

SPATIAL AND REAL ESTATE MANAGEMENT DETERMINANTS OF TOURISM SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

Alina Żróbek-Róžańska, PhD

Faculty of Economic Sciences

University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn

e-mail: alina.zrobek@uwm.edu.pl

Joanna Zielińska-Szczepkowska

Faculty of Economic Sciences

University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn

e-mail: joanna.zielinska@uwm.edu.pl

Abstract

Satisfying residents' needs is the main purpose of local authorities. Given that of the most fundamental of needs is the possibility of receiving fair income from work, local authorities should create an attractive investment climate, consistent with the directions of development described in strategic documents. One of the main directions, both for Poland as well as its individual regions and local units – gminas (communes), is the development of the tourism sector. To achieve this goal, local authorities possess tools that allow social-economic conditions to be shaped. The realization of particular tasks is a very complex process, and requires rational and active spatial and real estate management, coherent with the principles of spatial order and sustainable development.

Key words: *spatial and real estate management, tourism, spatial order.*

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1. Introduction

Social-economic development signifies the long-term process of complex transformations in a particular area, eventually leading to better living conditions for its inhabitants. Thus, such development should be considered spatially, that means for the particular area where positive changes can be observed. Modern conceptions of social-economic development are coherent with the statement that development on the national level depends on the situation in particular regions, and that local development is one of the main factors influencing regional development. Local development is shaped by exogenic as well as endogenic factors, among which special attention should be drawn to the rational use of own, unique resources (ZABIELSKA 2013, p. 316). It consists of such important elements as real income increase, positive structural changes, and better living conditions for the inhabitants of a particular area¹ (DOMAŃSKI 2004, p. 8).

In Poland, a long-lasting lack of suitable workplaces has been observed, which is caused by the

¹ Therefore, guaranteeing jobs and income that allow for an acceptable standard of living seems to be a critical element of development.

insufficient activity of economic units. At the same time, active entrepreneurs do not always include social costs in their economic calculations, such as disturbing spatial order or breaking the rules of sustainable development. Therefore, there is a need for an institution whose activities both support the development of entrepreneurship and mitigate the conflicts between private units and societies. On the local level, this task is delegated to local (gmina) authorities. Thus, one of the most fundamental tasks of local authorities is to create an attractive investment climate, expressed by the increasing number of business units and workplaces, without disturbing spatial order. Due to the fact that in market economies, local authorities cannot arbitrarily direct economic processes, they can stimulate them by improving conditions for investing. Thus, local authorities must compete for investors, which requires very skillful spatial management to create a relatively more attractive investment location.

The first step to proper spatial management is to define the desired directions of local development. These directions must be coherent with European Union, national and regional guidelines. One of the most attractive and dynamically developing sectors is tourism. Nowadays, tourism is one of the fastest developing sectors in the European economy². The European Commission considers tourism to be an important economic activity in EU countries, which contributes to employment and economic growth, as well as to development and socioeconomic integration in rural, peripheral, or underdeveloped areas. This can be confirmed by EUROSTAT statistical data - in 2013, the tourism industry accounted for 15.5% of the total industry in EU countries, and 11.4% of the total employment. A similar position of the tourism sector can be found in Polish national (*Strategia Rozwoju Kraju 2020, 2012*), regional (*Plan Zagospodarowania Przestrzennego, 2002; Strategia Rozwoju Społeczno-Gospodarczego...*, 2005), and local (strategies and development plans) documents. Thus, it can be assumed that local administration units need tourism for their own development. At the same time, the development of tourism requires well-thought-out solutions in spatial and real estate management, because tourism shapes all dimensions of space, leading to significant and noticeable transformations, and at the same time, space shapes tourism (MEYER 2011, p. 25). Such interactions require proper decisions to be made within strategic documents, planning tasks (such as defining areas designated for investments supporting tourism in studies and local spatial development plans), as well as complex public investments improving the tourism potential of the managed area.

The development of the tourism industry is shaped by many determinants. On one hand, natural, historical, cultural, entertainment, recreational or health merits are crucial. On the other hand, tourists are attracted by the accessibility of transportation and a high standard of accommodations. According to studies conducted by the Main Statistical Office: "areas attractive for tourists are those with high environmental value, i.e. sea coasts, mountains, lakes, national parks and other areas of outstanding natural or historical beauty. Many tourists also visit the biggest cities and health resorts," (*Turystyka ...* 2013, p. 48).

It is important to distinguish business/training tourism from its recreational counterpart. The first type of tourism develops around big cities, where many offices and business centers are concentrated. The latter develops in localizations which are especially attractive for spending free time. According to statistics which aggregate both types of tourism, the fewest nights spent in tourist accommodations were recorded in voivodeships located in eastern Poland, and the Opolskie, Lubuskie and Łódzkie voivodeships. On the contrary, tourists were found to spend the most nights in the Zachodniopomorskie, Małopolskie, Pomorskie and Mazowieckie voivodeships. The strong position of these four administration units results mainly from their natural and cultural value, as well as from business related tourism in the case of the voivodeship capitals (*Turystyka...*, 2013, p. 49). However, the most up-to-date studies on the preferences of tourists show that the significance of the natural environment decreases, as cognitive and sensory values increase. Therefore, the local spatial and real estate management policies should be adjusted to these new determinants of demand for tourist services.

2. New determinants of demand for tourist services

² In 2013, the number of nights spent in tourist accommodation in the EU28 reached new record level (2.6 billion), and has been continuously increasing since 2003 (with a break in 2008 and 2009 caused by the world financial crisis). In Poland, the number of nights spent in tourist accommodation reached 63 million in 2013.

Globalization poses new challenges to tourism and the need to adapt its offers to the growing needs of demanding customers. The consequences of progressive economic, demographic, psychological and sociological changes are changing trends in world tourism. Kowalczyk (2000) indicates that, in the coming years, tourism will experience new phenomena related to the parallel occurrence of "globality" and "locality". The existing tourism products will be transformed from typical products to ones which are capable of meeting the expectations of tourists in regard to entertainment, excitement and education. What is more, the importance of information technologies will increase. According to the report of the European Travel Commission, the most important directions of changes in tourism will include: demographic changes, lifestyle changes, and changes resulting from the development of the Internet, which are all shown in Table 1 [Tourism trends... 2006]³.

Table 1

New tourism trends in Europe	
Demographic changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - aging society; - increasing demand for tourism services outside of the traditional tourist season; - increasing demand for quality, comfort, safety, and cheap, quick transport; - increasing demand for products designed for people traveling alone.
Lifestyle changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - growing specialization among tourism providers caused by individual offers which are frequently chosen by tourists according to their individual needs; - growing awareness and education of the society resulting in a high demand for special offers "focused" on learning about the culture, art, history, and customs of a given region; - a partial decline in the seasonality of the tourism market –an increase in trips outside of the summer season and a growing popularity of summer destinations during the traditional winter period can be anticipated; - an ageing population and increasing concern for health are likely to result in increased demand for health tourism products and spa services; a growing interest in cultural tourism and specially designed programs for older travelers can also be expected; - in Europe, the shortage of time connected with the growing pace of life is likely to lead to more frequent but shorter trips;
Development of information technologies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - travelers will assume more and more control with a greater ability to compare prices and products on the Internet; - the growth of cheaper worldwide communication, coupled with the availability of inexpensive transport, will cause travel and tourism to increase rapidly; - the increasing usage of the Internet to find information about cultural products and to book cultural tourism is likely to continue in the near future, particularly in combination with transport services offered over the Internet; - new search and mapping services (e.g., GPS) will increase knowledge and expectations prior to the trip; - in search of new experiences, consumers will look into deepening experiential value and intensifying experiences more and more often by using special Internet websites; - new electronic payment systems will be developed, e.g., secure cards, etc. This will make it easier to transfer money and convert

³ More information can be found in: Zielińska-Szczepkowska J. *Polityka turystyczna*. [w:] *Polityka gospodarcza*. Praca zbiorowa pod red. R. Kisiela i R. Marks-Bielskiej, Wyd. Expol, Włocławek.

 currency, as well as increase the security of online transactions.

Source: Tourism trends for Europe, European Travel Commission, September 2006, pp. 1-10.

According to Kozak (2009), it is the expansion of cultural factors to areas originally assigned to nature tourism and the progressive differentiation of tourists' motivations and forms of recreation that define the direction of trends in tourism. On a global scale, there has been a noticeable shift away from viewing tourist attractiveness mainly in the light of natural factors. Innovative tourism products, for the construction of which the tourist infrastructure is the basis, play an increasingly important role in the development of tourism, providing tourists with new experiences. The growing popularity of different types of theme parks, shopping malls and even entire metropolises, all of which constitute tourist attractions, testify to the fact that natural and cultural values not only adapt to the created image of the environment, but must also compete with the man-made environment created for the needs of tourists. In this case, material values have a significant advantage over natural and cultural values because their location is decided on by the investor. The tourist infrastructure ceases to be merely a supporting factor, and becomes a condition facilitating the development of tourism, as well as an independent tourism resource, attracting tourists to a specific area.

3. Determinants of spatial and local real estate management stimulating the development of the tourism sector

The development of the tourism sector is a chance for the socio-economic development of the gmina; however, it requires well thought-out and advanced activities in spatial and real estate management of the local authorities. Current activities concerning the protection of the natural environment are not sufficient, because new trends in the demand for tourist services require much more sophisticated spatial transformations and adaptations. There are many conditions that must be met in order for the realization of public tasks supporting the development of tourism to be effective. Apart from the obvious resulting from legal regulations concerning, e.g. the functioning of territorial self-government units or environmental protection, other conditions should also be taken into consideration:

1) Current preferences of tourists

Not that long ago, the "3S's" (sun, sea, sand) seemed to be sufficient to attract tourists to a given area. However, the above formula is currently being more and more frequently replaced by the "3E's" (entertainment, excitement, education). At the same time, the increase in the number of trips, along with a decrease in number of days spent on vacation, is yet another noticeable change affecting the demand for tourist services. In addition to this, more and more elderly and/or disabled people and families with very small children are deciding to travel (MEYER 2011, pp.30-31). According to studies conducted by B.Bergier, Z. Kubińska and J.Bergier, tourists with disabilities are most willing to take part in rehabilitation camps or go on sightseeing tours (BERGIER et al. 2013, pp. 807-811), thus the issue of accessibility seems to be a crucial factor as well.

Local authorities ought to, e.g.: identify interesting places suitable for parks and thematic areas, and take them into consideration in spatial planning and management in order to provide the necessary infrastructure to satisfy the needs of tourists who are looking for active and ecological ways of spending their free time (bicycle paths, summer and winter sports facilities). The accessibility of tourist objects, adjusted to the needs of the elderly and disabled, is extremely important, as well as providing rest areas near roads and paths which are heavily trafficked by tourists.

2) Spatial order and sustainable development

In Poland, the symptoms of a lack of spatial order include, among others: use and development that is not coherent with natural, cultural, and landscape values; economically and socially wasteful suburbanization, which is destructive to the given area; a low quality of public space; a disarray of building forms and chaos in the architecture of urban complexes (*Koncepcja...* 2012, p. 31). Nowadays, however, more attention is being paid to urban green areas as a crucial element of public space. Natural areas provide social and psychological services, which are of utmost importance where the livability of modern cities and the well-being of urban dwellers and tourists are concerned (CHIESURA 2004, p. 130). According to Polish law, local authorities are equipped with tools supporting spatial order and sustainable development, such as plans and studies, and skillful spatial management (ŻRÓBEK-RÓŻAŃSKA 2011, pp. 39-48). Smart planning prevents chaotic "urban sprawl" and localizing

intensively developed urban spaces in the close proximity of ecologically valuable ones (BIŁOZOR 2007, pp.57-66).

Local authorities ought to, e.g.: introduce the priority of using already developed areas before developing new ones into legal acts (*Koncepcja...* 2012, p. 32); prevent "urban sprawl"⁴; plan and manage according to the idea of "smart growth"⁵, including:

- connecting the commercial and non-commercial use of space (SŁODCZYK 2012, p. 432) which increases the attractiveness of an area, as multifunctional areas are in a way "representatives of local culture" with high cognitive value for tourists,
- enabling access to various kinds of public spaces, and encouraging tourists to visit them through attractive architectural projects (SŁODCZYK 2012, p. 432); carefully designed, attractive (both during the day and at night), well-maintained, exposed, and accessible to everyone (even the elderly or disabled) public space invokes emotions and curiosity, as it provides the opportunity to feel as though one is a part of the unique local culture,
- locating streets, pavements and bicycle paths in such a way that creates fully-connecting systems of visually attractive roads, leading to all tourist destinations (SŁODCZYK 2012, p. 433).

3) Unfavorable effects of tourism development on the regional economy and environment

Economic development is impossible without the construction and more intensive use of already existing structures, which affects the regional environment⁶. The development of the tourism sector requires the integrated development of other elements of the spatial system to adjust it to the new economic structures in which tourism plays the dominant role. Otherwise the development of tourism can have unfavorable effects, such as placing too much of a burden on the natural environment, detrimental changes to landscape architecture, and the inefficiency of infrastructural facilities during the peak of the tourist season (MEYER 2011, p. 26).

Local authorities ought to, e.g.: plan with the awareness that the domination of only one function disturbs spatial order and eventually lowers the attractiveness of an area for tourists, adapt the communal infrastructure (such as the water-sewage network or communication network) to serve tourists in high season, and assess the results of every pro-tourism activity considering accounting for their mutual interactions.

4. Conclusion

The main challenge that local authorities must cope with is to create acceptable and continuously improving standards of living for their residents. In the case of the difficult economic situation in Poland where the lack of workplaces has been a long-lasting problem, the development of the tourism sector is considered to be an opportunity for local development. However, the development of the tourism industry must be stimulated by actions taken by the local authorities. Nowadays, the natural environment alone is not sufficient to attract tourists who expect more complex offers, in which contact with nature is interwoven with the possibility of active recreation, experiencing new cultures and values, and original forms of entertainment. At the same time, more and more elderly and disabled people are choosing to travel, and thus, tourism is shifting towards areas which are multifunctional, attractive and easily accessible. Therefore, attracting tourists requires integrated and advanced spatial and real estate management of local authorities, which will improve the attractiveness of the gmina to tourists without disturbing spatial order and sustainable development.

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⁴ The uncontrolled "sprawling" of singular urban function to rural areas

⁵ That is the economical use of space

⁶ More information can be found in the article: MITKUS S., O.R. SOSTAK, *Preservation of healthy and harmonious residential and work environment during urban development*, International Journal of Strategic Property Management (2009)13, pp.339-357.

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