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GEOGRAPHY OF TOURISM IN POLAND

LA GÉOGRAPHIE DU TOURISME EN POLOGNE

GEOGRAFIA TURYZMU W POLSCE

1. INTRODUCTION

The beginnings of tourism geography in Polish universities date back to the interwar period, and more exactly to 1936 when the Centre of Tourism was opened at the Jagellonian University in Cracow (Jackowski 1991). The Centre operated until 1939 and it was the only channel through which graduates could be trained for the tourism sector at university level in Poland as it then was. It published among others, the journal „Turizm Polski” for the years 1938—1939.

In the period following World War Two the development of tourism geography lagged behind that of other geographic sciences, which found expression also in the organizational structure of Polish geography. The geography of tourism was undertaken during that time within the sub-disciplines of economic geography, regional geography or meteorology and climatology („Prace Geograficzne” 1981).

The seventies were a turning point in the development of tourism geography in Poland. At that time the Department of the Geography of Tourism was opened at the Jagellonian University (1979), as well as a university specialization carrying the same name. During that period the Colleges of Tourism and Recreation with quite extensive programmes of tourism geography were also set up in the Academies of Physical Education in Cracow and Poznań in response to pressures from geographers. At the same time the Postdiploma Centres of Tourism were also opened at the University of Wrocław, Łódź, and Gdańsk, which were to provide education for future specialists in various areas of the

tourist economy. Finally, at the beginning of the eighties was established the second university department in Poland conducting both research work and didactic activity in the field of the geography of tourism. It was the Department of the Geography of Towns and Tourism opened at the Institute of Economic Geography and Space Organization at the University of Łódź in 1981.

This brief review of the history of tourism geography in Poland shows that this sphere of geographic sciences is quite young in Poland from the organizational point of view. The absence of separate organizational units dealing with it for a lengthy period did not mean, however that no research work was carried in the field of geography of tourism. The best proof is the large number of publications. The bibliography of Polish geography of tourism to be found in the reviews of Jackowski (1974) and Liszewski (1987) encompasses over 400 publications from this area of geography.

2. THE STATE OF THE GEOGRAPHY OF TOURISM IN POLAND AT THE BEGINNING OF THE 1990s

The present state of tourism geography in Poland is a result of the development of this sphere of geographic sciences mainly in the 1970s and in the 1980s. The activity of Polish geographers dealing with tourism can be seen in three fields, i.e., in didactic, research and organizational activities, including editorial work.

Academic specializations in the geography of tourism were being offered to students of geography at two Polish universities in 1991. Such specialization at the Jagellonian University was first offered in 1977 and at the Łódź University in 1982 (Liszewski 1989). It is available to students who have completed the second year of their geographic courses. The annual enrolment in Cracow is 20 to 25 students and in Łódź some 12 to 15. The courses last three years (six semesters) and end with the production of a Master's thesis in the geography of tourism and a M.A. exam. After graduating the students obtain an M.A. diploma in geography with specialization in the geography of tourism. The curricula at both universities differ and they are subject to constant modifications. The Jagellonian University places emphasis on the humanities and hence there are a large number of class on the history of art, ethnography, or history of tourism (Groch 1990). On the other hand, specialized courses in the geography of tourism at the University of Łódź are of a comprehensive character and students acquire knowledge in

four major areas: (a) physical and psychic abilities and needs of a tourist; (b) tourist resources of Poland and the world; (c) organization of tourist events and leisure time; (d) techniques of research and practical application of research findings in professional work (Liszewski 1990).

The second form of didactic activity conducted by geographers of tourism are the Postdiploma Courses of Tourism. They were offered by two centres in 1991: at the University of Wrocław (established in 1972 but operating with intervals) and at the University of Łódź operating continuously since 1977. The postdiploma courses last one year and their students are persons who have completed higher education earlier, but with different specializations, and are professionally or voluntarily involved in tourism. The Postdiploma Centre of Tourism at the University of Łódź which has been running the longest has had a total enrolment of 453 students from different parts of Poland, and 230 have completed the courses involving the preparation of a diploma dissertation (Dziegieć 1985). Among its students are both employees of tourist bureaux and institutions, persons involved in social-welfare activity, such as holiday organization and teachers in different types of schools. For a part of the students the courses mean revising and deepening their tourist knowledge, for others they create an opportunity to acquire completely new knowledge.

Apart from the above mentioned forms of didactic activity organized as regards curricula and classes, geographers of tourism also participate in the training of specialists for the tourist sector at the Academies of Physical Education and the Academies of Economics. These include the Academies of Physical Education in Cracow, Poznań, and Gdańsk with their strong teams of geographers, and the Academies of Economics in Warsaw, Poznań, Gdańsk, Cracow, and Jelenia Góra, where, however, the participation of tourism geographers in educational programmes is somewhat limited.

Questionnaire surveys carried out at the University of Łódź among graduates of tourism geography and the Postdiploma Centre of Tourism show that the former in about one-third of cases take up jobs in tourism, while a further one-third are employed in schools which can also be considered work corresponding to their specialization. Graduates of the Postdiploma Center of Tourism stress the great applicability of knowledge derived from the university courses, which finds reflection both in the practical application of qualifications acquired during the university courses in organizing numerous tourist events, and in the practical utilization of findings of their diploma research projects (Dziegieć, Liszewski 1990).

Research activity in the field of tourism geography is conducted in

Poland at all universities, at the Academies of Physical Education and Academies of Economics mentioned above, and in the Institute of Tourism. The strongest research centres in this area of geography appear to be the Cracow centre (Jackowski, Warszńska 1987) and the Łódź centre (Liszewski 1991).

Without going more deeply into research accomplishments of Polish geographers of tourism it is worth mentioning at least the leading research areas studied in Poland within this sphere of geographic sciences.

An analysis of publications indicates that the research work of Polish geographers of tourism is focussed today in nine main areas:

1. Theoretical foundations and research methods in the geography of tourism.

2. The natural environment as a tourist attraction, the evaluation of its attractiveness, changes and protection.

3. The material base of tourism and its spatial distribution.

4. Tourist settlements.

5. Regional tourist monographs (regional syntheses).

6. Suburban zones of large cities as areas of tourism and recreation.

Problems of second homes.

7. The problems caused by tourist activity, especially in rural areas (tourist urbanisation).

8. Spatial and structural analyses of tourist traffic (i.e. pilgrimages).

9. Spatial organization of leisure time, especially of inhabitants of large cities.

The above research areas receive varied attention in different geographic centres. By way of example, it could be added that the strongest research centre in the field of the methodology of tourism geography and also regional syntheses, as well as pilgrimages, is in the Cracow centre (Warszńska 1986). These problems are studied also in the Warsaw, Wrocław, and Toruń centres. The Wrocław centre specializes in analyzing the values of the natural environment, and primarily landscape for tourism. In turn, the main research emphasis in the Łódź centre is placed on tourist settlements, the tourist functions of suburban zones, tourist urbanization, and methodology of studies of tourist traffic.

The research area of tourism geography in Poland has undergone quite significant changes in an attempt to keep pace with rapid socio-economic change, which obviously influence tourism as well.

Polish geographers of tourism display a deep organizational involvement both on the international forum and inside Poland. It takes the form, first of all, of organizing conferences and scientific seminars, very often with foreign participants, and of editorial activity as well.

In the 1980s alone the following major scientific conferences were organized by Polish geographers of tourism:

1. In 1983 the Department of Geography of Towns and Tourism, University of Łódź, organized a symposium of the Commission of Geography of Tourism and Recreation attached to the International Geographic Union (4th—11th September).

2. In 1985 the Department of Geography of Tourism, Jagellonian University, organized „The Carpathian Tourist Conference” in Cracow. (13th—16th May).

3. In 1987 the Department of Geography of Towns and Tourism, University of Łódź, jointly with the University in Angers (France), organized in Łódź the First International Didactic Seminar on „Teaching Tourism at University Level” (3rd—7th May).

4. In 1988 the Department of Geography of Towns and Tourism, University of Łódź, was an organizer of the Polish-French Seminar (Łódź—Aix) on „Contemporary Changes in Rural Space under Influence of Urbanisation and Tourism” (9th—14th May).

5. In 1990 the Warsaw centre organized an International Seminar on „Determinants in Development of International Tourism in Countries of Central and Eastern Europe” (16th—19th October).

6. In 1991 the Department of Geography of Towns and Tourism, University of Łódź, organized jointly with the University in Angers (France) the Third International Didactic Seminar on „Role of Traineeship and Field Studies in Educating Specialists for Tourism” in Łódź (3rd—6th June).

Polish geographers of tourism participated also during this time in all the symposia organized by the Commission of Geography of Tourism and Recreation attached to the International Geographic Union in Europe, among others in Aix-Provence (France 1981), Paris (France — 1984), West Berlin (1985), Klagenfurt (Austria — 1988), Prague (Czechoslovakia — 1989), and in many regional and national scientific meetings.

It should be added that the Department of Geography of Towns and Tourism, University of Łódź, has regularly organized each year (starting from 1984) field seminars in the geography of tourism with the participation of geographers involved in this sphere of geographic sciences („Tourist Workshops”).

Polish geographers of tourism are also actively involved in editorial activity. At the beginning of the 1990s three Polish journals were being edited by geographers.

The oldest of them is the quarterly „Problems of Tourism” published by the Institute of Tourism in Warsaw since 1977. Each edition of this journal is available in Polish with an English-French version.

The half-yearly „Tourism” published by the University of Łódź is the only Polish scientific journal entirely edited by geographers of tourism. Between 1985 and 1990 were published regularly *Acta Universitatis Lodzianis* „Turyzm” (7 editions in all). Starting from 1991 this publication has been replaced by a new journal, which has preserved the name „Tourism”. It is published in Polish with longer summaries in English and French. Whenever necessary some series in foreign languages are also published.

„Folia Touristica” published by the Academy of Physical Education in Cracow since 1990 is the latest journal edited by geographers of tourism.

In addition geographers of tourism either edit themselves or take part in editing both scientific publications of higher education institutions and numerous regional publications.

The above brief presentation focussed on the geography of tourism in Poland should give the reader an insight into the state of the development of one of the youngest disciplines of geographic sciences in Poland.

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