

Summary of the doctoral dissertation entitled:

„Sports tourism in the urban space of Lodz”

In recent years there has been a noticeable intensification of traffic related to sports. This movement is increasing the popularity of sports tourism among other forms of tourism activities. However, with regard to the length of the phenomenon, the concept of sports tourism is relatively new. The aforementioned movement related to sports and sports tourism is particularly noticeable in cities, including Lodz. Sports tourism also represents a great opportunity for cities to improve their image among potential visitors. The goal of individual cities should therefore be to skillfully use their own sports potential in conducting promotional activities.

The research problem of this study was the phenomenon of sports tourism in the urban space of Lodz. Beginning the field research and considerations related to the topic of the dissection, the definition of sports tourism formulated by H. Gibson (1998) was adopted. According to this definition, sports tourism is a trip outside the place of permanent residence to engage in sports activities for recreation or competition, a trip to watch popular and elite sports shows, as well as a trip to visit sports attractions such as sports halls and avenues of fame, sports parks and stadiums, sports museums, etc.

In addition, the research problem of this study was the relation between the various elements shaping sports tourism in the urban space of Lodz. These elements included the sports space of Lodz, including those creating it: sports infrastructure facilities, sports events organized in Lodz, and Lodz sports entities and institutions responsible for the functioning of sports in the city. In addition, organized sports events, promotional activities, and stimulators and barriers to the development of this form of tourist activity were also considered as elements shaping sports tourism in Lodz.

The spatial scope of the study included the administrative boundaries of the city of Lodz, as well as the cities of permanent residence of the respondents and Polish cities taken into account in the comparative analysis of sports space.

For the purposes of this study, the following research hypotheses were formulated:

1. The development of sports infrastructure and the increase in the number of organized sports events in Lodz contribute little to the development of tourism, as they do not significantly affect the use of assets and elements of the tourist infrastructure unrelated to sports.

2. The organization of large and distinctive sports events does not improve the image of Lodz among visitors.

The primary objective of the study was to verify the research hypotheses. In addition, the following cognitive, methodological and application objectives were also set:

Cognitive objectives:

- to characterize the phenomenon of sports tourism in the urban space of Łódź and related phenomena, such as fanotourism and groundspotting,
- to define the role and place of sports tourism among other forms of tourist activities practiced in the area of Lodz,
- identify stimulators and barriers to the development of sports tourism in the urban space of Lodz,
- identify the impact of sports events organized in Łódź on shaping the city's image among visitors,
- characteristics of promotional activities related to sports tourism and sports events organized in Lodz,
- defining the spatial range of the sports tourism phenomenon in the urban space of Łódź,
- review of existing definitions of the concept of sports tourism and an attempt to create a synthetic definition on the basis of conducted analyses and field research,
- to systematize and organize the terminology related to the concept of sports tourism.

Methodological objectives:

- to develop the author's definition of the concept of sports tourism,
- development of the author's classification of the concept of sports tourism.

Application objectives:

- to prepare a compendium of knowledge on the current state of the sports tourism phenomenon in the city space, usable by city authorities and Lodz sports and tourism organizations,
- to develop recommendations for Lodz authorities and Lodz sports and tourism organizations regarding the possibilities of developing sports tourism.

The main research methods used for the purpose of this study included: questionnaire interviews conducted during selected sports events organized in Lodz in 2019-2022, expert interviews on the phenomenon of sports tourism in Lodz, and a focus study on the terminology

of sports tourism. In addition, a literature search was also carried out related to: sports tourism, Lodz sports space and other related issues related to the subject of the work. In addition, an inventory of facilities shaping Lodz's sports infra-structure was also carried out.

The completed research process and the collected source material enabled the author to verify the research hypotheses and realize most of the assumed objectives of the work. The formulated research hypotheses were verified as follows:

1. The development of sports infrastructure and the increase in the number of organized sports events in Lodz contribute little to the development of tourism, as they do not significantly affect the use of assets and elements of the tourist infrastructure unrelated to sports - hypothesis confirmed in full,
2. The organization of major and distinctive sports events does not improve the image of Lodz among visitors - hypothesis partially confirmed.

The conducted research procedure and the obtained results of the field survey showed that sports tourism in the urban space of Lodz does occur, but it is a marginal phenomenon. Compared to other forms of tourist activities, it is less popular. This phenomenon in the urban space of Lodz is perceived primarily through the prism of the development of sports infrastructure, as well as the growing number of organized sports events. Taking into account the spatial range, the phenomenon of sports tourism occurs in most parts of the Lodz area, but to the greatest extent in the central and western parts of the city. In the case of Lodz, organized sports events also generate a small amount of tourist traffic. The field survey also showed that the biggest barrier to the development of sports tourism in Lodz is promotional activities. Improving this element can certainly increase the popularity of this form of tourist activity, especially on the occasion of organized sports events.