

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE BORDERLANDS OF POLAND

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Abstract: The essential objective of this study has been to analyse the role and significance of political boundaries in the functioning of tourism in near-border areas. It was important to make apparent the influence of a boundary on the development of tourism structure (tourist traffic and tourist infrastructure) within near-border areas of Poland. An attempt was also made to demonstrate the manner in which changes in the functions of boundaries influence the development of tourism, as well as the extent to which a boundary may of itself represent a tourist attraction.

Key words: tourism, border, borderlands, Poland, European Union

INTRODUCTION

Borderlands usually constitute peripheries from the socio-economic point of view. They often coincide with valuable natural landscapes and are often rather little-transformed by human economic activity. Additionally, they tend to feature numerous historical and cultural attractions. They therefore possess very considerable tourist potential, albeit with that potential of itself not sufficing for the actual development of tourism. Use of such potential also depends on changes in the function of borders. The main aim of the work described here has thus been to analyse the role and significance of political boundaries in the functioning of tourism in Poland's borderlands.

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN TOURISM AND BORDERS—A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The complexity of the tourism process is such that it also poses certain difficulties where the understanding of both spatial and social processes is concerned. A strict definition of tourism in today's world is very hard to achieve, due to the overlapping of social and spatial processes (Fig.1). In this paper, tourism is defined as a system of actors, practices and spaces, participating in people's "recreation" in line with movement, and a temporal stay, away from the location of everyday life (Knafou and Stock, 2003).

Border regions are "areas whose economic and social life is directly and significantly affected by proximity to an international boundary" (Hansen 1981). They

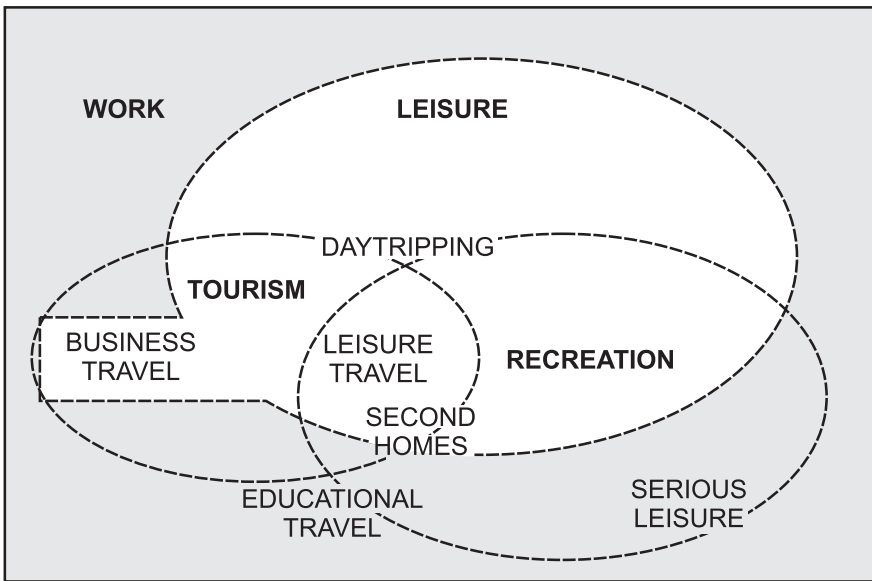


Figure 1. Relationships between the notions of leisure, recreation and tourism.

Source: after Hall 2003, modified

have a great potential for the development of tourism and there are many studies pointing to the successful development of tourism in border areas (e.g. Christaller 1955, 1963; Miossec 1977; Matznetter 1979; Essex and Gibb 1989; Arreola and Curtis 1993; Galluser 1994; Timothy 2002; Wachowiak 2006, Caccamo 2007; Więckowski 2010).

Matznetter (1979) highlighted some of the connections between boundaries and tourism, and suggested a three-fold typology of spatial relationships between the two: where the boundary line is distant from tourist areas, where a tourist zone exists adjacent to the boundary on one side only, and where tourist zones extend across, or meet at, borders (Matznetter 1979).

Depending upon their character and the function they perform, boundaries may constitute barriers or filters in regard to the development of tourism, being capable of modifying space and constituting elements underpinning integration. Boundaries influence the development of tourism through, in particular, motivations and stimulation to travel, the development of tourist infra-

structure, marketing and promotion, as well as regional brands. Borders have a strong effect on tourism. In many areas we can observe contrasting development on two sides of a border. Borders influence the spatial development of tourism. Additionally, tourism also exerts strong effects on the border landscape (Timothy 2002).

International boundaries may have significant implications for tourism, especially in terms of planning, promotion, and taxation. Borders influence tourism in many more ways (Timothy 2002). The flow of tourists, their choice of destinations, the planning and physical development of tourism, and the types and extent of marketing campaigns are all affected by the nature of political boundaries. Borders signify and are associated with an abrupt change in language, religion, political attitudes, cultural traditions, and social mores. National holidays on either side of a border are obviously different and business hours may vary. Various scales, or levels, of boundaries exist, and each of them has its own purpose. National boundaries have the most obvious impacts

on the natural environment, economic operations, and patterns of socio-cultural interaction.

It appears that tourist space is sensitive to changes in the location of boundaries and the functions they perform. A new boundary (or closing of an existing one) across a given area may give rise to the disappearance or functioning of separate spaces in the neighbouring countries (without mutual relations). In a case of boundaries disappearing (be it due to a shift or a change of function towards openness), tourist space may develop (usually jointly), but may also vanish due to the loss of an attractive location close to the border (evening-out of the offer, prices, etc.). The disappearance of a boundary as a barrier causes an increase in the flow of goods and people, and leads to a greater role for localities situated next to a border, which were of marginal significance before. A new zone of activity gives rise to linkages between two economic systems or two regions. Also of importance is the broadening

of the economic base due to the appearance of new factors.

A way of demonstrating common elements between tourism and boundaries in a conceptual perspective was proposed (Table 1).

One of the key issues associated with the tourist function in near-border areas is tourist attractiveness. It had been held previously that the attractiveness of a place as regards tourism depends on its tourist qualities, or only the existing tourist infrastructure. According to the model of tourist attraction (Leiper 1990, Lew 1987, Richards 2002) the force with which a place attracts tourists does not depend uniquely upon its tourist qualities. The influence of the most important elements on the tourist attractiveness of a near-border area is shown in Fig. 2.

Borders influence the development of specific kinds of tourism in borderlands. The forms of contemporary tourism in near-border areas are first and foremost constituted by shopping, gastronomic, leisure, health

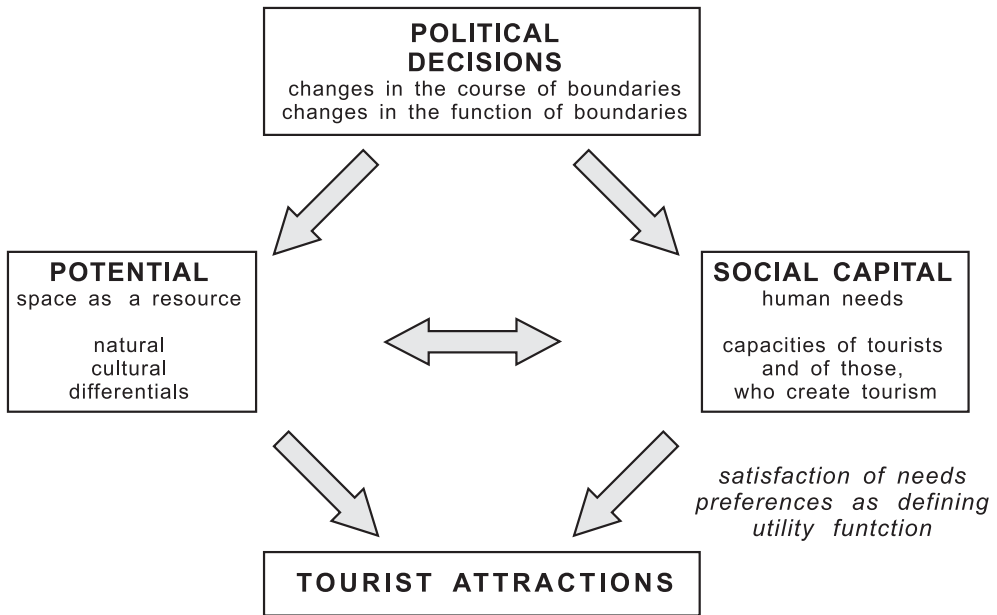


Figure 2. Influence of the most important elements on the tourist attractiveness of a near-border area

Source: author's own elaboration, after Więckowski 2010

Table 1. Similarities and differences in the interpretation of the phenomena of tourism and boundary (along with near-border areas).

Concepts and notions	Boundaries and borderlands	Tourism
peripherality	Marginal space from the social and economic points of view	Specific tourist attractiveness of the peripheries, mainly entailing the value of the natural environment (Christaller 1955, 1963)
dependence	Boundaries and borderlands are dependent upon political decisions, and upon the economic development of the centre, with, additionally, path-dependence	Tourism as dependent upon its capacities and needs, and upon economic development; development path dependence
spatial discontinuity	barrier, separating two national socio-economic systems	Unstable system (cyclical connections), separation of area of emission from area of reception
socio-economic and political differences	Separation of two national state organisms	Differences decisive for the appearance of tourist traffic (e.g. conformity with Ullman's Triad)
perception	The boundary is a barrier (depending upon the degree of formalisation), but people usually perceive it to be a greater one than it is in reality (the mental barrier)	In perceptions, mental space is a reflection of imageries, a pattern, a symbol (mental space is not always identical with real space)
symbolism	Symbol of the boundary—as a barrier (a wall) or, in the European Union representing integration and cooperation; the boundary and transboundary setting show the international character (globalisation) in the local perspective	Tourism shows the international character (globalisation) in a local setting (glocalism); Selected elements may have symbolic value and hence function as tourist attractions, at the same time being conducive to the protection of natural and cultural heritage
the encounter of cultures	A boundary brings a meeting of neighbours and may constitute an element in integration, cooperation and linkage	Encounters between different lifestyles of tourists and locals (in conformity with the theory of exchange)
synergy	A boundary is an element of modernisation and an impulse for economic growth; in the EU it constitutes a specific locus of access to financial means	The synergy effect, supporting modernisation; the modernisation element, frequently its indicator, development of tourism is an impulse for economic growth; an important factor underpinning financing from EU funds
integration	Currently an important element in the development of near-border areas, it is constituted by political, economic, social and spatial integration	Tourism may constitute an element integrating people and, in a sense, areas; it is a factor facilitating socio-economic integration

Source: Więckowski 2010

(medical), transit, various forms of nature-oriented, cultural (including urban) and event-oriented tourism. Tourism in areas adjacent to boundaries or borders is based primarily on “otherness”. It is common for

attractive objects in peripheral areas to be constituted by elements of the natural environment alone. In the borderlands of various countries, especially areas of the mixing of different cultures and religions, an inter-

est as regards tourism is also represented by the cultural landscape, along with numerous historical monuments and urban patterns. The differences resulting from the existence of a boundary between two separate state organisms in particular provide a basis for shopping (and so shops and shopping centres, including tax-free shopping facilities, on, for instance, ships), use of services (catering, accommodation), culture (museums, historical monuments, etc.), as well as interest in other, different elements (including, in particular, the natural environment).

Borders can function as tourist attractions. Some people cross borders just so they can claim that they have been in a different country or particular place (Timothy 2002). Closed borders may also constitute attractions to be visited (as with the border between the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, i.e. the so-called Demilitarized Zone or DMZ).

TOURIST SPACE WITHIN THE BORDERLANDS OF POLAND

The Polish borderlands are characterised by conditions favourable to the development of tourism, as is underlined by researchers in: the Polish-Russian borderlands (Korneevets and Dragulieva 2004, Palmowski 2007), Polish-Lithuanian borderlands (Kałuski 1992), Polish-Belarusian borderlands (Proniewski, Proniewski 2007), Polish-Ukrainian borderlands (Miszczuk 2007), Polish-Czech borderlands (Lamparska 2003, Potocki 2009), Polish-Slovak borderlands (Więckowski 2002, 2004; Ptaszycka-Jackowska and Baranowska-Janota 2003) and Polish-German borderlands (Meyer 1996, Liszewski 2003, Węclawowicz *et al.*, 2006). The functioning of tourism in these areas is associated mainly with the processes of transformation, integration, globalisation and modernisation. The capacity for tourism to develop is decisively influenced by general conditions, endogenous potential and path dependence. The primary impact on the functioning of tourism in near-border

areas is exerted by changes in the functions of boundaries and increased mobility in society (due in turn to increased wealth and leisure time, needs, and fashion, as linked with a wish to undertake tourist trips).

Tourist traffic is concentrated in the most attractive localities¹. The centres of such concentrations are along the coast (at Świnoujście, Międzyzdroje and Dziwnów, and—on the Vistula Spit—at Krynica Morska); in the lake districts known as Lubuskie (in Łagów), Mazurian (in Mrągowo), Suwalskie and Augustowskie (in Suwałki and Augustów), and Łęczyńsko-Włodawskie (in Włodawa and Okuninka); in the mountains (Jelenia Góra, Szklarska Poręba, Karpacz, Duszniki Zdrój and Kudowa Zdrój in the Sudety, and Zakopane, Wisła, Ustroń and Krynica Zdrój in the Carpathians); in larger cities (Szczecin, Białystok, Gorzów Wielkopolski and Katowice) and in localities where transits takes place (like Słubice and Cieszyn) (Fig.3).

Tourism plays a key role in Polish borderland areas (Kornak *et al.* 1983; Kałuski 1993; Lijewski 1994a; Zygodlewicz and Koczurek 1994; Mikułowski and Wyrzykowski 1995). Depending upon the criteria adopted, borderlands account for 30–50% of accommodation infrastructure, and for 25–45% of the tourist traffic in Poland. Analysis of the structure to tourist traffic in provinces adjacent to the Polish borders makes it clear that domestic traffic dominates in each of them.

¹ Research on tourists could cause some problems in the interpretation of tourism traffic data. This leads us to the over- or underestimation of the scale and nature of tourism development. As with all studies on tourism, the analysis in this paper is supported by a relatively poor and inconsistent base of underlying data and information. Official estimates are known to contain very large errors both overstating and understating actual stocks and flows. Additionally, the data and their interpretation depend on the definition of tourism. The information presented in this paper has been derived from the existing national data on tourism. A majority of data used were prepared by the Institute of Tourism and the Central Statistical Office (GUS). The data on border traffic has been derived from the Border Guard of Poland. The paper restricts its scope largely to evidence from secondary data, though clearly many derive from surveys and non-official data, especially where the spatial aspects of tourism development are concerned.

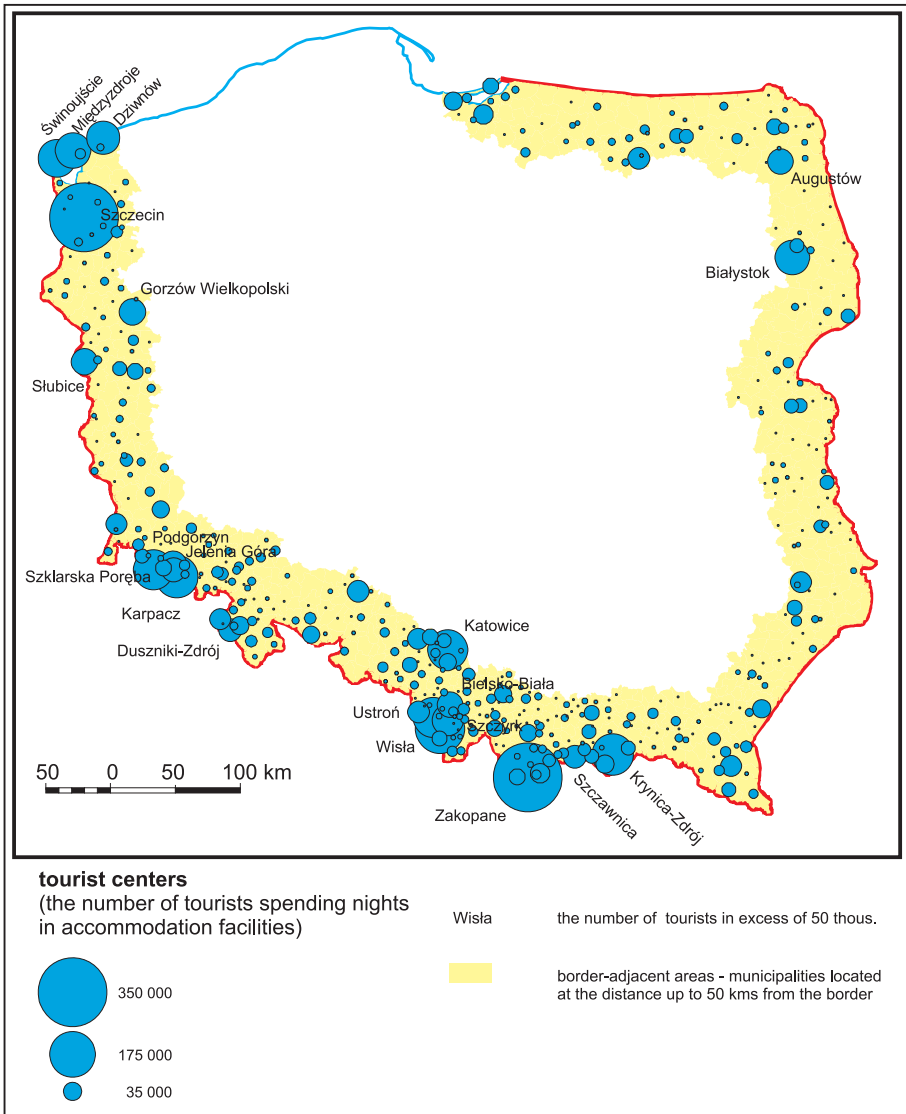


Figure 3. Tourist traffic in the Polish borderlands (by municipality).

Source: author's own elaboration on the basis of data from Regional Data Bank of the Central Statistical Office, 2007

It is usual for there to be a major contribution from traffic, originating in the given province (almost 50% in Podlaskie, more than 25% in Zachodniopomorskie, Lubuskie, Opolskie, Śląskie, Małopolskie and Lubelskie provinces), or else from neighbouring provinces. The magnitude and distribution

of tourist movements confirm the thesis that short-distance traffic predominates. The situation as regards international tourist traffic is similar. Likewise, traffic originating from the country closest beyond the border of a given province is also dominant. Thus, in provinces bordering with Germany, it is

Germans that are the foreigners who prevail. For example, in Dolnośląskie and Lubuskie provinces they account for more than 25% of tourists, and in Zachodniopomorskie for more than 15% of the total. In turn, in the provinces situated along the eastern border, it is either Ukrainians that dominate (in Lubelskie and Podkarpackie provinces more than 25% of all tourists), or Belarusians (close to 20% in Podlaskie province). Analysis of the sizes of flows makes apparent the level of dependence on tourist traffic originating from within the same province, with the exceptions of Warmińsko-Mazurskie and Podkarpackie provinces. It should be emphasised that the main group of tourists in Lower Silesia is constituted by Germans, and in Podkarpackie province by Ukrainians.

In municipalities situated up to 50 km from the border the share of Polish tourists among all tourists is 80%. Within the Polish borderlands, municipalities with a preponderance of domestic tourist traffic are in a clear majority, with a particularly marked concentration of them to be noted in the Carpathians, in the eastern and central parts of the Sudety Mts., and in the Polish-Russian and Polish-Lithuanian borderlands (Fig.4.).

The average duration of the stay of a tourist in accommodation facilities in the Polish borderland zone is 3.3 days. In the majority of municipalities, short-term stays (of up to two nights) dominate, along with medium-term ones (of 2 to 4 nights). The short term stays occur mainly in towns and in localities situated along transit routes. On the other hand, the longest tourist stays (in more than 30 municipalities the average duration of a stay exceeds 7 days) are observed in health-resort and leisure-oriented municipalities.

In borderlands, people's crossings of the border constitute an important factor in development even if the stay is of just a few hours' duration. Border traffic in Poland was the subject of research by: Lijewski (1994b) and Komornicki (1999, 2003). Analysis of traffic across the border indicates that:

- in the years 1980–2000, there was a dynamic increase in all cross-border flows, including in the number of single-day visitors, as well as tourists coming to and from Poland; post-2000 there was initially (during the first 2–3 years) a significant drop, followed by a stabilisation of numbers of both tourists and visitors;
- within the overall number of inward tourists, there is a very high share of tourists and single-day visitors from neighbouring countries (the single-day visitors from neighbouring countries constituting 91.5% of all such visitors; while the tourists from neighbouring countries spending at least one night in Poland account for 66.1% of all tourists—albeit as compared with a figure as high as 79.7% in 1996);
- there are lower shares noted for Poles (especially tourist Poles) visiting neighbouring countries than for foreigners coming to Poland;
- there are imbalances in tourist traffic and in the movement of visitors across each border and with each neighbour; in a majority of cases the traffic towards Poland is heavier than that from Poland, the opposite situation only being observed for the southern borders with the Czech Republic and Slovakia;
- there are low shares of true tourists among the overall numbers of people crossing state borders (Więckowski 2010).

THE INFLUENCE OF BORDERS ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN POLAND

In Poland's communist era (1945–1989) the closed nature of borders was a decisive factor ensuring clear-cut barriers to flows of people. Indeed, border zones even faced an additional difficulty with the development of tourist infrastructure, inasmuch as the locating of businesses in border zones in general, and near-border areas in particular, was definitely “discouraged”. It was thus of key importance to this study that it be possible to confirm the pre-1989 existence

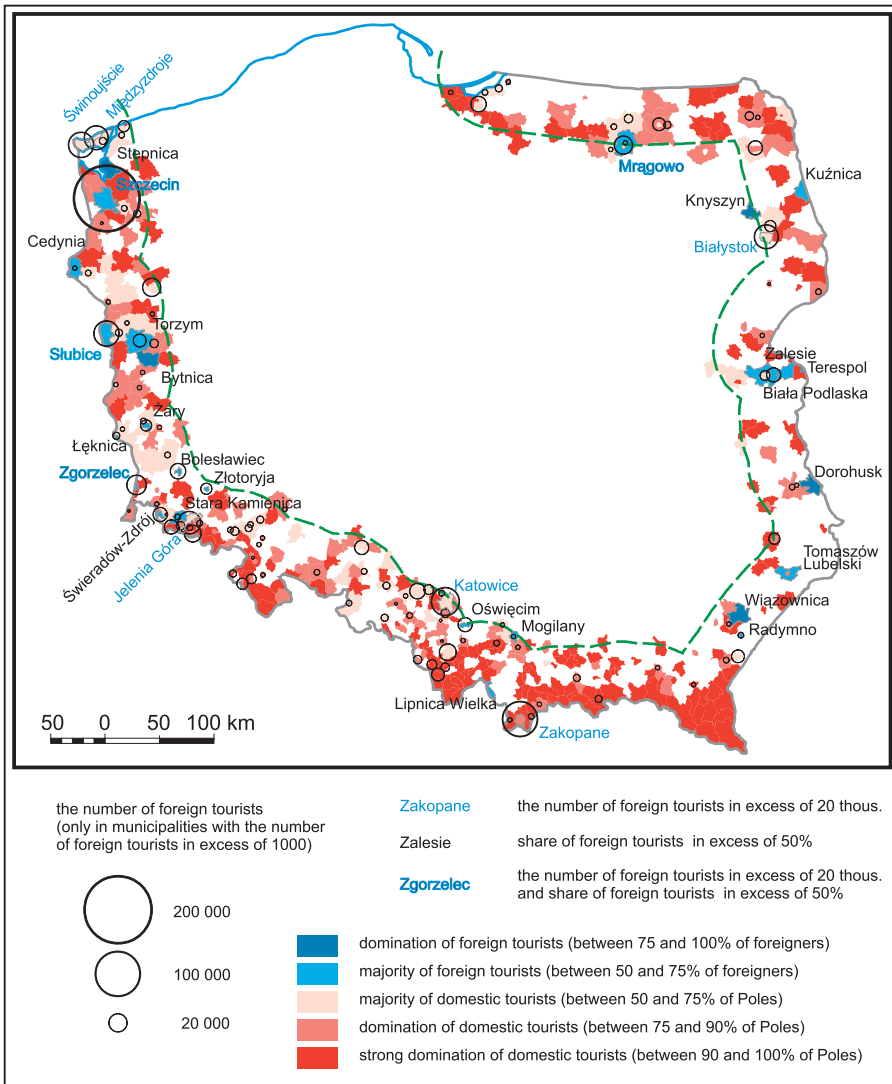


Figure 4. A typology of areas in terms of origins of tourists taking advantage of accommodation facilities, according to municipalities.

Source: author's own elaboration on the basis of data from Regional Data Bank of the Central Statistical Office, 2007

of a clear and strong barrier effect that constrained, not only cross-border mobility, but also the development of tourism anywhere in the vicinity of a border. In the event, it did prove possible to confirm that barrier-borders did exert a disadvantageous influence on the development of tourism in their

vicinity, and that flows across the borders remained at a low level.

On the other hand, this existence of borders that were genuine barriers, as well as of border-adjacent areas that remained isolated combined to ensure that the quality of the natural environment was quite often

higher than elsewhere in these areas, the result being the establishment of a number of areas of legally protected nature on or near Poland's borders.

Where tourism could function at all, it did so entirely within the domestic setting, with there being no possibility of developing transboundary tourist regions. Yet, paradoxically, it was ultimately the existence of that limited level of tourism that provided arguments, and even pressure, for borders to be opened up, or at least made accessible to temporary crossing (as with the so called tourist conventions in the Carpathians).

After 1989, the process by which borders began to open up was a hallmark of a changed function. There was now at least a genuine new impulse for tourism to develop in areas adjacent to state borders. The opening-up of borders initiated a process whereby flows increased thanks to the fact there were differences between neighbouring areas across the border, as well as in relation to the needs of people. Then as now, the decisive element underpinning the crossing of borders is human need, alongside people's capacities to actually make crossings. Involved here are such elements as the desire to trade or do shopping, as well as to take some recreation or seek pleasure.

Beyond that, human behaviour can be seen as multi-motivational, implying a range of motives for the behaviour observed (be this conscious or unconscious—partial or entire). What this means is that most trips have continued to be taken with multi-motivational underpinning, even if behaviour patterns have been found to exhibit gradual change. Since the beginning of the transformation period in border areas, four purposes underlying transboundary mobility have been dominant: trade, shopping tourism, transit, and tourism based around natural assets (mountains suitable for skiing). Proper tourism, that is—leisure- and health-oriented resembles shopping tourism (purchases for one's own needs) in being engaged in by wealthier persons (e.g. Germans) in a country with a lower wealth indicator (e.g. Poles in Slovakia).

The opening up of borders has constituted a new stimulus for the development of borderlands. New attractions, needs and capacities have been put in place steadily. General systemic changes help with the use of endogenous potential, which can be modified through an uncovering of new resources and innovations. Increases in traffic help in the development of tourist infrastructure that services it. Hence, new tourist infrastructure is developed, along with accompanying services, or else existing ones are extended. This process is supported by economic and social changes that help increase the significance of tourist movements, as closely associated with increased leisure time and wealth. Given wise policies and investments, these processes become impulses behind the appearance and increase of tourist space, and they trigger off economic development.

With the systemic transformations, a change in the ways borderlands are perceived has taken place. Tourism, and especially tourist traffic, is ahead of other effects of integration. It has been noted that tourism in borderlands constitutes:

- an element in integration, the abolition of myths and stereotypes, the lowering of language barriers and barriers as regards mentality, etc.,
- a source of income and means of generating improvements in the quality of life,
- a source of internal change (thanks to effective use of endogenous potential),
- a source of external change stimuli (via inflows of tourists on the one hand, but also EU and domestic funding on the other),
- an essential element in the linking of neighbouring countries.

In the borderlands of Poland, use is being made of specific financial means for the development of tourism. EU funding is the main component to investments in the domains of leisure- and nature-oriented tourism. However, three fundamental observations apply in this context:

- the primary beneficiaries of the development and of funding are local people, not visitors,

- funds from the EU represent the dominant means by which activity is stimulated, along with the development of borderlands (especially those that are truly peripheral and usually poorly accessible),

- use of public funds (assistance from the EU) for the purposes of developing tourist (recreational) infrastructure in regions without tourist traditions serves these areas themselves, and not the tourists from the outside; therefore, these means are not so much used for the development of the tourist sector, as for improving the quality of life of inhabitants (e.g. the organisation of special events serves in strengthening transboundary connections of the local population).

The boundary is an important element, stimulating regional and local development, on the basis of tourism, in particular. New tourist space is currently observed to be developing, with functions changing and the tourist infrastructure brought closer to the boundaries. Furthermore, the formation of new transboundary patterns takes place. Integration processes are nowadays based mainly on the use of space on both sides of a border—in areas that can hardly be called fully-developed transboundary regions.

Within borderlands, tourism is considered the most important branch of the economy, and one that is often treated as the sole opportunity for development, at the same time becoming the primary domain of integration.

Currently, economies are characterised by a shift in the functional development of regions towards the services sector, including also as regards opportunities related to tourist development. In upcoming years, the development of transport, increase in amounts of free time, etc. will lead to more intensive competition between regions, in terms of both the seeking out of investors with a view to tourist infrastructure (as well as other—e.g. transport—infrastructure) being expanded, in order to ensure changes of function, performed by respective centres and regions, and also in terms of attract-

ing tourists. An increase in competitiveness may take place along with the development of various complementarity associations. Of essential importance will be the increase in the number of persons disbursing larger amounts of money for purposes other than the satisfaction of basic needs. Hence, the issue lies in the generation and fuller satisfaction of the secondary cultural needs of “plain people” (Krawczyk 2005). So a further increase in the significance of tourism may follow. Near-border areas may take advantage of this phenomenon. Specifically, the areas in question still have large reserves for the development of tourism at their disposal, and broader dispersion of tourist traffic is essential, not only for the economic growth of rarely-visited areas, but also for a reduction in congestion in those in which traffic is excessive. The very fact that a border area had been underdeveloped, depopulating, etc. may constitute a positive element, since a lack or relatively low intensity of settlement processes and related production activities (agriculture and manufacturing) could over a definite period entail an improvement in the environmental conditions in a given region. This effect is being observed in numerous borderlands, also, or even above all, due to a long period of their being situated not so much in a peripheral position, as in the vicinity of a well-guarded state border. Such areas have frequently gained nature-based attractiveness, and legally-protected natural areas have been established there, something that enhances tourist attractiveness in virtually every case. Yet nature-based attractiveness alone (without appropriate infrastructure and access) will not secure the development of a given region. Only a potential opportunity for development is therefore constituted. Recent studies confirm this observation in the case of Poland (see Kozak 2009).

Irrespective of functions performed, boundaries can be perceived as tourist attractions and as destinations for tourist movements. Tourism takes place when an area is attractive to tourists (e.g. on account of associations with the border, a peripheral location, or nature), and when respective

populations express the need to undertake—and have the possibility of undertaking—tourist trips.

For many tourists the very act of crossing a border is attractive. Even the crossing of a border by tourists that otherwise remain in their own countries constitutes an additional attraction of a stay. Besides, tourism, which exploits “otherness”, takes advantage in borderlands of the possibility of an immediate (just beyond the border) visit to another country, with another language, culture, and often also religion. The “otherness” is also expressed through different land use, other feasts and holidays, other dishes (culinary tourism) and products in shops (shopping tourism). Still, it is emphasised that in Poland there are as yet too few tourist attractions promoted at the very border. The main tourist destinations in Polish borderlands are rather border National Parks. Nine out of the 23 Polish National Parks are adjacent to the state border. Three more are situated close to a border. Five Parks from the above total in fact constitute Polish components of contiguous international units straddling a border (i.e. the Parks in the Karkonosze, Tatra, Bieszczady and Pieniny Mountains, as well as Białowieża NP). In Poland, more than 8 million people visit the nine National Parks adjacent to international borders each year (70% of the tourist flow in all National Parks in the country). Poland’s number one natural attraction—the Tatra Mountains (Tatrzański) National Park—alone receives around 3 million visitors a year. The National Park in the Karkonosze Mts. receives 2 million. The Pieniny National Park is in turn a destination for 800,000 tourists annually (Więckowski 2008).

Irrespective of the character of boundaries, the borderlands in two neighbouring countries are characterised by differences expressed primarily through different levels and magnitudes of tourist development, tourist attractions and tourist traffic. The differences in the level of economic development, in product and service qualities and prices, are further conducive to exchange and the undertaking of trips. The decisive el-

ement where the magnitude of tourist traffic across a border is concerned is the existence of differences (including in price) and of an emission (sending) market, as well as the elimination of barriers—mainly of a psychological nature. Population movements take place in all directions, but there are clear imbalances in this traffic.

In addition, there is a differentiation depending upon the function of boundaries. In the case of closed boundaries, differences exert a significant influence on the existence of trafficking, limiting the mobility of people (where cross-border traffic is very low). In the case of open boundaries the differences contribute to the development of trade and tourism.

SUMMARY

It can be concluded that the development of tourism in borderland areas is above all dependent on the presence of tourist attractions. It is obviously political decisions that influence the existence and functions of state borders, with recent European integration changing those functions in the direction of openness, thereby encouraging integration of neighbouring territories. Equally, the external frontiers of the EU and of the Schengen zone have been tightened again, though it remains much easier to cross them than it was before 1989.

The general liberalisation of border regimes has combined with the course of socio-economic processes (improved quality of life, broadened individual capacities, greater free time) to facilitate increased cross-border mobility. Depending on people’s needs and capacities, and in line with theories concerning exchange and choice, there has been an increase in numbers of trips and border-crossing events. The less wealthy travel to earn money, or to save it by purchasing at lower prices, while the wealthier travel for consumption purposes (to do shopping and obtain services), as well as for cognitive and leisure purposes. The reasons for travelling are diverse, and

frequently multi-motivational. Tourism proper, as a higher-level good, is still in the initial phase (tourist traffic as defined literally accounts for a couple to a dozen or so per cent of overall cross-boundary mobility).

Resulting from the increase in the number of trips, new tourist developments, supported by accompanying services, come into being, or else existing ones are extended. Tourist space develops there, where the area is attractive for tourists (e.g. thanks to attractions being associated with the boundary, peripheral location, nature). Tourism in areas neighbouring with the borders of Poland is based upon complementarity (prices, offers), trade and other services, transit traffic, and attractive nature (including in National Parks).

In every case of a borderland, the two sides of a border sustain an imbalance in magnitudes of flows and in the state of development of tourism. According to theories of regional and local development, we are dealing with asymmetry between the two parts of the borderland, and discontinuity of space, with development therefore conforming to the proposition of the mosaic.

It is very difficult to demonstrate which of the elements to the development of tourism withinborder areas is of decisive importance. For there are numerous external and internal elements, which influence to differing degrees the development and functioning of tourism within the borderlands. These elements include, in particular: degree of openness of boundaries, relations of prices and currency exchange rates, tourist offers (both tourist attractions and quality of service), fashion trends, preferences, skills in the introducing of innovation, and quality of human capital.

An attempt at a summing up can be made if we state that the decisive factors for the development of tourist space in near-border areas in the period 1989–2009 were:

- intensifying flows of people
- the appearance of a return to travelling
- specificity of the location factor in the vicinity of borders

- transitory, but also variable, differences in the state of market equilibria for particular goods, made more pronounced by changes in currency exchange rates

- transformation of the economy into the market economy and accession to the EU, and, consequently, new policies associated with the allocation of funds for the development of peripheral regions

- the synergy effect (linkage of potentials, expansion of the offer, complementarity and the advantage taken of the much broader markets of tourist emission areas, i.e. places of origin of tourists).

New hypotheses for future research appearing in the course of this study were verified in part. The most important of these are as follows:

- equalisation of prices and of quality of service, and the resultant disappearance of differences, does not have to limit the development of tourism, provided that, in the period of “prosperity”, adequate investments have been made into the tourist sector, with a consequent increase in the given area’s attractiveness; then, the border ceases to be the element attracting tourists, while the role is taken on by some other attraction—a mountain range, river or fortress, cultural events, unique gastronomic features, tourist infrastructure, etc.;

- where a boundary does not cross an area perceived as attractive for tourism, that area tends to stagnate or go into oblivion;

- openness of a boundary is not a necessary condition for the development of tourism, though it undoubtedly has a facilitating influence on the integration of tourist space and its development;

even with open boundaries that are fully permeable and do not implement the barrier or “development blocking” functions at all, such negative functions are often taken over by other elements, e.g. areas of protected nature (National Parks), poor spatial accessibility, weak social capital, lack of innovations, etc.—which represent a serious barrier to further development.

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