

The Impact of Tourism Development on Urban Spaces: A Comprehensive Approach to Sustainable Urban Development.

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Abstract – Urban spaces are increasingly confronted with sustainability, resilience, and social equity challenges. Traditional urban development models, particularly those centered around tourism, often lead to environmental degradation, social inequalities, and economic over-reliance on a single industry. This can create fragile economies and overburdened urban infrastructures. In response to these issues, this research advocates a shift from tourism-driven development towards a more comprehensive and sustainable urban development model. By incorporating smart city technologies, green infrastructure, and social inclusivity, cities can enhance their resilience while improving the quality of life for residents. The research draws on case studies from cities such as Barcelona, Copenhagen, and Singapore, which have successfully implemented strategies that balance environmental sustainability, economic diversification, and social equity. These cities have integrated smart systems for energy efficiency, promoted green urban spaces to combat pollution, and fostered inclusivity to address social disparities. This research suggests that a holistic approach to urban planning—focused on minimizing environmental impacts, optimizing resource use, and promoting social justice—provides the most effective pathway to sustainable city development. In doing so, urban spaces can become more adaptive, livable, and economically robust, offering models that other cities can emulate.

Keywords: Sustainable Urban Development, Social Equity, Resilient Cities, Tourism-Independent Development, Comprehensive Development.

I. INTRODUCTION

Sustainable development has become increasingly important in urban contexts, addressing the environmental, social, and economic challenges facing modern cities. Sustainable tourism plays a central role in this regard, serving as an effective tool for achieving economic development while preserving urban cultural identity and minimizing environmental impacts. This study aims to examine the influence of sustainable development in urban tourism spaces, focusing on the interplay between tourism, sustainable urban development, and challenges related to social inclusion.

The study adopts a comprehensive methodology that combines theoretical analysis with practical case studies to evaluate the impact of sustainable tourism projects. A key focus is the Olympic Village in the Poblenou district of Barcelona, a case study demonstrating how sustainable tourism can act as a catalyst for urban regeneration and social equity.

The research highlights several significant findings, including the contribution of sustainable tourism to urban

infrastructure enhancement, the creation of permanent employment opportunities, and the reinforcement of local cultural identity. However, it also identifies notable challenges, such as controversies surrounding urban gentrification, which often lead to rising property prices and the displacement of low-income residents.

The study concludes with recommendations advocating for a holistic framework for urban development that balances the efficient use of urban spaces with environmental and social sustainability. It emphasizes the importance of preserving urban cultural heritage while integrating smart technologies to enhance resource management and improve urban services

A. Research problem:

The over-reliance on tourism as the primary driver of urban development, especially in cities rich in cultural heritage like Cairo and others in Egypt, has led to overcrowding, infrastructure strain, and loss of local identity. This paper investigates how cities can develop sustainably by incorporating diverse strategies that balance economic development, environmental

sustainability, and social equity rather than focusing on tourism-driven development.

B. Research Objectives:

1. To develop a holistic framework for sustainable urban development that addresses economic development, environmental sustainability, and social well-being without relying heavily on tourism.
2. To identify critical strategies for urban development that promote smart development, green infrastructure, and social inclusivity.
3. To analyze case studies of cities that have diversified their development strategies beyond tourism and draw lessons for sustainable urban transformation.

C. Methodology:

1. **Case Studies:** The study will examine cities successfully implementing sustainable development practices across multiple sectors. Examples may include Copenhagen's integration of green urban spaces, Singapore's smart city initiatives, and Barcelona's shift from industrial zones to multifunctional urban spaces.
2. **Field Research:** will involve direct observations, interviews, and surveys with architects and residents. The aim is to gather insights into urban transformation projects prioritizing sustainability across multiple dimensions.
3. **Data Analysis:** A comparative analysis of sustainable urban development frameworks will be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of integrated approaches that combine environmental, social, and economic goals without focusing on tourism alone.

II. 2. TOURISM SPACES AND THEIR DEVELOPMENT PROCESS:

Tourism spaces are defined as spaces encompassing all the services and goods a tourist consumes during their stay. These spaces must evolve into unique and competitive sustainable tourism models that reflect the authenticity of the place and provide a distinctive experience from the tourist's perspective [1]. Tourism marketing organizations and businesses are crucial in shaping and promoting sustainable tourist services. Hence, the concept of tourism spaces should address both tourists' desires and the producers' capabilities to deliver [2].

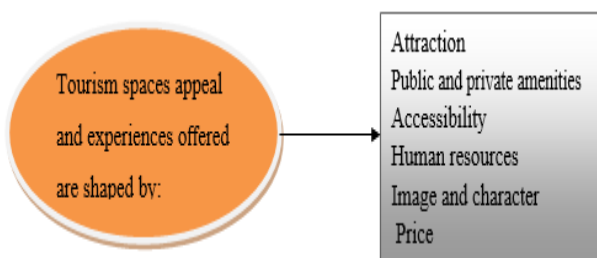


Figure 1: Elements of Tourism Spaces.

Tourism marketing not only responds to market demand but also considers external factors, or "pull factors," that significantly influence the success of a particular tourism space. These factors include the destination's appeal, cultural relevance, accessibility, and the quality of infrastructure, which all contribute to how tourism spaces develop and thrive [3].

A. 2.1 Key Characteristics of Tourism Spaces:

- **Shift in Traveler Identity:** Modern tourists increasingly see themselves as "travelers" rather than mere tourists. They seek a deeper immersion in the culture, along with an understanding of both the human and physical environment of the tourism space. Their holiday experience is driven by personal fulfillment and a desire to engage meaningfully with the destination.
- **Experiential Tourism:** The tourism experience has grown beyond individual activities. Travelers now look for holistic and unique experiences, even in well-established spaces. This highlights the importance of creating a comprehensive tourism offering where the sum of experiences exceeds their parts.
- **Experimental Tourism:** Many travelers are motivated by the quest for adventure, seeking new experiences that push them beyond the familiar. They desire freedom from the constraints of everyday life, and tourism spaces that offer novelty are highly attractive.
- **Existential Tourism:** Travelers are increasingly searching for purpose and self-realization during their trips. Whether learning a new skill, taking on physical challenges, or reconnecting with nature, tourism spaces must cater to these deep, existential needs [4].

B. 2.2 Why the Development of Tourism Spaces is Crucial:

Tourism spaces are crucial in the global economy, offering unique economic development and cultural exchange opportunities. The development of these spaces is driven by several factors, ranging from societal shifts to technological advancements. The table below outlines the key reasons why developing tourism spaces has become essential in today's experience-driven economy. It highlights the growing demands of modern travelers, the influence of global infrastructure improvements, and the impact of digital competition on tourism space development, as in Table 1[5].

Table 1: Key Drivers for the Development of Tourism Spaces.

Key Factor	Description
Experience Economy	Modern consumers demand unique, immersive, and transformative travel experiences, increasing the demand for extraordinary tourism spaces.
Increased Disposable Income	Rising disposable incomes, especially in the West, have expanded the tourism market, encouraging space competition.
Lifestyle Indicators	The choice of a tourism space has become a lifestyle symbol, with emotional appeal, conversational value, and celebrity status influencing tourists' decisions.
Symbol of Prestige	Specific tourism spaces are associated with prestige, making them desirable for travelers seeking status and sophistication in their spaces.
Globalization and Infrastructure	Improved global infrastructure and ease of travel, especially to remote spaces, have facilitated the development of new and accessible tourism spaces.

C. The Sustainable Tourist Destination Model.

A sustainable tourist destination aims to meet the needs and expectations of consumers while maintaining harmony with the environment and local culture. This model focuses on safety, security, hygiene, accessibility, transparency, and authenticity, ensuring that tourism activities respect the human and natural environment. By integrating the dimensions of sustainability—cultural, historical, and natural—tourist spaces can establish themselves as resilient, long-lasting spaces, as in Figure 2 [6].

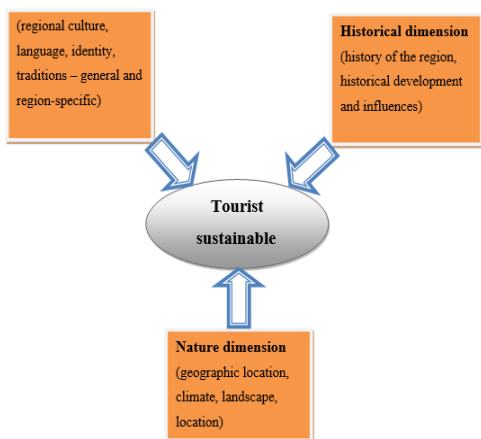


Figure 2: Tourist Development Dimensions.

The Dimensions of Sustainable Tourism Include:

- **Cultural:** Incorporating local culture, language, traditions, and regional identities into the tourism model.
- **Historical:** It recognizes the region's historical significance and development, allowing visitors to connect with the past [7].
- **Natural:** Emphasizing the geographical location, climate, and natural landscape of space, highlighting the environmental uniqueness of the destination.

D. Components of a Sustainable Tourism Model.

Sustainable tourism spaces have several key components that shape a visitor's perception and overall experience. These components can be categorized into three primary dimensions: landscape, crowds, and climate, as in Figure 3.

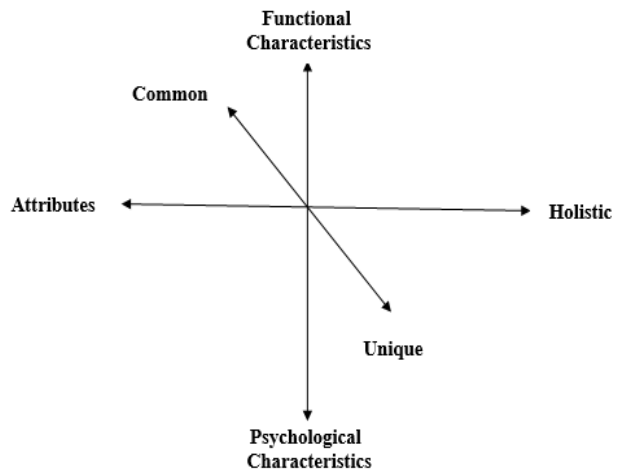


Figure 3: Components of a Sustainable Tourism Model.

- **Physical/Functional Attributes:** These are measurable elements, such as prices, size, and climate, which tourists use to compare spaces. These attributes are critical in shaping the tangible aspects of tourism experiences.
- **Psychological/Intangible Features:** These components are more complex to quantify but essential for shaping a tourist's emotional and psychological experience. Elements like the atmosphere, cultural appeal, and romantic allure of the space contribute to its overall identity.
- Tourists are often drawn to spaces unique or different from their everyday surroundings. Sustainable tourism spaces must balance
- **Functional Attributes** (like price and accommodations) with **unique features** (such as cultural symbols or special events) that set them apart.
- **Psychological Traits:** Features like local

friendliness, landscape beauty, or cultural significance.

- **Unique Psychological Traits:** These include emotional responses tied to places of religious significance or historical events [8].

A key challenge in sustainable tourism is measuring these holistic representations of spaces, as many aspects—such as atmosphere—cannot be easily broken down into individual attributes. A comprehensive model that accounts for functional and psychological dimensions is necessary to understand the full scope of sustainable tourism spaces [9].

III. STUDY EXAMPLES OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM.

Sustainable tourism is a multi-faceted concept that extends beyond economic profitability, encompassing urban development's cultural, environmental, and social dimensions. Unlike traditional tourism, sustainable tourism is more cognitive and subjective, with visitors' perceptions varying based on cost, uniqueness, or urban sophistication. Moreover, a tourist's attitude toward a destination often involves strong emotional connections—excitement, fun, or a sense of novelty—which play a significant role in shaping the success of a tourism space.

A key aspect of sustainable tourism is tourists' emotional attachment to a place. This attachment can transform

tourism into a more sustainable practice by fostering loyalty, encouraging repeat visits, and nurturing respect for the destination's environment and culture. A notable example of how this emotional connection and sustainable tourism intersect is Poblenou in Barcelona, a once-industrial neighborhood transformed into a modern, sustainable urban space, mainly through its development for the 1992 Olympic Games [10].

A. 3.1 Barcelona's Olympic Village in Poblenou: A Case of Sustainable Urban Tourism.

Before the transformation, Poblenou was an old industrial space suffering from economic and social decline, marked by homelessness, high crime rates, public disorder, pollution, and deteriorating infrastructure. However, the decision to repurpose the district as part of Barcelona's preparation for the 1992 Olympics allowed the city to turn the space into a symbol of sustainable urban tourism. This transformation demonstrates how sustainable tourism can serve as an urban regeneration tool, enhancing civic pride and economic resilience.

Barcelona's approach was a city-wide exercise that promoted inclusivity and local ownership. The Olympic Games catalyzed physical infrastructure improvements and social and cultural revitalization. By creating new spaces, such as the Olympic Village, Barcelona could attract tourists, foster a sense of local pride, and provide long-lasting benefits to its residents [11].



Figure 4: The location of the Olympic Village in Barcelona [12].



Figure 5: The site being developed (1999)[14].

B. 3.2 The Barcelona Model of Sustainable Tourism.

Table 2 Key Features of this Transformation Included:

Key Feature	Description
Coastal and Infrastructure Recovery	Investments in coastal reclamation, housing developments, roads, and transportation lead to lasting infrastructure improvements.
Economic Impact	There was a significant drop in unemployment (1986-1992), and permanent jobs were created in construction, retail, and services, which enhanced Barcelona's global image as a tourist destination [13].
Urban Regeneration and Social Impact	The Games accelerated Barcelona's pre-existing regeneration plan, focusing on inclusivity, restoring residents' sense of identity and pride, and ensuring tourism benefits were widely distributed.

Barcelona's Olympic development highlighted the potential of tourism to drive sustainable urban renewal. The city's leaders embraced an urban regeneration strategy that received international and domestic acclaim. The "Barcelona Model" became a blueprint for other cities seeking to leverage large-scale events for long-term urban development, combining urban beauty, economic development, and social justice.

Urban Beauty and Architectural Quality: The design and architecture of Barcelona's urban space were praised for their formal quality, and the regenerated spaces added aesthetic value to previously neglected spaces. The



success of Economic Success and Social Equity: The regeneration effort went beyond financial gain. It provided more equitable access to improved urban spaces and enhanced residents' quality of life. The city's transformation balanced tourism and local needs, creating a more socially just urban space [15].

However, the transformation of Poblenou was subject to controversy. Gentrification became a significant issue, as the urban renewal led to higher property prices, pushing out long-term, lower-income residents. While the spaces were transformed into attractive spaces for wealthier citizens and tourists, critics argued that this redevelopment occurred at the expense of local communities. This tension between tourism development and social inclusion remains challenging in many urban renewal projects.

C. 3.3 Tourism and Gentrification: Lessons from Barcelona.

One of the most significant impacts of tourism-related development in Barcelona, particularly in Poblenou, was the rise of gentrification. Transforming industrial spaces into high-end residential and commercial spaces increased property values and rents, displacing many long-standing residents. Gentrification has become one of the most poignant socio-political issues in the city, as international appreciation of the "Barcelona Model" spurred further speculation and investment in real estate.

The Social Segregation creation of gated communities in certain parts of the Olympic Village and rising costs contributed to a widening gap between affluent and lower-income locals. This form of social segregation contradicts the original vision of inclusive urban renewal. **Urban Identity and Authenticity:** While Barcelona succeeded in establishing itself as a global tourism hub, critics argue that the city's international brand led to the commodification of its culture and loss of authenticity. Some parts of the town, including Poblenou, became tailored for tourists rather than reflecting the lived experiences of local communities [16].



Figure 6: The view of the Olympic Park [17].



Figure 7: Barcelona Olympic Village - Frank Gehry Fish Sculpture [18].



Figure 8: Barcelona - Olympic Village - Residential Zone [19].

D. 3.4 Sustainability in Tourism and Urban Development.

Despite these challenges, Barcelona's approach offers valuable lessons for integrating sustainability into tourism development. Key factors include:

- **Mixed-Use Development:** The Olympic Village combined residential, commercial, and leisure functions to maximize land use efficiency. This approach helped balance the needs of tourists with those of the local population.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** Barcelona enhanced its urban space by reclaiming land and creating new green spaces, such as artificial beaches and public parks. The focus on green infrastructure promoted environmental resilience, reducing the ecological footprint of tourism development.
- **Cultural and Social Inclusion:** Although gentrification occurred, the overall planning process was rooted in a desire to benefit all residents. The city took steps to maintain cultural heritage, restore civic pride, and integrate sustainability into its long-term

development goals.

The development of the Olympic Village in Barcelona resulted in significant transformations that brought strengths and challenges to the city. On the strengths side, the project generated permanent employment opportunities, thanks to increased inward and external investment in service industries. This economic boost diversified the city's industries beyond tourism, contributing to long-term development. The city's enhanced infrastructure — improved roads, public transportation, and telecommunications — also elevated Barcelona to a top tourist destination, attracting millions of visitors. The urban planning efforts that continued after the Games allowed further diversification into new industries, fostering more sustainable and robust urban development.

However, these benefits were counterbalanced by several weaknesses. Barcelona's success as a tourist destination led to overcrowding in the city center, which strained public services and infrastructure. The rising demand for housing caused property prices to surge, displacing poorer communities who could no longer afford to live in newly revitalized spaces. The creation of gated communities

within the Olympic Village, designed to offer exclusivity and security, unintentionally promoted social segregation, limiting access to these spaces for low-income residents and contributing to increased social exclusion [20].

Ultimately, while the Olympic Village project significantly improved Barcelona's infrastructure and economy, it raised critical social concerns. Rising housing costs, resident displacement, and the creation of socially exclusive spaces serve as reminders of the need for inclusive urban development. Future projects must create urban spaces that drive economic development and foster social equity and sustainability, ensuring all residents benefit from urban revitalization efforts.

E. 3.5 Key Attractions and the Strengths and Weaknesses of the Olympic Village.

The Olympic Village in Barcelona was designed to attract local and international visitors through natural features, man-made structures, and special events. Its development aimed to boost tourism and local economy while enhancing the city's infrastructure [17].

However, despite its many strengths, notable challenges accompanied the transformation, such as social segregation and increased housing costs. Below is a summary of the Olympic Village's key attractions, strengths, and weaknesses, as in Table 3.

Table 3: Key Attractions, Strengths, and Weaknesses of the Olympic Village

Attraction	Strengths	Weaknesses
Natural Features: Beaches, harbors, lakes, and parks attract tourists with scenic beauty and recreational opportunities, enhancing Barcelona's coastal appeal.	Permanent employment gain :The Olympic Games project generated thousands of jobs in construction, retail, hospitality, and service industries, which led to long-term employment opportunities post-Games.	The city center is overcrowded due to the influx of tourists, especially during peak seasons. These tourists overwhelm the city's infrastructure, leading to overcrowded public spaces and traffic congestion.
Man-Made Attractions: Purpose-built structures such as stadiums for sporting events, casinos, leisure shopping centers, health spas, parks, and marinas provide modern amenities catering to diverse tourist needs.	Inward and external investment in service industries: The redevelopment attracted local and international investments, particularly in the hospitality, retail, and entertainment sectors, driving sustained economic development.	Rise in housing costs :The redevelopment and increase in tourist demand for accommodations caused property values and rental prices to skyrocket, displacing long-time residents.
Special Events: Large-scale events like the Olympic Games, fairs, festivals, and expositions promote Barcelona as a global tourist hub and enhance its cultural visibility.	Continued city planning and infrastructure improvements: post-Olympic infrastructure upgrades, including roads, public transport, and telecommunications, benefited tourists and residents, enhancing overall urban mobility and connectivity.	Displacement of poorer communities :Gentrification forced many lower-income residents to move out of the Olympic Village and surrounding spaces due to unaffordable housing and living costs.
Retail Concepts: Malls, waterfront developments, and factory outlets create unique shopping experiences for tourists and residents.	Diversification into new industries: The city's economy diversified into technology, cultural industries, and sustainable tourism sectors, reducing dependency on traditional industries	Gated communities foster social segregation: The creation of gated, exclusive residential spaces has led to increased social segregation, restricting access to revitalized spaces for lower-income communities.
	Numerous visitor spaces: The Olympic Village and nearby attractions, including parks and beaches, became major tourist spaces, boosting Barcelona's global tourism profile.	

IV. KEY LEARNINGS AND DEVELOPMENT METHODOLOGY.

Several valuable insights were gained regarding sustainable tourism and urban development throughout the project. The following table summarizes the key lessons learned and the methodology applied to address challenges such as social equity, environmental sustainability, and economic diversification. These

Learning guided the project's approach to balancing tourism development with broader urban goals, ensuring that regeneration efforts benefit residents and the environment [21]. The methodology emphasizes a comprehensive, inclusive strategy for urban development that integrates green infrastructure, smart technologies, and cultural preservation, as in Table 4.

Table 4: Key Learnings and Methodology for Project Development.

Aspect	What Was Learned/Applied	Methodology for Development
Sustainable Urban Development	Learned the importance of integrating environmental, economic, and social factors into urban planning to ensure long-term resilience and livability.	Adopted a comprehensive urban development model that balances sustainability across infrastructure, economy, and social inclusion.
Tourism's Role in Urban Regeneration	Realized the potential of tourism as a catalyst for urban renewal, but also recognized its limitations due to gentrification and social exclusion.	A balanced approach was used by leveraging tourism to finance urban projects while ensuring that these developments benefit residents equitably.
Cultural And Historical Preservation	Understood the significance of maintaining local culture and history to enhance a city's unique identity and appeal to residents and tourists.	Integrated local heritage and cultural assets into tourism development plans, ensuring that modernization does not erase historical identity.
Economic Impact	Identified the dual impact of tourism on economic development. and rising property prices, which can drive out local communities if not carefully managed.	Promoted mixed-use development that supports diverse economic activities (tourism, retail, housing) and affordable housing initiatives.
Environmental Sustainability	Observed the necessity of including green infrastructure, like parks and sustainable energy, in urban development to combat environmental degradation.	Implemented green solutions, such as land reclamation for parks and renewable energy systems, to reduce the ecological footprint of urban spaces.
Social Equity	Learned that urban development could lead to social segregation and inequality without inclusive policies.	Ensured the development process included community input and provided affordable housing options to avoid displacing low-income residents.

CONCLUSIONS:

Integrating sustainable tourism within broader urban development frameworks is essential for creating resilient, inclusive, and environmentally sustainable cities. While tourism can be a powerful economic driver, over-reliance on this sector can lead to social inequalities, environmental degradation, and economic instability. By adopting a balanced approach incorporating mixed-use developments, green infrastructure, and smart city technologies, cities can achieve long-term development. that benefits residents and visitors. Furthermore, preserving cultural heritage and ensuring social inclusion is crucial for maintaining a city's identity and ensuring

equitable development. The findings of this research emphasize sustainable urban development. is not only possible but necessary, as it provides the best path forward for creating livable, vibrant, and adaptive cities for future generations.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- **Adopt a Holistic Urban Development Framework:** Cities should develop comprehensive urban plans integrating tourism with broader sustainability goals. This includes aligning tourism development. with environmental, social, and economic priorities to avoid over-reliance on tourism while ensuring

balanced urban development [22].

- **Promote Mixed-Use and Diverse Economic Activities:** Encourage the creation of mixed-use spaces that serve residential, commercial, and tourism functions. Diversifying urban activities ensures a more stable local economy, reduces risks tied to tourism fluctuations, and fosters more dynamic and resilient urban space.
- **Invest in Green Infrastructure and Environmental Sustainability:** Urban planners should prioritize including green infrastructure such as parks, green roofs, and renewable energy systems. These initiatives improve environmental resilience, reduce the ecological footprint, and enhance urban spaces' overall appeal and livability for residents and tourists.
- **Ensure Social Inclusion and Prevent Gentrification:** Urban development projects must focus on social equity by implementing policies that ensure affordable housing and prevent the displacement of low-income communities. Encouraging community participation in the planning process and safeguarding residents' rights can mitigate the negative effects of tourism-driven gentrification.
- **Preserve Cultural and Historical Identity:** Cities should integrate cultural preservation into their development plans by protecting historical landmarks and local traditions. By doing so, cities can maintain their unique identity and enhance their cultural appeal to tourists while fostering local pride and engagement [23].
- **Leverage Smart City Technologies for Sustainable Management:** Smart technologies, including IoT, smart grids, and data-driven urban management systems, should be implemented to optimize resource use, improve urban mobility, and manage tourism pressures. These technologies help enhance the efficiency and sustainability of city services, benefiting both tourists and residents [24].
- **Prioritize Long-Term Sustainability Over Short-Term Gains:** Policymakers and developers should focus on long-term sustainability rather than short-term economic benefits from tourism. By doing so, cities can ensure continuous development that serves the current population and future generations, promoting environmental stewardship and social well-being [25].

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