

TOURISM AS A FACTOR OF REGIONAL ECONOMY DEVELOPMENT IN BESKID NISKI AND ITS INFLUENCE ON SOCIAL AND NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

Patrycja ŻEGLIŃ

Faculty of Physical Education, University of Rzeszow, Rzeszow, Poland

Keywords:

- tourism,
- regional economy,
- beskid niski.

Abstract:

The paper concerns sustainable tourism development issues in tourist destinations and its connections with regional economy development. Discussion is partly based on Wysowa Zdrój, which is popular destination, both for winter and summer tourism, and where natural environment plays a significant role. The main aim of the paper is to show how tourism influences regional economy development without destroying social and natural environment simultaneously.

INTRODUCTION

Tourism as one of the fastest growing industries in Europe, acquires significance worldwide. Aside from economic aspects, tourism is seen as a factor of sustainable development as well. It means, that all the activities connected with tourism sector have to be undertaken in conformity with European Union Treaty¹, taking into account sustainable development with the respect to natural environment. It is worth saying, that there has to be balance maintained between various needs and interests. Unfortunately, with the growth and intensification of tourism, we observe many threats and faults of nowadays tourism, which means mass tourism.

The main goal of the paper is to show economic importance of tourism industry in tourist destinations as well as balance disruption in ecosystems, which make it possible to develop tourism sector.

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND ECOTOURISM

The term: sustainable tourism was introduced during I Conference in Stockholm „Man and environment” in 1972. Furthermore, rules of sustainable tourism development were described in 1992 by *Tourism Concern* and *World Wide Fund for Nature* in document titled: „*Beyond the Green Horizon: Principles for Sustainable Tourism*”. Additionally, Agenda 21 for Travelling and Tourism Economy² appeared to underline the following issues:

- tourism should promote healthy and productive life style in harmony with nature,
- it should promote/create tolerance and understanding,
- protection of national culture and natural environment,
- active participation of local people in tourism industry,
- new source of earning money for local people.

¹ *European Union Treaty (article 2)*, Dz. U. UE 2012 C 326, p. 1.

² Agenda 21 is a non-binding, voluntarily implemented action plan of the United Nations with regard to sustainable development.^[1] It is a product of the Earth Summit (UN Conference on Environment and Development) held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, in 1992.

Eco-development inherent to sustainable development as well as ecotourism development. Eco-development definition was precised in 1975 in the aim of correct proportions between three capitals: economic, human and natural. Ecotourism is a tourist movement, which aim is to join tourists' needs with sustainable development, integration of local people, and new attitudes towards tourism and its organizers (touroperators). As a form of travel, ecotourism takes great care of understanding of environment's culture and natural history, fosters the ecosystem's integrity, and produces economic opportunities and conservation gains. Ecotourism provides jobs and income for local people, it makes possible funds for purchasing and improving protected or natural areas to attract more ecotourists in the future. Moreover, it provides environmental education for visitors, and encourages heritage and environmental preservation and enhancement (the creation of new or enlarged national and state parks, forests preserves, biosphere reserves, recreation areas, beaches, marine and underwater trails and other attractions). One can list the following examples of ecotourism:

- Third World countries host many ecotourists. In Brazil, nature travel has become the country's largest new source of revenue.
- In south-central Africa, Rwanda's ecotourism is the third largest source of foreign exchange earnings.
- In Costa Rica, 60% of visitors are interested in seeing the national park system, which comprises 11% of the country's land area. If biological and private reserves are added, the protected areas total 23% of the nation.

Ecotourism puts emphasis on tourist activities development aimed at a close contact with nature, direct relationships: tourists-local people, as well as taking into account tourist capacity.

Fortunately tourism industry has begun using modern technology in the fields of computer science, communications and building of transportation to preserve the environment. Therefore, sustainable tourism development is seen as „making things last”, whether it is an economy, an ecosystem, or a culture³. According to other scientist⁴ sustainable tourism is defined as tourism which is in a form which can maintain its viability in an area for an indefinite period of time. As we can see, tourism plays a very important role in our lives. Tourism always though in varying degrees contains the dimension of psychological and physical effort.⁵ To prove it, one has to take into consideration the following sentence: Quality of life should be improved thanks to tourism⁶. Sustainable tourism has multiple goals, namely to create and maintain successful industries including tourism, and to conserve appropriate levels of the natural and cultural environment, with due regard to time and place. There are various activities promoting increase of tourists' ecological awareness in the world. Among others, *Give Back Gateways Programme* initiated by Ritz-Carlton hotel chain, which makes it possible that guests all over the world can work for local societies; for instance: in Cancun (Mexico) tourists can help with protection programme for turtles; they can take a part in cleaning Sonnenhof – centre for seriously ill children in Berlin or can help with ancient buildings renovation in Wuzhen (China).

³ D. Pearce, 1989, *Tourism Development*, Longman, Harlow.

⁴ R. Butler, 1980, *The Concept of a Tourism Area Cycle of Evolution. Implications for the Management of Resources*. *Canadian Geographer* No 24.

⁵ R., Grzywacz, P. Żegleń, The effectiveness of education to participate in the physical culture through tourism on the example of Piwniczna Zdrój inhabitants, *Scientific Review of Physical Culture*, Vol. 4, Issue 1, Rzeszów 2014, p. 100.

⁶ *Guide for Local Planners*, 1993, World Tourism Organization, Madrid.

CHARACTERISTICS OF BESKID NISKI REGION

Region of Beskid Niski is rich in mineral waters (Krynica Zdrój, Wysowa Zdrój), which are health resorts. It is attractive region for hiking, bicycle tourism and winter sports – twelve ski lifts (e.g. in Gorlice), camping sites and tourist farms/fields. There are remains of Łemkowie – indigenous inhabitants of the region (autochthons), cemeteries from World War I, orthodox and Uniat churches (in Bartne, Gładyszów). Furthermore, there are tourists trails/paths (didactic or natural paths) Ostry Wierch hill (at 938 m above sea level), Hucul horses stud (in Gładyszów), and the biggest health resort in Poland (Krynica Górska). Among Wysowa Zdrój attractions one should enumerate aquapark and swimming pools in spa resorts: (in Biawena and Glinik), horse riding centres: "Jaśmin,, and "Osława", rope park (in Zacisze), ski lift "Ramis", tourist trails, sport field „Orlik”, in winter- ice rink, and tennis court. All the tourist attractions attract many tourists each year, both during summer and winter seasons. Main attractions in Wysowa Zdrój are also: „Zdrojowy Park” as the main aim of walks, „Łopaciński Valley”, „Wysota Hills”, „Jawor Hill” with Orthodox church on the top, well-developed horse riding tourism, for active relax – tennis, skiing, swimming, etc. When talking about natural environment in the region discussed, the author of the paper has to emphasize the following characteristic features:

- peripheral location of the region,
- mountain areas,
- distance from industries,
- lack of air/water pollution,
- wastes in Ropa river,
- car fumes,
- clean underground waters,
- first class of waters' cleanness (hard permeable soil),
- meadows - 14%, forests – 62%, grazing lands – 8%, orchards – 0,01%, wastelands – 10%, arable lands – 7%,
- high level of naturalness and low level of human's transformations.

Existing forms of natural protection in the region are as follows: Magurski National Park, Yew trees in Nowa Wieś – nature reserve, Igiełki – nature reserve, Kornuty - nature reserve, Modrzyna - nature reserve, Jasiołka' ravine - nature reserve, Millennium Reserve on Cergowa Mountain - nature reserve, Wadernik - nature reserve, Jasiołka sources - nature reserve, stone over Jaśliska - nature reserve, Jaśliski Landscape Park, South and Małopolska Region Area of Protected Landscape, Beskid Niski Area of Protected Landscape.

On the other hand, there are many threats connected with tourism industry development in the region: These are for example: clearing the forests, hunting trips, poaching, air pollution, dyeing out of tree stands.

On account of all the advantages and disadvantages of mass tourism, one should ask: **Tourism: Blessing or Blight?**⁷ The question refers to an excellent book of G. Young, which was very popular in the mid-70s and it concerns tourism industry development. When answering the question we have to take ambivalent character of tourism for granted. During World Tourism Organization (WTO) Congress in Manilla in 1980, the following thesis was put: „tourism brings more costs than benefits”. According to research⁸ the most frequent negative effects of tourism are as follows:

⁷ G. Young, 1973, *Tourism: Blessing or Blight?*, Penguin Books.

⁸ The author's research.

Table 1. Tourism impact on the region according to its inhabitants

	Tourism impact on the region	Answers (in %)
1.	People think only about money	79
2.	Lack of a sense of togetherness	53
3.	Too many foreigners	46
4.	Adverse change of destination	45
5.	Family is not a unity anymore	44
6.	Landscape is marred	43
7.	Only minority benefits from tourism	26

Source: the author's elaboration.

Additionally tourists tread odd plants and soil. They influence flora (precious species become extinct). The respondents also pointed at waste, increased tourist movement in the season, noise, fire risk, building tourist infrastructure (without any conformity with local societies and natural environment).

Other aspects of mass tourism were touched. The respondents were asked about investments and their influence on the region. The answers were differentiated, as shown in table 2:

Table 2. Tourism investments and the influence on the region

	Tourist investments cause	Answers (in %)
1.	Landscape transformation (destruction)	59
2.	Losses in natural environment	45
3.	Decrease of arable (cultivated) lands	40
4.	Limited access to sea for local people	34
5.	Problems with water (water usage)	30

Source: the author's elaboration.

According to E. Dziedzic⁹, local authorities should undertake some activities that, firstly, make it possible that tourism is integrated with social and economic life of local societies, and secondly, provide attractive tourist product to achieve the first goal. **Small scale development strategy**¹⁰ also suggests some solutions aiming at limited tourism development and reduce of external influences, as well as bigger autonomy of local authorities, who should create directions and pace of its development.

SUSTAINABLE TOURISM CONCEPTS

As we can see, tourism has many faces. In accordance with it, there are many concepts, and ideas how to make mass tourism more friendly, and first of all, sustainable phenomenon, making money at the same time. One of the popular concepts is entitled: **Hard&Soft Tourism Concept**¹¹, which presents characteristic features of so called "so far tourism", i.e. mass tourism and "future tourism", i.e. soft tourism. These two forms are opposite to each other and compared. Furthermore, according to J. Jafari¹², tourism industry brings both social and economic costs and benefits. It is presented in the table 3 below as **Balance of Tourism Concept**.

⁹ E. Dziedzic, 1998, Obszar recepcji turystycznej jako przedmiot zarządzania strategicznego. Monografie i Opracowania No 442, Szkoła Główna Handlowa, Warszawa, p. 17.

¹⁰ A. Mathieson, G. Wall, 1982, Tourism: Economic, Physical and Social Impacts, Longman, New York.

¹¹ J. Krippendorff, 1983, Wołanie o nową światową politykę turystyczną, [in:] Problemy Turystyki No 3, Instytut Turystyki, Warszawa, p. 23.

¹²J. Jafari, 1974, The Socioeconomic Costs of Tourism to Developing Countries, [in:] Annals of Tourism Research No 1/7.

Table 3. Balance of tourism

Economic	
Costs	Benefits
inflation Outflow of foreign currency Seasonal character of prices/employment and unemployment Economical/ trade fluctuations Unstable development Destroying local resources (by tourists and farmers) Local tourist infrastructure is not used by local people because of lack of money and lack of accessibility (tourist ghetto) the industrial and tourist buildings marred the landscape Destroying a landscape because of low absorption level of environment A big ecological capacity because of tourist activity Commercialization of culture, habits, customs and traditions in the destination in order to tourists' tastes and wants	Inflow of foreign currency Production of tourist products/souvenirs Diversity of economic activity Investments Using an existing infrastructure Building and improving a new tourist infrastructure Using a tourist infrastructure by local society The multiplier effect Improving a level of society supply New job opportunities for young people, unskilled people and others in farming villages
SOCIAL	
Costs	Benefits
The loss of identity Conflicts, xenophobia, prostitution, crimes, Lack of understanding Activity for a show	Financial support for culture, buildings, museums, and all heritage in the village Education improving Overcoming the barriers, for example: language, social, class divisions, religious and races. Civilizations' mixing and learning them Appreciate own and foreign social and cultural values International peace and understanding

Source: the author's elaboration on the base of J. Jafari, 1974, The Socioeconomic Costs of Tourism to Developing Countries, [in:] Annals of Tourism Research No 1/7.

CONCLUSIONS

Awareness about sustainability issues, which referred originally to the natural environment but now also covers the social, economic and cultural spheres as well as the built environment developed significantly over many years. Today, most governments, international development agencies, acknowledge that, without sustainability, there cannot be development that generates benefits to all stakeholders, solves serious and urgent problems such as extreme poverty, and preserves the precious natural and man-made resources on which human prosperity is based.

Tourism sector could not remain indifferent to the sustainability challenge of our times. This is why the World Tourism Organization (WTO) focuses its advisory and technical assistance services on policies, development guidelines, management techniques and measurement instruments that allow national and local governments, as well as the tourism industry, to incorporate sustainability principles into their decision making process and day-to-day operations. Governments have a crucial role to play in the development and management of tourism and in making it more sustainable.

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

1. Butler R., 1980, The concept of a Tourism Area Cycle of Evolution. Implications for the Management of Resources. Canadian Geographer No 24.
2. Dziedzic E., 1998, Obszar recepcji turystycznej jako przedmiot zarządzania strategicznego. Monografie i Opracowania No 442, Szkoła Główna Handlowa, Warszawa.
3. Grzywacz R., Żegleń P., 2014, The effectiveness of education to participate in the physical culture through tourism on the example of Piwniczna Zdrój inhabitants, Scientific Review of Physical Culture, Vol. 4, Issue 1, Rzeszów.
4. Guide for Local Planners, 1993, World Tourism Organization, Madrid.
5. Hosts and Guests Revisited: Tourism Issues of the 21st Century. Co-edited by: V. L. Smith and M. Brent, California State University 2001.

6. Jafari J., 1974, The Socioeconomic Costs of Tourism to Developing Countries, [in:] *Annals of Tourism Research* No 1/7.
7. Jalinik M. (ed.), 2010, *Turystyka na obszarach przyrodniczo cennych*, Białystok.
8. Krippendorff J., 1983, Wołanie o nową światową politykę turystyczną, [in:] *Problemy Turystyki* No 3, Instytut Turystyki, Warszawa.
9. Making Tourism more sustainable. A guide for policy makers. United Nations Environment Programme, World Tourism Organization, 2005.
10. Mathieson A, Wall G, 1982, *Tourism: Economic, Physical and Social Impacts*, Longman, New York.
11. Matušíková, D. 2008, Produkt cestovného ruchu ako faktor ovplyvňujúci rozvoj regiónu. (Tourism product as a factor influencing regional development) *Nové trendy v marketingu: zborník z medzinárodnej vedeckej konferencie*. Trnava, p. 255-260.
12. Matušíková, D., 2008, New global trends dominate in tourism industry. *Management 2008. (Part II.) : in times of global change and uncertainty*. Prešov: University of Prešov in Prešov, p. 643-648.
13. Pearce D., 1989, *Tourism Development*, Longman, Harlow.
14. Rapacz A., (ed.) 2007, *Gospodarka turystyczna w regionie. Wybrane zagadnienia jej funkcjonowania*, Jaremen Press, Jelenia Góra.
15. *European Union Treaty (article 2)*, *Dz. Urz. UE 2012 C 326*.
16. Young G., 1973, *Tourism: Blessing or Blight?* Penguin Books.
17. Wodejko S. (ed.), 2008, *Zrównoważony rozwój turystyki*, Szkoła Główna Handlowa, Warszawa.
18. Żegleń P., 2011, The use of public-private partnership (PPP) in the development of the tourism economy: the example of the Podkarpacie region, Poland [in:] *Acta Turistica Nova*, Vol. 5 (2011), No. 1.