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## URBAN 'TOURISM EXPLORATION SPACE': THE EXAMPLE OF ŁÓDŹ

**Abstract:** The author refers to the concept of 'tourism space' published earlier, and confronts this notion with a definition of 'urban space', bearing in mind that both these 'spaces' are subspaces of general 'geographical space'. Assuming that each is distinguished on the basis of differing criteria, the author believes that the tourism function which gives rise to 'tourism space' can develop within 'urban space'. Further on, the formulation of a precise definition of urban 'tourism exploration space' is focused on, which is understood as a personal space of created in the discovery of a city. The conclusion includes three case studies of urban 'tourism exploration space' in Łódź: Bidermann family properties, Piotrkowska courtyards and the 'Green Ring of Tradition and Culture'.

**Key words:** urban space, tourism space, urban 'tourism exploration space'.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Cities as tourism destinations are nothing new in the history of world tourism but interest in them has grown considerably in recent years, and urban tourism (discovering, visiting, staying, being entertained, etc.) has become not only a permanent offer of tourism offices and agencies but it has also clearly marked its presence in academic journals and textbooks (KOWALCZYK 2005, LISZEWSKI 2008, MIKA 2007).

The aim of this article is not to discuss the attractiveness of tourism assets, the development and the organization of tourism in cities, or forms of the urban tourism. These can be found in the literature quoted in the text. The author intends to present his own opinion regarding the origins and exploitation of urban 'tourism exploration space'.

His work (published several years ago) presenting the research concepts of 'tourism space' and 'urban tourism space' (LISZEWSKI 1995, 1999), features a generally defined 'tourism exploration space'. In this article the author attempts to find a more precise definition, as well as to identify it within the 'urban space' of Łódź. In order to achieve this aim it is necessary to treat such space as the subject of study and to recall the general idea of 'tourism space'. With these two basic notions in mind ('urban space' and 'tourism space'), the author will present a definition of urban 'tourism exploration space' and afterwards identify it through the giving of examples.

### 2. 'URBAN SPACE' VS URBAN 'TOURISM EXPLORATION SPACE'

The meaning of a 'city' varies in different parts of the world and so researchers look for characteristic features and measures in order to find out if a population concentration in a given space is a settlement known as a 'city'. Without going too deeply into a discussion of the definition, it is worth noticing that some geographers began their research in order to define urban space in the pursuit of finding a more precise definition of an urban form of settlement (LISZEWSKI 1997). Researchers assume that a 'city' is based on population concentrating in a small area of 'geographical space'. This concentration leads to transformations and an independent organization of the space it occupies, whose characteristic landscape distinguishes it from general 'geographical space' (DZIEWOŃSKI 1956).

Following this line of reasoning, attempts were made to describe in more detail the particular organization of the part of 'geographical space' known as 'urban space', as well as to identify the factors responsible for the way it has developed. More thorough analyses show that the organization of urban space is determined by five groups of factors (LISZEWSKI 2008):

a) legal and administrative: which determine the formal organization of this space, i.e. its subdivision (plots, streets, squares, etc.);

b) morphological: which express intended or accidental urban complexes and their heritage in geographical space (the historical development of the city);

c) functional: which are responsible for ascribing different functions typical of cities to space (industry, crafts, trade, transport, housing industry, etc.);

d) administrative and institutional: which determine the current management of urban space by local and state government, as well as other institutions;

e) organization of 'social life': also known as socio-cultural factors, responsible for the social organization of space.

A review of the factors which affect the organization of urban space points to an immense complexity and diversity, and this reason alone makes areas attractive to tourists.

Urban space, which encompasses cultural heritage, contemporary development forms, as well as the variety of social life, is becoming attractive not only for day trips, but also for longer stays. Can we then treat urban space and tourism space as one? The answer to this question requires a definition of tourism space and its relation to urban space.

According to LISZEWSKI (1995, p. 94), tourism space is 'a functionally distinct part (subspace) of general geographical space, i.e. space which includes the natural elements of the Earth's surface (natural environment), the lasting effects of human activity (economic environment), as well as the human environment in the social sense'. Interpreting this definition, the author says that tourism space is always a product of human activity, with the geographical and social environment being used for tourism purposes (recreation, learning, experience, impressions). It is discovered and developed, so according to this definition, tourism space does not exist without the tourist, the one who engages in different tourism activities and creates tourism space. Different forms of tourism activity create different types of tourism space. LISZEWSKI (1995) differentiates five main types of tourism space, based on human tourism activity in geographical space:

- exploration space (discovered for the purpose of tourism activity);
- penetration space (tourist 'reconnaissance');
- assimilation space (direct contacts between tourists and local inhabitants);
- colonization space (permanent tourism development);
- urbanization space (the transforming of tourism areas into residential areas, mainly for urban inhabitants).

This general notion of tourism space and its subspaces can be related to an analysis of the

development of the tourism function in urban space. In order to apply this concept to cities, however, we must recount the general assumptions of these two kinds of spaces.

Firstly, we must remember that both urban and tourism spaces are subspaces of general geographical space.

Secondly, each of these spaces was identified on the basis of a different set of criteria. For urban space it was its organization, and for tourism space, its tourism function. Acknowledging this fact makes it clear that both subspaces may occupy the same part of general geographical space.

We can conclude that the tourism function may develop within urban space, and in this way 'urban tourism space' can be identified, including the five types mentioned above. A reverse relation is also possible, where an urban space is created within tourism space (LISZEWSKI 1999). Having stated this we can focus now on urban 'tourism exploration space'.

As said before, some authors make 'tourism exploration space' a part of tourism space discovered for the purposes of tourism activity. This means that it is a new tourism space. In order to give a precise explanation of such 'exploration spaces', we must divide them into actual and personal 'tourism exploration spaces'. The actual spaces, whose number is decreasing, include those parts of the Earth which are being discovered for educational, scientific or emotional reasons. There are fewer such areas today, and they are mainly the summits of high mountains, the sources of equatorial rivers, the Antarctic and Arctic, the sea and oceanic deeps. The most spectacular explorative expedition of the recent decades was the first landing on the moon, if we assume that its purpose was not only learning or observing, but also ordinary curiosity and a need for strong impressions, which nowadays motivate, for example, high mountain exploration. This form of tourism also includes trips in space when people travel to a space station orbiting around the Earth, as well as some other extreme expeditions by balloon or plane.

The real exploration spaces in the Earth's geographical environment are disappearing, although people still dream of discovering new unknown places. Personal exploration space is the space of each individual discovering places or areas not known before. This is done alone or in a small group and this search and discovery of something new, and unknown, is as important to the individual as reaching a mountain summit for the first time to a Himalayan mountaineer.

Personal 'tourism exploration space' is a result of curiosity to discover new, unknown parts of geographical space, whether they are scarcely populated

areas of Australia or the centres of huge cities, inhabited by millions of people.

It is not surprising that we are interested in personal 'tourism exploration space' in cities. However, we must explain the relation between the 'tourism exploration' and the 'tourism penetration spaces', especially as regards cities.

With reference to the works quoted before (LISZEWSKI 1995, 1999) and a more recent publication by KRONENBERG (2006) on 'tourism penetration' areas in Łódź, we will try to draw a line between 'penetration space' and 'exploration space'. The former refers mainly to areas which are prepared and appropriately developed for tourism purposes, often a strongly promoted area, well described in guide books and brochures. We can quote here the classic example of 'tourism penetration space' in Kraków, which encourages visitors to visit the Old Town, Wawel, and recently also Kazimierz, the Kościuszko Mound and some other parts of the city. In the light of KRONENBERG'S research results (2006), 'tourism penetration' areas in Łódź (visited by organized tourism groups) include Piotrkowska St, Księży Młyn, the Jewish cemetery, 'Manufaktura' and some other places which together make a relatively modest 'tourism penetration space'.

Does this mean that the discovery of Kraków or Łódź by tourists usually ends here? It does to a large extent, but there are tourists, usually individuals or those encouraged by an ambitious guide, who explore the space of these and other cities on their own, 'discovering' new places, meeting new people or experiencing the thrill of being discoverers. These are the 'tourism exploration spaces', usually not included in brochures or guide books, not advertised, which does not mean that they are less interesting to those who want to know the 'true face' of the city, region or building they are visiting. Let us look closer at such potential 'tourism exploration spaces' in Łódź.

### 3. 'TOURISM EXPLORATION SPACES' IN ŁÓDŹ: CASE STUDIES

Łódź as the only Polish large city (over 500 000 inhabitants) that has never been considered attractive for tourists, results both from its history and functions. Although it received municipal rights from King Wladislaw Jagiello (Jogaila) on 29<sup>th</sup> July 1423, it practically vegetated until the early 19<sup>th</sup> c. as a small agricultural town of no administrative or economic importance. The decree of 18<sup>th</sup> September 1820 was a breakthrough in the life of Łódź, issued by the authorities of the Polish Kingdom, which nominated

the town as a factory settlement. The decision quickly came into force and as a result a cloth producing settlement, called New Town (*Nowe Miasto*), was created in 1821-3, south of the Old Town (*Stare Miasto*), on the other side of the Łódka river valley. In 1824-8 it transformed itself into a cotton-linen settlement, called Łódka, with large areas taken up by textile factories in the valley of the Jasioń River.

This urban tissue soon became populated by settlers arriving at this 'promised land' from abroad (Silesia, Bohemia, Saxony, Wielkopolska, Germany and other west European areas) and the Polish Kingdom. The development rate of this new factory settlement is reflected in the growing number of inhabitants. In 1820 there were 767, while 10 years later in 1830, it was 4343 (PUŚ 1987, p. 19). The dynamic development was also caused by the fact that considerable sums of money, mainly from the Polish Kingdom government funds, were given to 'administrative' settlements and the entrepreneurs who had decided to settle there.

The development rate of Łódź in the 19<sup>th</sup> c. could not be rivalled by any other town in Europe: in 1820 Łódź had 767 inhabitants, and in 1914 the population number had risen to 477 862 (within the administrative city limits of that time). This means that the population during that period increased by 62 302%(!), and if 1830 is taken to be the starting point - by 11 003%. Therefore the most characteristic features are the following:

- the foundation of a new town which triggered a rapid development of industrial Łódź;
- an incredible increase in the population, mainly due to the migration from outside, first from abroad, later from closer areas;
- a change of the economic function from an agricultural town into a huge international, mono-functional industrial centre, based on textile production and other accompanying industries;
- the multi-cultural character of the city inhabitants, resulting mainly from the migration.

Quoting PUŚ (1987, p. 70), according to the National Census from 1897, the inhabitants of Łódź included Poles (46.6%), Jews (29.4%), Germans (21.4%), Russians (2.4%) and other nationalities (0.4%).

This short review of the history of Łódź and its rapid development in the 19<sup>th</sup> c. explains the lack of buildings which would be commonly regarded as attractive for tourists (castles, churches, city walls, etc.), and makes it clear why Łódź was not considered to be a tourism city. This is also confirmed in an analysis of available tourism guides recommending Łódź (ŻEBROWSKA 1996). A guide book from 1897 described nine tourism sites, including seven churches. In 1939, 54 sites were mentioned,

including 12 churches, and in 1982 the number of sites recommended for visiting reached 118, the most important of which were palaces, villas and manor houses (24 buildings). It should also be stressed that the guidebook from 1933 for the first time recommended five industrial buildings as interesting for potential tourists.

The contemporary tourism offer of Łódź is much wider. Apart from the sites mentioned above, it includes meticulously re-created traces of Jewish culture and sites connected with their extermination (the Jewish ghetto), former industrialists' palaces, museums, parks, the palm house, the zoological and botanical gardens, factory estates, the partly revitalized factory complex called '*Manufaktura*', Piotrkowska St, cultural events and many more other buildings and parts of Łódź, considered worthy of 'tourism penetration' (KRONENBERG 2006). They are directed mainly to organized groups visiting Łódź with a guide.

It appears, however, that a city of such unusual origins (an industrial city) and turbulent past where huge fortunes were gained and lost, different cultures and religions co-existed, a city splendidly portrayed in the book by Władysław Reymont and then in the film by Andrzej Wajda ('The Promised Land'), can be and should be discovered (explored) in a different way.

Alternative ways of exploring the city, suggested by the author, follow the lives and fortunes of great industrialist families, discover the 'other face' of Piotrkowska St – its courtyards, but also lead the tourist to the 'Green Ring of Tradition and Culture' in Łódź, marked out by urban planners. Obviously, there are many more 'tourism exploration spaces' in the city – as many as there are individual interests and ideas for discovering Łódź. Below, we present a few in the form of case studies.

#### **A. The Bidermann family fortune as a 'tourism exploration space' of Łódź (MACHUDERA 2007)**

The history of the Bidermann family is described in a monograph, which can be very helpful while searching for traces of their fortune in Łódź (KUŹKO 2000). The family history and especially their activity in Łódź is typical of many German families who built huge fortunes in this city, often over just one or two generations. The maker of the Bidermann fortune was Robert (Wilhelm's son), born on 13<sup>th</sup> August 1836 in Zduńska Wola, who first learnt at his uncle's in Konstantynów, and next as an apprentice at Józef Paszkiewicz's dyeworks in Łódź. On 5<sup>th</sup> May 1863 he was granted a journeyman certificate in dyeing and in the same year married Emma Adelma Braun (the Braun family came from Bohemia) and started his

own business by building a dye works on a plot of land adjacent to the Łódka river valley connected to the further industrial activity of this family.

The Bidermanns had thirteen children, who were educated and prepared to run the business in the future. Robert Bidermann's fortune was carefully estimated. At the start, the couple had 20 000 roubles (including a part of his wife's dowry). On the day of his death Robert Bidermann's possessions were worth 1684 934 roubles (he had multiplied his wealth by a factor of 84 over a period of 35 years!). Among other things, it included the factory, palaces, houses, a park and manor houses in Bedoń and Brus outside the city.

After Robert Bidermann's death, the property was taken over by his children who set up a joint-stock company and continued to develop it. It is worth mentioning that the enterprise functioned until 1945 as the Bidermann Textile Factory in Łódź (after World War II it was nationalized).

There are many buildings in Łódź which are connected with the Bidermanns' fortune and confirm the wealth of this family. We should mention here Robert's palace, built in 1878 as the family seat (2 Kilińskiego St), the former dye works (1/3 Kilińskiego St), Alfred Bidermann's palace with a coach house – currently part of the University of Łódź premises (1/3 Franciszkańska St), the Helenów Park, the main factory buildings (Smugowa St), the tenement houses at 38 Gdańska St and 99 Piotrkowska St, a villa – currently the property of the *Politechnika Łódzka* (10/12 Skorupki St).

Looking for traces of Bidermann activity in Łódź, one should also visit the Evangelical-Augsburg cemetery in Ogrodowa St, where the family members were buried. A tragic epilogue to the second generation of the Bidermann family was the death of Robert's youngest son, Bruno, who on 24<sup>th</sup> January 1945 (five days after liberation) shot his wife, Louise, his daughter Lil and committed suicide at the family seat – the palace at 2 Kilińskiego St.

#### **B. Tourism 'exploration space' behind Piotrkowska St.**

Piotrkowska St, the main and most famous street in Łódź, described in all tourism guidebooks and recommended by all the guides, is known mainly for its facades, shops, restaurants and other institutions located there. However, does what we see while taking a stroll along Piotrkowska St tell us the whole truth about the greatest 'shop window' of the city?

From the beginning Piotrkowska was a street with residential buildings, more or less attractive town houses, but also including palaces. The buildings were reconstructed and their functions changed;

generally speaking, flats were removed from the front buildings, which were turned into shops, restaurants, offices and other services.

At the time when the New Town (*Nowe Miasto*) and then the Łódka settlements were marked out, the plots of land near Piotrkowska St were rather narrow and long, which resulted in numerous outbuildings along each plot. As a result of transforming the plots on Piotrkowska St, they were tightly built with narrow courtyards. It is these courtyards which can become a very attractive 'tourism exploration space' for somebody who wants to discover the city life (ORZECZOWSKA 2008).

In order to show the tourism assets of Piotrkowska courtyards, ORZECZOWSKA (2008) classified the

elements determining the tourism originality of these spaces, and the living conditions of the tenants. The classification comprises five groups of features, as well as several dozen details:

a) courtyard components (closed plot, plot divided into segments, decorative building fronts, outside flights of stairs, balconies, windows);

b) area development (gastronomic and hotel services, galleries, cinemas, special shops, other services and crafts);

c) aesthetics (the condition of elevations, parking bans, an isolated middle, courtyard surface, the gates);

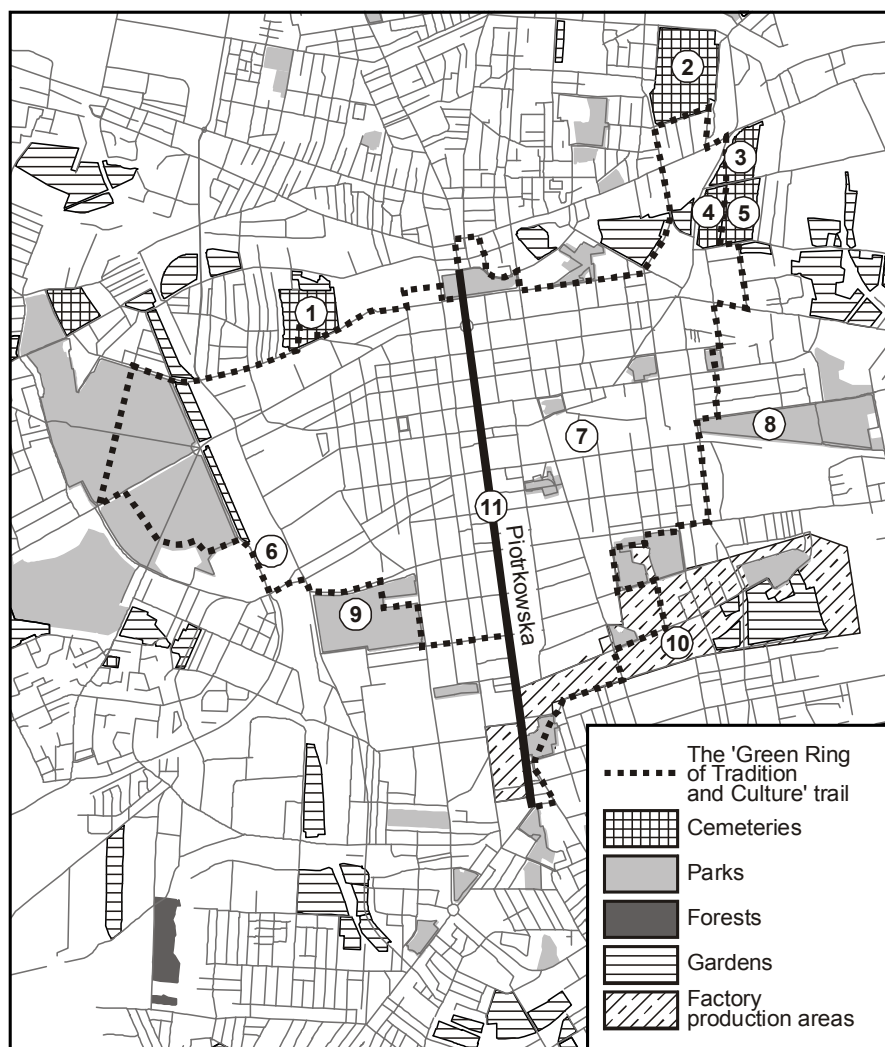


Fig. 1. An idea for a 'Green Ring of Tradition and Culture' trail in Łódź  
(source: PRUSINOWSKI 2008)

Cemeteries: 1 - the Old Cemetery, 2 - Jewish Cemetery, 3 - Communal Cemetery, 4 - Orthodox Cemetery, 5 - Roman-Catholic Cemetery; Railway stations: 6 - Łódź Kaliska, 7 - Łódź Fabryczna; 8, 9 - parts of 'Łódź forest'; 10 - manufacturing areas; 11 - Piotrkow route area  
I - The 'Green Ring of Tradition and Culture' trail; II - cemeteries; III - parks; IV - forests; V - gardens; VI - factory production areas

d) attributes (wells, hatches, outbuildings, stained glass visible from the yard, craftsmen's workshops);

e) gates (mouldings, wooden panelling, vaults, surface, wooden gates, bollards).

The elements listed above, found in the courtyards of a big city, as well as the people we meet there, will allow us to discover a different world, frequently separated from the noise and glitter of the main street only by the gate. The exploration of such spaces provides an insight into the city and gives the thrill of discovering something new and unknown.

### C. The 'Green Ring of Tradition and Culture'

The third example of 'tourism exploration space' is the 'Green Ring of Tradition and Culture', which was created part of the 'Spatial development plan for Łódź' from 1993. The ring joins fragments of greenery surrounding the 19<sup>th</sup> c complex of industrial Łódź, divided into segments, along with 19<sup>th</sup> c. industrial buildings, sports facilities or other elements of the cultural heritage of Łódź. Making an inventory of this area, from a learning and recreational perspective, PRUSINOWSKI (2008) listed the following items: 17 parks and gardens, 4 cemeteries (including two large complexes), 7 large 19<sup>th</sup> c. industrial (currently former-industrial) buildings, 10 small garden complexes, 11 sports facilities, 33 historical monuments and 16 historical complexes. This huge potential, which allows us to understand the genesis and development of industrial Łódź, is already partly prepared for tourism exploration. All in all, it has 54 information boards, and the area is to be provided with four special tourism trails which will enable tourism groups to penetrate it.

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The three case studies presented are considered capable of creating personal 'tourism exploration spaces' in Łódź, and show different opportunities for discovering the city in a different, but conscious and innovative way. Such tourism discovery in different environments is very creative and intellectually alive. However, it requires preparation, just like an alpinist getting ready for a mountain expedition equipment and food supplies must be prepared, as well as all available information about the area of exploration collected, the tourist who wants to

discover new, unfamiliar parts of the city (or other areas of geographical space) must prepare, especially intellectually (a thorough study of the area to be explored is necessary). It appears that the necessity to get prepared for these 'expeditions' is the greatest obstacle which makes exploration, including a tourism one, available only to a few. Therefore 'tourism exploration space' is primarily individual (personal) and this is also true for the discovery of cities.

*Translated by Ewa Mossakowska*

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