

PROFESSOR WŁODZIMIERZ KUREK



Prof. dr hab. Kurek has been an employee of the Institute of Geography and Spatial Management of the Jagiellonian University since 1971. He was awarded a doctoral degree in natural sciences in 1979 at the Faculty of Biology and Earth Sciences on the basis of a dissertation, written under the supervision of Prof. Karol Bromek, entitled *An Attempt at a Typology of Farms in the Żywiec Beskids based on the communes of Jeleśnia, Koszarawa, Stryżawa and Zawoja*. In 1991 he obtained his habilitation in natural sciences, based on his academic achievements and the thesis entitled: *The Influence of Tourism on Social and Economic Changes in the Rural Regions of the Polish Carpathians* (1990). In 2006 Włodzimierz Kurek gained the title of professor for the entirety of his academic, didactic and organisational work, including the book *Tourism in the Mountains of Europe: selected issues* (2004).

Prof. Kurek's academic accomplishments include more than 150 published works (in Poland and abroad), among which are several books and with several more as editor. These may be grouped into two sub-disciplines of geography: the geography of the village and the geography of tourism. At the beginning of his academic work, he dealt with the geography of the village and farming, focusing his research on the region of the Carpathian Mountains. The research was related to the varied structure of the agricultural use of land depending on natural as well as demographic-economic factors, and to the possibility of economic activation of rural areas. At the beginning of the 1980's Prof. Kurek extended his research to tourism issues. His academic interests were mainly

focused on the relation between tourism and rural areas, including farming, and they resulted in works concerning the social and economic changes in villages under the influence of tourism, as exemplified by selected examples and tourist regions in the Carpathians. Such an academic trend is also reflected in his habilitation dissertation which discusses the influence of tourism on social and economic changes in those regions.

In the middle of the 1990's, Prof. Kurek became a member of a research team of geographers from Central and Eastern Europe whose purpose was to analyse social and economic changes in rural regions during the period of the political transformation. The results of such analyses were published as several articles in *GeoJournal* and as chapters in books: *Poland*, [in:] D. Turnock (ed.), *Privatization in Rural Eastern Europe. The Process of Restitution and Restructuring. Studies of Communism in Transition* (Edward Elgar 1998); *Variations in Technical Infrastructure and Private Economic Activity in the Rural Areas of Southern Poland* (1999); *The Population of the Polish Countryside: Demography and Living Conditions* (GeoJournal 2000); *Agrarian Change*, [in:] D. Turnock (ed.), *East Central Europe and the Former Soviet Union: Environment and Society* (Arnold 2001), *Sustainable Agriculture*, [in:] D. Turnock (ed.), *East Central Europe and the Former Soviet Union. Environment and Society* (Arnold 2001) (together with B. Górz).

Recently, Prof. Kurek's interests have focused on changes in the tourist sector in Poland during the period of political transformation, concepts for the harmonious development of tourism, and problems of the development of tourism in mountainous regions. Moreover, he is an academic editor and co-author of the university handbook entitled *Tourism* (2008), and an editor and co-author of the two-volume textbook: *Tourist Regions of the World* (Vol. 1. *Europe*, Vol. 2. *Regions Outside Europe*, 2012). He was the author of the major part of a two-volume textbook published by the PWN publishing house, entitled *Tourist Geography of the World*, edited by Jadwiga Warszyńska (six editions between 1994 and 2001).

He has been a reviewer in several dozen doctoral and habilitation degrees, and for an academic professor's degree. He is a member of the Academic Councils for 'Tourism' and 'Management and Education', as well as a permanent reviewer on several geographical journals. He has given several dozen lectures during Polish and foreign conferences, and has taken part in numerous exchanges at European universities. He carried out research in the Alps and in the Massif Central in France and, for a few months, conducted field research on agriculture and tourism in Africa.

In 1994-2016, at the Institute of Geography and Spatial Management of the Jagiellonian University, he performed the function of director of the Department of Tourism and Health Resort Management. He was a co-organiser and director of the Postgraduate Course in Environmental Protection and Development as well as a founder, co-organiser and director of extramural studies in geography with the specialisation of *Tourism*. Moreover, in 1998-2010 he was employed as a full professor at the University of IT and Management in Rzeszów where he taught students on the *Tourism and Recreation* specialisation.

He has supervised ten doctoral students, and is supervising five more while more than 260 students have graduated with an MA in geography under him.

Prof. Kurek is a member of the Polish Geographical Society, the Commission of Geographical Sciences (of the Polish Academy of Sciences), and the Polish Tourism Association. He has obtained several awards from the Jagiellonian University for his academic activity as well as didactic and organisational achievements. He has been given the Medal of the National Education Commission, the Gold Medal for Long Service and the honorary award 'Za Zasługi dla Turystyki' (For Tourism Services).

Miroslaw Mika