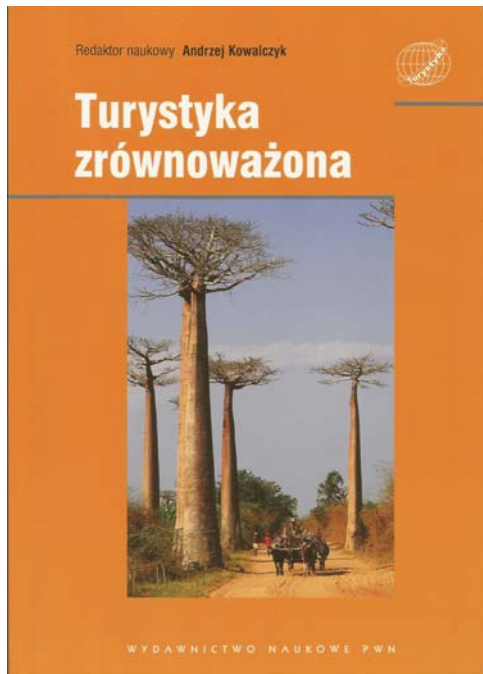


REVIEW

Tourism 2010, 20/2



ANDRZEJ KOWALCZYK (ED.)
TURYSTYKA ZRÓWNOWAŻONA
WYDAWNICTWO NAUKOWE PWN SA
WARSZAWA 2010, 323 pp.

Turystyka zrównowazona, published by PWN SA in 2010, is a textbook written by a team of ten authors under the editorship of Andrzej Kowalczyk – mostly lecturers and post-graduate students from the Department of Tourism and Recreation Geography (*Zakład Geografii Turyzmu i Rekreacji*), Warsaw University. The book contains six chapters with an introduction and conclusions. It has 323 pages of text, supplemented with 39 colour photographs.

The text on the cover informs the reader that the book consists of three parts. The first contains a theoretical and methodological discussion, the second presents environmental issues, and the third cultural aspects of sustainable tourism. The very interesting Introduction by Kowalczyk is strongly factual, and Chapter 1, *Definicja i zakres pojęcia 'turystyka zrównowazona'* (*The Definition and Scope of 'Sustainable Tourism'*), partly repeats its contents. However, the authors go a step further and expand on the problem as well as setting out the definitions and concepts of sustainable tourism. The authors present their understanding of the notion and show the affinity of their opinions to those presented by R.W. Butler. They define sustainable tourism as (...) a phenomenon in which tourism activity does not cause irreversible

changes to the natural environment, while at the same time bringing benefits to the tourists themselves, the local communities, the areas visited, as well as the people and institutions providing tourism services (p. 33). Chapter 2 concisely informs the reader of the theoretical concepts which are important for the modern understanding of tourism (mainly from a geographical perspective), and which Kowalczyk believes to be close to the idea of sustainable tourism. The relations presented here may leave the reader dissatisfied due to the absence of final conclusions or a comparison showing the author's professional opinion on which concepts and which aspects are the most useful or relevant. The third chapter presents the principles of tourism development which reflect the concept of sustainable tourism. The authors focus mostly on the presentation of legal regulations (Polish and European) and tourism infrastructure in protected areas. This chapter is definitely shorter what follows and intentionally does not exploit the issue to the full because, according to the authors, in order to have a deeper insight we should refer to the literature suggested in the chapter. The next two chapters are the longest. They show the environmental (Chapter 4) and cultural (Chapter 5) aspects of sustainable tourism.

Environmental tourism is analysed in the context of global and local threats in mountainous, forested, coastal and arid areas. More attention is devoted to geo-tourism (geological tourism) and eco-tourism (ecological tourism). As regards the numerous forms of cultural tourism, the authors decided to analyse those which they believed to be 'particularly important from the point of view of sustainable tourism and at the same time are increasingly often chosen by tourists' (p. 164). They include ethnic, industrial, oenological and literary tourism which are described in separate sub-chapters. The last, sixth chapter, presents active tourism as a form of sustainable tourism. Out of its many forms the authors point to ski tourism as unconnected with the idea of sustainable tourism (disregarding differences between downhill skiing - harmful for the natural environment - and the environmentally-friendly cross-country skiing or ski-touring). The forms regarded as important for local development and at the same time not causing considerable change to the natural environment, cycling and horse-riding, are discussed in more detail. Golf tourism is presented as a controversial form. In the Conclusions the authors stress that sustainable tourism '[...] should not be understood as a separate form of tourism behaviour (p.290), but as an approach to tourism'. They make it obvious here that considering the present role of tourism in economic development, it can hardly be expected that sustainable tourism will replace mass tourism (35). However, the former should not be rejected because as history teaches us: '[...] many illusions and utopias come true after some time, even if only partly' (p. 292).

The book, especially the fourth, fifth and sixth chapters contain numerous figures (38) and tables (32). Case studies, additional and often very interesting illustrations of the issues presented, are included in the chapters (in frames and highlighted in grey), as well as the colour photographs at the end of the book. The figures are mostly the authors' own. The presentation of the data is clear, easy to understand (except

Table 12 - pp. 117-8 - with too much text) and supplements the authors' text well. However, the brief commentary (without examples) on the almost three-page-long Table 5 (p. 40-3), presenting the final version of sustainable tourism indexes, recommended by *VISIT*, seems insufficient. Table 7 (p. 98) requires an erratum as Szczeliniec (Poland) was mistakenly ascribed to volcanic activity, probably in the editing process.

The bibliography, especially that in English, has been well selected and is up-to date, consisting of articles from foreign journals usually hard to reach by an average reader, which is undoubtedly an advantage in an academic textbook. On the other hand, however, the authors did not take into consideration some interesting publications in Polish, e.g. Butler 2005, Kozuchowski 2005, Niezgodna 2008, Wnuk 2005. An important source of information was the internet (mainly statistical data), as well as reports on the authors' own observations (supplementing some of the included photographs).

The book presents a modern approach to tourism, especially the conditions and possibilities for its sustainable development. Touching on important issues the book becomes a significant but, as the authors point out, it is not the only source of information. It is most certainly, nevertheless, an important voice in the discussion on sustainable tourism. In appreciation of its accessibility and above all the wide spectrum of the presented issues, as well as the interesting way of presenting them, the book is worth recommending to both those professionally involved in tourism and those who are interested in contemporary tourism, its different faces and challenges.

Translated by Ewa Mossakowska

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