban creativity leads to the conclusion that the analysis should be grounded in the notions of differences, perspectives, dialogue, and deviation [27]. Urban creativity allows one to demonstrate the interdependences between cultural activities, the economic sphere, change strategies, and a sustainable transformation of the city. We identified Lublin as an interesting case study because it has established many agendas and strategies of urban sustainability and creativity. Sustainability concept has strongly affected the policy of urban planning and has stretched beyond environmentalism to the transformation of the social and economic relations of the city. Lublin's location in a cross-border area of Polish, Jewish, and Ukrainian cultures as the centre of the eastern region has emphasized the social nature of urban creativity. The economic problems of the city have been rooted in that historic context which has stigmatized the urban imagination and influenced the external image of Lublin for many years as a backward centre with negative social capital.

Recovering the traumatic history of this cultural melting pot and reviewing it in the light of current development trends shows the importance of management by redefinition of values related to the significant spaces. The traumatic experiences of the Holocaust and Stalinist crimes are symbolically inscribed in the nature of meaningful places such as the German Concentration 'Majdanek' Camp and the Lublin Castle located in the centre of the Old Town, which was one of the cruelest Stalinist prisons in the past. The centre has

developed an image of the city of inspiration and knowledge. The changes were introduced by culture and nine universities. Lublin's rebranding is being shaped by four strategic development areas: openness, friendliness, entrepreneurship, and academicity. Strategic documents also feature the concept of a creative civil society, indicating the direction of the city's development. The potential for change of Lublin is identified with key social ideas affecting the creation of urban imagination: Memory and Anticipation; City and Region; In the Face of the East; and Culture of Knowledge.

The sustainable transformation of the city is taking place through a number of integrated strategic tools [28]. Lublin is among the European cities that have announced a joint declaration "Join, Boost, Sustain". Its aim is to strengthen cooperation in the field of sustainable digital transformation and to develop a model method of technological transformation of European cities [29]. It is also one of the few Polish cities to be certified as a smart city [30]. The contingent cultural policies are imbedded in the field of its sustainable development [31]. They have strongly shaped the opportunities for creative urban sustainability and transformation of the negative social capital into the positive economic assets.

The 'Cultural Development Strategy of the City of Lublin for 2013–2020' mentions Principle 4E, i.e., four values considered to be the basis for sustainable development, as shown at Figure 1. The four values are: experiment (investing in the development processes of spaces open to innovation and unconventional forms of expression); efficiency (generating sustainable benefits); ecology of culture (holistic thinking in discovering the network of relations connecting each thing with its environment and avoiding conflict situations); and empathy (building mutual respect and partnership relations).

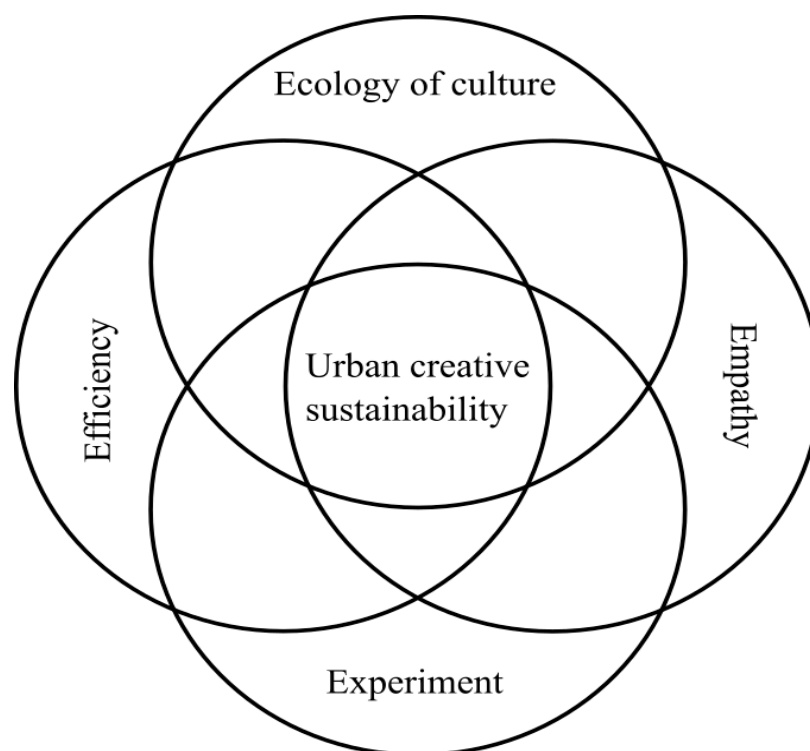


Figure 1. Urban creative sustainability-basis values.

3.1. From Deviation to Creativity

This study focuses primarily on the analysis of the sustainable urban transformation of the cultural meeting spaces and its impact on selected economic processes mentioned before. Like in other cities in Central Europe [32], the sustainability transition in Lublin started with cultural heritage redefinition and led to the establishment of creative industries. Culture was understood both as an enabler and a driver of the economic, social, and environmental

dimensions of sustainability in Lublin's development strategies [33]. Cultural sustainability often subjected to criticism can be regarded in this case as a fundamental issue, even a precondition to be met on the path towards sustainable development. The processes of common values rebranding and cultural assets improvement were framed in Lublin in a characteristic pattern of achieving the hidden and inscribed in the city's cultural assets. The investments in creative industries started from cultural subsidies.

Stimulation of urban creativity, as shown in Figure 2, regards processes of introducing and consolidating social changes which could be framed as: socialization towards creativity; experiencing the cultural differences; transforming and exchanging meeting spaces of countercultures; and developing novel perspectives of reading the city [34].

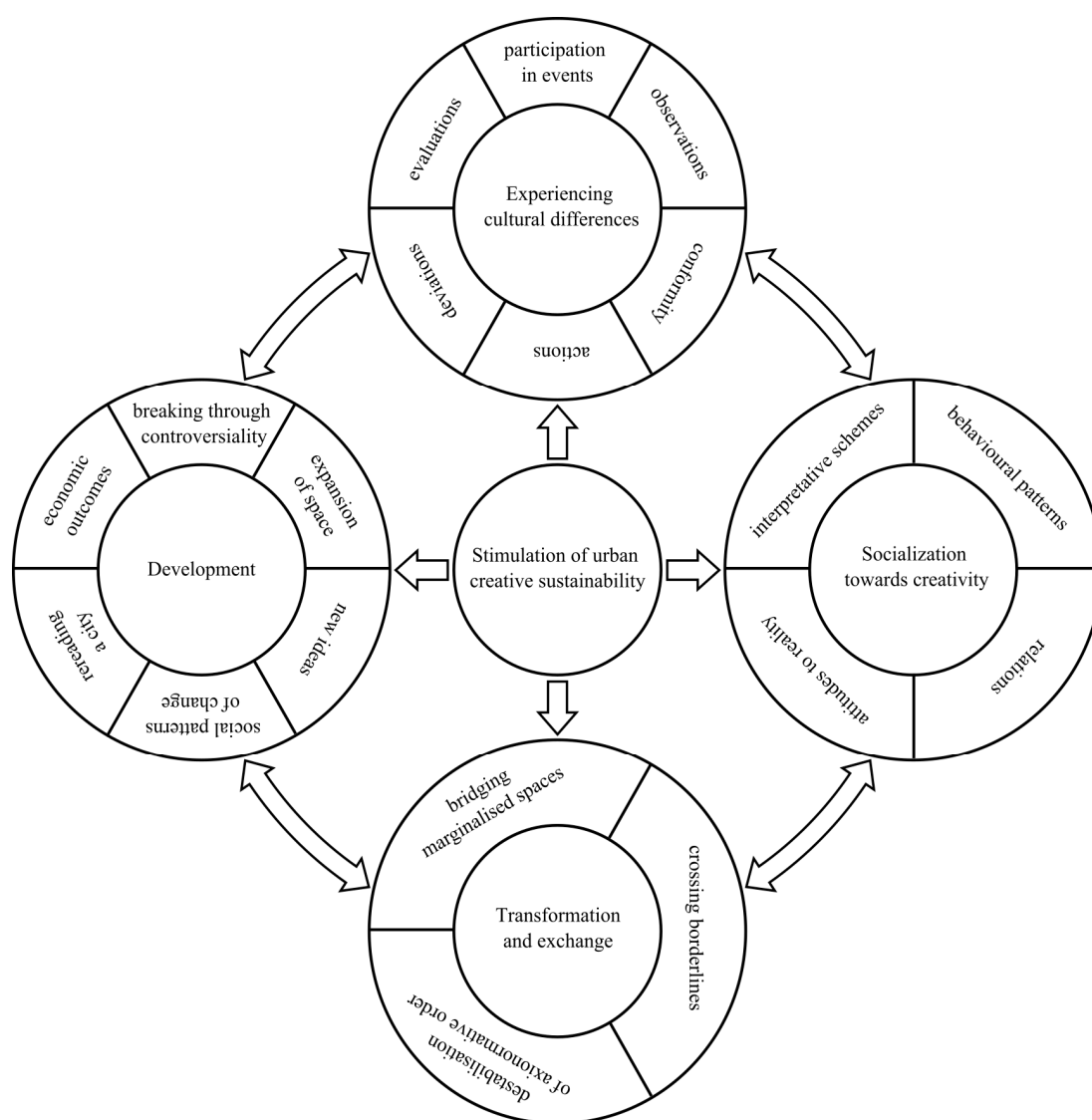


Figure 2. Stimulation of urban creativity- a model approach.

The exploration of urban spaces as a tool for creative sustainable transition has brought many opportunities and solutions to address social and economic problems. Sociocultural thinking about urban creativity has influenced the strategic development of Lublin as a creative and sustainable city. The year 2016 saw the establishment of the Centre for the Meeting of Cultures with the view to widening creative spaces. The aim of the institution is to co-shape multicultural urban imagination and raise the awareness of multiculturalism. This is closely associated with the policy of recognition and strategies of transformation

of the dominant patterns of decoding the communication and imagination concerning the others claimed to be different, excluded, dangerous, disrespected, misunderstood by majority [35]. A creative coexistence of many cultures requires appropriate tools, media and, most importantly, space conducive to intercultural communication, building cultural awareness and creating a common urban imagination [36]. Culture is by nature a complex, multidimensional creation. The theoretical reflection on the phenomenon of multiculturalism requires one to refer to many analytical perspectives [37]. The process integrating different cultures is not homogenous. The most desired direction of cultural integration is a peaceful coexistence and mutual development creating a social and cultural context for urban creativity.

Any inquiry into the specific role of different cultures and values related to them in modern societies raises the question of the function of the development of cultural structures in the context of sustainability. In Lublin, the transformation can be considered as the convergence of urban spaces. Cultural institutions and creative subjects of social change are becoming spaces of the process of valuing creative society [38]. Urban spaces serve as social theatres provoking the play of specific roles [39]. Spatial arrangements become places of creation of valuable social relations and a kind of virtual superstructure. The world of intangibles influences the processes of transformation of the physical layer of a world of culture. Cultural events interfere with the city's space, i.e., the living space of its inhabitants. Giving the space new meanings dynamizes places which become planes of social situations and accompanying emotions. Narratives about urban space become an interesting subject of research in this context. Creative spaces of meeting cultures are also new ways of communicating and conveying information about significant places [40,41]. The physical experience of space can be contrasted with the way of experiencing its symbolic meaning [42,43]. Locating events in urban space is not only about adapting it to specific performances. Art is increasingly becoming a tool for revitalising Lublin's urban space. An example of the influence of art on the processes of shaping urban imagination is the Carnival of Art Masters, a circus transferred to urbanised space. Urban space functions as an open circus tent, transforming it into a form of artistic structure redefined for the purposes of specific presentations in order to revitalise problematic places by familiarisation with single elements of change [44]. Inspiring creative urban sustainability started from the destruction of classical forms and ways of understanding both multiculturalism and creative spaces [45].

3.2. *Experiencing the Creativity of Spaces*

Contemporary cities are important elements of individual and social identity. While discussing the city and creative spaces, we mean certain imagined structures of places and related values, emotions, and events. Creativity evokes associations with perception and some kind of urban experience. The analysis of this largely immaterial phenomenon requires one to refer to the category of urban imagination and pose the fundamental question of how creative urban space is understood. As a result, it covers the hermeneutical and aesthetic issues. This is confirmed by our research, in which we have referred to the way we experience the creativity of space on the basis of two questions. In the first, we asked whether every public/urban space favours/stimulates creative activity? Among the answers obtained, negative ones prevailed. Most of the respondents stated that not every space can be considered creative. Those who saw the creative potential of each space, however, stressed that the question should be limited to the area of public space, because it provides an opportunity for anyone to enter it in order to express their opinion. A creative space can therefore be attributed a performative function.

“Yes, definitely yes. In any space you can express something, communicate to others, for example, some information. Anyone who is in a public space can perform the role of an audience.”

In the course of the research we reproduced the process of stimulated activation of the city's creative potential. Creative spaces are rooted in the symbolism of values, and

this property is interpreted as the basis for reading the city. A procedure to decode the symbolism of creative urban spaces is the analysis of the purposefulness of the messages addressed to the recipients. The aim of the cultural message was assessed as an important element of choosing a place for creative activity. In the urban imagination, each place has a specific identity, which is difficult to erase or change. These strategies will meet with public opposition, therefore, socialisation towards creativity brings challenges. Many places are socially excluded from 'creativity'. Experiencing the places' creativity is selective. It is impossible to experience the whole city's creative potential. It has too many dimensions. Stereotypical thinking about spaces is firmly entrenched in public consciousness.

"Creative spaces are areas where various festivals, meetings, cultural events are organised. The Old Town, for example, is such a place."

Many places arouse anxiety, being associated with dangers, threats, deviations from the norm. Creativity is an idealised phenomenon. The barriers of the creative potential of the development of space are formal and legal conditions and spatial organisation.

In the second question we asked *how the boundaries of creative spaces in Lublin are changing*. By asking the question, we meant symbolic, imaginary boundaries. The respondents took the question literally and most of them pointed out that there were such physical borderlines which somehow overlap with imagined spaces of creative activity. As a result, the analysis of the statements led us to conclude that urban imagination does not detach us from the reality of the city, but rather proposes an alternative way of entering into relations with it. The historical, social, and architectural specificity of a place becomes a natural tool to mediate the experience of creativity in urban space. Creative spaces help us discover the invisible, symbolic dimension of physicality and, therefore, they are precisely superimposed on the physical grid of the city. A positive evaluation of the answers was an interesting aspect. The research mostly started with the phrase "Positive (judging)".

"Positive. Spaces of creativity are expanding their boundaries. They are moving away from the city centre, from the Old Town and into the districts."

"Creative spaces are increasingly local. The immediate vicinity of the place of residence is a very good area for stimulating creative activity, supporting multi-cultural identity and educating one about the need for intercultural dialogue."

Creative urban spaces are seen as places which can increase or decrease their area in a literal sense. They are expanded by revitalisation measures. In the past, creativity was developed in the Old Town, and now there is definitely more activity in the districts.

"The trend is to bring this urban creativity closer to the citizen. Earlier, it had to be reached, one needed to get to this 'centre of events'."

Creativity is interpreted as a phenomenon that can be stimulated, evoked, provoked through top-down initiatives by both local authorities and NGOs within specific spaces. Interestingly, the creativity of space is interpreted in terms of discontinuity and seasonality. It is combined with organized events, cultural events, and concerts. The processes initiating the creative properties of space are purposeful and cause symbolic opening of usually 'closed' parts of the city.

"Creative spaces become active seasonally, not on a permanent basis [. . .]."

Out of the whole spectrum of possible experiences of urban creativity, the creator of an event, the inspirer of a specific symbolic space arrangement, selects those which should be considered as important. A fragmentary experience of the city is therefore linked to temporality. Space becomes an expression of society only in specific conditions, always situated on the timeline. The seasonality of events is a factor that hinders the imagined access to creative places. The respondents stressed that the image of the city does not detach us from reality, which becomes only a fluid tool of creativity in the hands of a creator and visionary. Inspirational spaces can fade away when the experience of combining the real and the imagined is broken. The creativity of urban spaces appears as the result of a specific compilation of metaphors and symbols, values, and narratives

about experiencing the city in everyday life and in exceptional social situations. Urban creativity is a fragmentary phenomenon. An (un)sustainability transition of the city starts by transforming and exchanging meetings spaces of countercultures. Acts of creative deviation in decoding the universal values and norms effect the harmonious changes on a macro scale.

In the research, we also referred to the thread of new technologies, which seems to dominate the urban narrative of Lublin. The analysis of various documents and reports led us to the conclusion that they are regarded as tools supporting and stimulating urban creativity. We asked the respondents *how new technologies influence urban creativity*. The answers confirmed our assumption. Everyone stressed the creative potential of new technologies, defined as tools of communication, sources of information, and extensions of urban reality.

“New technologies are new tools of creativity or a source of information about creativity, creative activity, and organised events. New technologies expand what we have in real life and create a new quality. They help to widen access to creativity, e.g., for people with disabilities.”

Technology shortens the distance, but also helps one to quickly transform space and adapt it to the needs of creative activity [46,47]. It enriches physical reality with new dimensions of virtuality. The notion of ‘expanding reality’ was most frequently quoted in the answers of the respondents. If new technologies are such an important element in the development of creative urban spaces, an interesting issue is the thread of digital exclusion, which in this context would be, in a sense, the same exclusion from experiencing urban creativity. We asked *whether creative activity depends on age?* In principle, everyone confirmed this fact, but they interpreted the differences in various ways, referring more to qualitative categories. Young people and seniors were considered to be the category of the most creative people.

“Yes, young people and seniors are the most creative. There are many activities aimed at seniors in Lublin. I understand creativity as innovation. People between the ages of 40–50 are mostly excluded from these activities. Maybe even 35-year-olds.”

The context of the problems of an ageing society has been the focus of most of the statements. The question did not refer to the use of new technologies. This is the reasoning that appeared in many responses. Creative activity is associated with new technologies.

“Yes, young people are more inclined to use new technologies. New technologies are natural for them. Senior citizens need to put more work, more effort into using new technologies, and the effects of learning, acquiring these competences are smaller.”

The levels of awareness, intelligence, and inventiveness are therefore factors influencing creativity, but they do not depend on age, but rather on individual resources of people, their personalities, and their tendency to adopt certain attitudes towards reality. This idealism comes in contrast to an objective assessment of creative activity, in which far more boundary conditions are beginning to emerge, for example, in relation to technical and social competences and so on.

An important issue was to find out the opinions on *the readiness of Lublin’s inhabitants to experience the meeting of cultures (multiculturalism) in creative spaces*. The answers given were varied, but the respondents referred to the same way of argumentation in reading the city.

“No. In order for them to be able to see it for themselves, they must be properly prepared for multiculturalism, for understanding it, experiencing it and being open to it. There are many approaches and attitudes to multiculturalism. Education should be conducive to learning to read what we encounter in urban space.”

Lublin is perceived as a place where multiculturalism is inscribed in tradition. The city has a specific identity. The uniqueness of the place has also been shaped by the cultural events, which have played a significant role in education for multiculturalism and common work on historical traumas. The expression ‘being accustomed’ to multiculturalism was constantly repeated. Sustainability transition is rooted in developing novel perspectives of reading the city and going beyond the routine. Creativity is one of the measures of Lublin’s uniqueness.

“They are already familiar with it. Many such undertakings have already taken place. It is becoming increasingly difficult to attract attention in order to be controversial. Organised cultural events make people get used to multiculturalism [. . .]. Multiculturalism and such controversiality are already canons of culture in Lublin, in a positive sense, of course.”

Creativity is, therefore, also combined with controversialism. Cultural events produce imagined creativity and new patterns of experiencing abstract art symbolism.

In the last question, we asked the respondents *whether Lublin is a creative city*. This question aroused the most emotion. The answers were positive and referred mainly to the categories of inspiration, knowledge, i.e., the terms promoted by the promotion campaigns. Some of the usual advertising slogans underwent an interesting transformation, becoming part of the common language [48].

“Lublin is a city of inspiration.”

The respondents indicated that the question whether Lublin is a creative city is very different. In their opinion, the previous question referred to the category of culture. Creative spaces for meetings of countercultures in Lublin are areas of cultural events. The creativity of space is the property of an area of cultural influence. However, the concept of a creative city is instead identified with the economy.

“It is, but it seems to me that it is expanding and merging. It just started with culture, but now when we are talking about a creative city, it is about something else. Lublin has transferred creativity to the economy, to the economic brand, especially to IT companies. It is all about creativity and knowledge. They started with culture, and it has all moved elsewhere, to social innovation.”

The dominant statement ‘it all started with culture’ appeared in every interview. Lublin’s competitiveness is connected with these specific socio-economic assets of creativity. A creative city is not a simple sum of creative spaces. It is the sphere of influence of economic, political, and social processes. Creative initiatives have provided Lublin’s competitive economic advantage. In the interviews, there was also a constant thread of activity of local authorities, perceived as an important link in the process of creating conditions conducive to creativity, both for organisations, foundations and for creators, informal groups. The creative city is related to the administrative and economic sphere rather than just the cultural one. It must be emphasized that creativity is recognised as a strategic factor in sustainable urban development.

4. Limitations and Avenues for Future Research

Our findings should be viewed in light of the study’s limitations that point to the future direction of the research. The research method we have applied makes systemic comparisons between studies conducted in different cultural circles almost impossible. The findings are based on qualitative in-depth reviews. It was not designed to provide generalizations [49]. Our aim was to give a thick description of the respondents’ point of view on the problems, which we linked to the process of creative sustainable urban development when operationalizing the concept and to provoke interest in sociological and philosophical perspective through qualitative inquiry. Each city develops under specific socio-economic conditions which, over the centuries, have shaped its unique identity and, above all, its culture. The study of sustainable urban creativity seems to gain a new dimension through this very methodology [50]. Our research shows what function creative

spaces can play in sustainable urban development, how strongly they are linked in social consciousness with issues of social exclusion, underdevelopment, and social risk. The standardization of solutions related to the implementation of sustainable development does not bring the desired results. Our research shows how the introduction of the specific strategy for the creative transformation of urban space affects the process of sustainable development. Space has its own unique axiology, which may translate into the way a city is perceived as a creative hub. Identifying a different perspective on the cognition of the sustainable urban creativity phenomenon is still a very promising area of research within the framework of integrated order issues.

Nevertheless, in future studies, greater research pluralism can be achieved by interviewing Lublin authorities and artists. Their point of view can provide an additional framework for interpreting the problems of creative urban sustainability that we have analyzed and placed in the perspective of experiencing creative spaces [51]. We suggest that such micro and culturally rooted approaches should be further explored to provide subjective and rich descriptions of the relationship between creativity embedded in places (naturally or through stimulation) and urban sustainability in order to gain deeper insights into the process of complex economic transformations.

Future research could also develop the basic conditions for understanding the economic functions of places where cultures meet in multicultural environments. Highlighting cultural differences and making sense of such encounters are very important factors for creative sustainable urban development. This perspective could deepen our understanding of how creative urban spaces lead to cultural learning and economic growth.

5. Discussion and Conclusions

In this paper, combining sociological and philosophical inquiry and qualitative methodology, we examined how cultural managers understood the relations between creative urban sustainability and economic development of Lublin. Our analysis showed that the context of a multicultural environment posed a serious challenge to the sustainable development of Lublin, whose many spaces evoked negative associations related to their traumatic history. The identity of the city translated for many years into the perception of it as an underdeveloped city. Investing in the creative transformation of excluded urban spaces has changed the perception of the city as a creative and inspirational centre, developing according to the principles of sustainable urban development.

The discussion will refer to the theoretical questions and issues posed in turn in the paper. The first was the issue of measuring urban creativity and its impact on sustainable urban development, primarily in the context of stimulating creative industries. In order to operationalize these problems, we developed the block of questions posed to respondents during interviews. This strategy was focused on the understanding urban creativity and attributing importance to specific spaces as important for the development of sustainable creativity. The methodology was adapted to a humanistic perspective. Our purpose was to identify the position of those responsible for the creation of creative urban spaces in a city implementing the rebranding strategy aimed at stimulating the development of creative industries and sustainable urban development. This perspective might be evaluated very differently [52]. Empirical research to date has been dominated by a quantitative trend in approaching the issue of sustainable urban creativity [53]. Numerous studies have referred to measurable categories, in a quantitative sense, such as resources and indicators enabling general comparisons between cities in terms of their level of creativity. We have deliberately chosen the qualitative methodology. The perspective allowed us to see another context for considering urban sustainability, analysed through the lens of creative spaces; the ways in which they are interpreted and the accessibility to them defined as important elements of inclusion. Our respondents argued that not every space is characterized by creativity. Creative spaces are rooted in the symbolism of values, the specific identity of places and its potential for communicating important messages for society. Participating in creative spaces and receiving symbolic messages requires specific socialisation. Our research shows

that creativity is a processual property, has its limits and requires constant stimulation. The way of experiencing creativity, which seems to have a very subjective character, is transformed in time into a form of an internalised social pattern, becoming the beginning of destabilization of the existing axionormative order.

Creative urban sustainability is mainly defined empirically through the events organized in geographic spaces and is rooted in a normative context as well as self-categorization processes. Urban creativity is both a unique property and a social resource with a significant economic potential. It is an agent of social change and economic transformation. At the forefront of the analysis is the issue of a frequent lack of understanding of the essence of socialisation towards creativity and the importance of deviance in overcoming symbolic social traumas in marginalised and economically backward spaces. The example of Lublin shows perfectly how, thanks to the long-term strategy of cultural management, it is possible to stimulate the creation of interpretative schemes enabling one to cross cultural barriers and to influence the established resources of common knowledge [54]. The factors at the authority and collective levels interact in order to produce certain creative outcomes [55]. These processes are evident in the analyzed example of Lublin, where the change in the approach to excluded social spaces gave rise to their social and economic revitalisation. The current strategic documents of the European Union place a strong emphasis on the issue of social inclusion. In this context, our research provides arguments in favour of the thesis that the management of often excluded spaces of cultural encounters, which can become factors supporting urban creativity, should be underlined in urban development policies.

The humanistic emphasis requires the inclusion of strategies to socialise urban design and stimulate creativity. Urban space is first and foremost a place of cultural encounter, of human interaction. The theme of “encounter” plays an important role in the process of social change interpreted in this way [56]. Space can become a factor for changing lifestyles, communication models and economic activity. Individual elements of urban spaces can become agents of social influence by stimulating educational or persuasive content. Sustainable urban creativity is also a counterbalance to the standardisation of local culture, as our research shows very well. The specificity of particular places connected with their identity and history may imply unique urban planning or architectural solutions [57]. Creative spaces are important elements of integrated order, therefore this issue is part of the sustainable development research stream, although it is still a poorly recognized topic. Too little attention seems to be paid to the issue of cultural determinants of sustainable urban development in social research. In designing spaces for the meeting of cultures, not only their creation is important, but also building relationships with their users. Educational cultural projects are also agents of social change. It seems that, in the future, cultural conditions will further intensify the tendency for communities to diversify. Sustainable development of urban creativity should not be considered only in terms of a spontaneous process. The analysis of the Lublin case study reveals the importance of a proper spatial policy, an element of which is the revitalization of places where cultures meet. Economic stimulation of creative spaces may take various forms. The model of change introduced in Lublin is particularly interesting because it can be applied in cities with a similar traumatic history and problems with managing the identity of symbolic places of remembrance of the past.

The second problem addressed in the research was the issue of sustainable use of new technological solutions, especially for communication, in the process of creating urban creativity. The technological aspect is very much accentuated in research on social exclusion in contemporary cities. In our study, this theme was not controversial. The respondents stressed that technology is an important element of sustainable urban creativity, which enables and facilitates imagined collisions of different axionormative orders. Descriptions of how to implement technological solutions did not go beyond their current use. There were no ideas for introducing new solutions; rather, attention was drawn to the need to better adapt technologies to real social needs. Analyzing the results of the study, we come

to the conclusion that the issue of technology assessment still requires further development. The perspective of sustainable development allows us to also identify ambivalent effects of technological development. New technical tools may deepen social divisions, and intensify problems of digital exclusion of various categories of people. This is certainly an aspect of research that requires further continuation. Analyzing this problem in the perspective of available empirical data and functioning theories, we do not go beyond the framework of existing knowledge [58,59]. We present the state of a certain reality as seen through the eyes of its users and, at the same time, co-creators. Their understanding of technical potential influences the ways in which specific solutions are implemented in the projects initiated. Thus, we see that, given the current state of knowledge about the prospects for technical development, technology is still an underutilised resource that can expand the reach of creative cultural meeting spaces in cities.

The third aspect of our research was to assess the willingness of the inhabitants to experience different forms of creativity in spaces, especially multiculturalism and whether Lublin is perceived as a creative city. The creative industry is a growing sector in Lublin and is connected in the strategies with innovative universities as well as the sustainable development concept. Urban reconstruction understood as a change in the way of experiencing the problematic urban spaces in terms of identity and history was supposed to lead to economic revitalisation. Might it be argued that the factors of creative urban spaces also stimulate sustainable urban development? The design of creative spaces seems to be an immanent part of sustainable development from a theoretical perspective. What then is the empirical picture? Our research proves that it is an important tool for stimulating change, especially the process of urban regeneration. Referring to the answers given by the respondents, we see that the economic potential of this resource is rated very highly and is linked to the broader concept of socio-economic urban renewal.

The sustainable development model of urban creativity is rather prospective; it is difficult to simply reduce the whole complexity of transformations solely to the instrumental dimension [59–61]. However, concrete economic effects can be seen in Lublin, which speak in favour of confirming the thesis of the importance of both culture and unique institutions for the development of a creative sustainable city. Stimulating urban creativity causes axiological transformations in the existing axionormative order and we can interpret these phenomena in terms of sustainable development. Here we are considering a certain axiology of economics, which implies significant changes, for example, in the way brands and the images of cities are created. Intangible benefits, such as changing the image of a city and building a positive identity, are certainly a more difficult subject of research, due to the frequent lack of possibility of direct reference to temporal and measurable factors of the analysed socio-economic change. All respondents recognized the existence of this seemingly inexplicable relationship between economic development and investment in the regeneration of excluded cultural meeting places. They linked the change to the concepts of cultural events, identity, communication, social inclusion, revitalization of space, positively defined deviance and controversy, and to the situation of the ‘meeting of cultures’, which results in a change in the cognitive perspective of its participants.

Sustainable transformation has its origins in breaking the established symbolic codes prescribed to spaces. The analysis and evaluation of forces causing changes and activating creative potentials inscribed in meeting spaces of countercultures leads to the conclusion that subjectivity and social agency are not permanently assigned to structures. Creativity interpreted as a change agent may facilitate the crossing of certain symbolic boundaries in the reading of the city and become a driving force behind the causality of specific social actors. However, the ontic status of the emergent properties of creative urban spaces can be transformed as an epistemic phenomenon. The necessity of studying the phenomenon of creativity as a social phenomenon becomes apparent, as creativity is constructed within specific social situations. This perspective goes beyond strongly established ways of interpreting sustainable urban creativity, leading to new theoretical challenges in interpreting problems of sustainable development.

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