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## PROCESSES OF TOURISM SPACE FORMATION

**Abstract:** The article is an attempt to name and define the processes which transform geographical space and result in the appearance or disappearance of tourism space as broadly understood. The processes include restructurization (modernization and revitalization) and degradation. All of them have been discussed in the context of their actual stage of tourism space development. More attention is devoted to degradation, which has only recently been seen as a process which may lead to the creation of spaces attractive to tourists.

**Key words:** tourism space, tourism space attributes, tourism space 'actors', restructurization, modernization, revitalization, degradation

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Despite the fact that the terms 'tourism space' or 'tourism spaces' are widely used in the literature (cf. SHAW, WILLIAMS 2004, LISZEWSKI 2006), they are usually understood intuitively. Only a few authors (e.g. MIOSSEC 1976, WARSZYNSKA, JACKOWSKI 1978, HUSBANDS 1983) have attempted to formalize them in a definition. One of the most successful was made by LISZEWSKI (1995, pp. 87-103) who formulated the definition most frequently quoted in the Polish literature:

**Tourism space** is a functionally distinct part of geographical space (subspace), understood as a space consisting of the natural elements of the Earth's crust (natural environment), the long-term effects of human activity in this environment (economic environment), as well as the human environment in a social sense.

An analysis of the definitions found in the Polish literature, presented by WŁODARCZYK (2009), makes it possible to formulate a universal definition of tourism space, taking into account both its objective and subjective understanding. In the author's opinion, it can be assumed that:

**Tourism space** is that part of geographical space where tourism occurs. The necessary and sufficient condition for classifying a part of geographical space as tourism space is tourism, regardless of its volume and character. An additional condition for delimiting tourism space is the occurrence of tourism infrastructure whose volume and character allow us to define the type of tourism space. (WŁODARCZYK 2009, pp. 74-75).

An objective attribute of this definition is the statement that tourism space is a part of geographical space as understood in a general sense, while a subjective one is that it requires a tourist, a participator who not only defines it but, through his decisions also creates his own, individual space of tourism activity, its core element. From the academic point of view, a definition formulated this way is a functional definition.

The importance of issues regarding tourism space is proved by the large and growing number of academic publications (e.g. DURYDIWKA, DUDA-GROMADA 2011, KACZMAREK, KACZMAREK 2011, KOWALCZYK 2011, STASIAK 2011, WŁODARCZYK 2011a, b).

Typical components of tourism space include natural and cultural heritage, infrastructure (including tourism infrastructure) and human activity. The relative proportions of the first three components, within a given space, may vary considerably (they may occupy the majority of this space or not at all). The only objective attribute is man (the tourist). Even if we can imagine tourism space without cultural heritage or infrastructure (rarely without natural heritage), it is not possible to delimit it without the actual effects of tourism, however small it may be. In other words, tourism space without the person who makes use of it does not exist (LISZEWSKI 2005, WŁODARCZYK 2009).

Tourism space, and the phenomena which occur within it, is the primary object of study in tourism geography. The majority of researchers in this field agree with this. However, the notion itself and its semantic range still cause discussion, and some

researchers (cf. KOWALCZYK 2011) suggest that tourism space should be redefined. Nevertheless, in the author's opinion, focusing on the tourism assets (a very subjective category) or tourism infrastructure (which does not determine the function of the space if unused) seems unjustified. The author believes that the 'potentiality' of tourism space resulting from the existing assets or tourism infrastructure does not allow its delimitation, because if something is 'potential' it means that it does not yet exist at a given time and place, and there is only the possibility that it will exist in the future, provided certain conditions are met or through tourism activity (*Słownik języka polskiego* [Polish Language Dictionary] 1979).

Tourism space, as mentioned above, is a dynamic structure. However, the dynamism does not show merely in the relations between its individual components or 'actors' (inhabitants, users-tourists), but also in the development (transformations) of the space itself from the moment it is discovered by the tourist, through consecutive stages, until it ceases to exist when its functions weaken or disappear and the tourists leave. Transformations take place as a result of different processes which produce both structural and functional changes.

According to *Słownik języka polskiego* (1979), a continuum is an uninterrupted, well-ordered set of elements (infinite number), transforming one into another. In this article, **continuum** will be understood as a sequence, a consecutiveness of elements (stages, phases, etc.), not always clear-cut, very often rooted in one another (transforming one into another), connected with the **development (transformations) of tourism space**. However, it must be stressed that tourism space in this process is treated as a stage in the development of general geographic space (Fig. 1). The author also assumes that the continuum of tourism space development may be cyclical, that is individual stages not only follow one another, but may reappear after one cycle ends.

In order to describe the continuum of tourism space more accurately, the author will define and discuss such notions as 'new', 'mature' and 'old' tourism space, the tourism space development cycle, and stages (phases) of tourism space development.

## 2. NEW AND OLD TOURISM SPACES

The new, mature, as well as the old (or rather ageing) tourism spaces have been described many times in many monographs. However, not many authors have made the effort to define these notions which has made it difficult to understand and see the differences between them. One of the attempts to describe the

relation between old and new tourism spaces was made by LISZEWSKI (2006a) who states that these notions should be considered in two contexts: technical and social. The problem of the new tourism space is different depending on a given area and the elements forming it, where the space may not only be a newly-created one, but also an old tourism space which the tourist discovers for the first time.

These notions will be treated as stages in tourism space development and discussed from the perspective of the area and not the tourist. As regards tourism space development (in the context of transformations in general geographic space) when we analyse a kind of functional consecutiveness, we may speak of pre-tourism, tourism and post-tourism spaces (Fig. 1). These three basic categories are consecutive stages of space development in the context of its functions (WŁODARCZYK 2009).

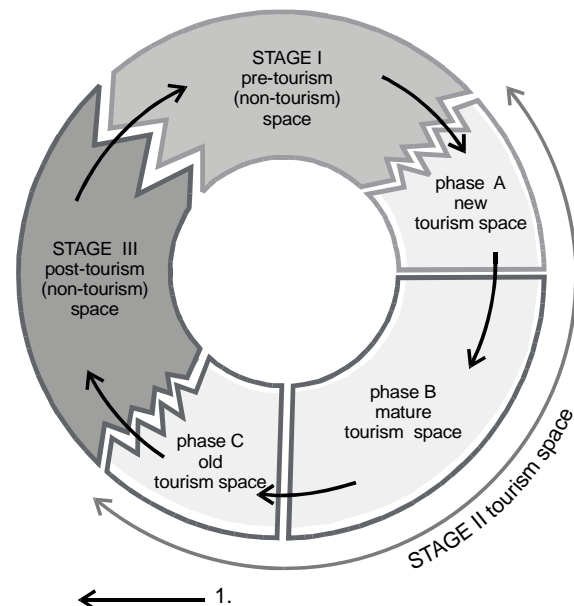


Fig. 1. From pre-tourism to post-tourism space  
Source: Author, based on WŁODARCZYK (2009)

Let us assume that the three stages in the functioning of tourism space are at the same time a full (complete) cycle of geographical space development.

Stage I - **pre-tourism space**: at this stage of development, space does not perform any tourism functions and tourism is not observed. It must be assumed, however, that the resources of this space are (or will be) conducive to tourism space development. How soon this type of space will transform itself into tourism space depends on a number of factors and conditions, such as fashion for certain areas or kinds of tourism activity, access to information, investment opportunities, or availability of time, economic accessibility, etc.

Stage II – **tourism space**: according to the adopted definition, it is the area where we observe tourism (regardless of the size and character of the area). In general, the functioning of tourism space can be divided into three basic phases, creating development continuum:

Phase A – **new tourism space**: it had tourism functions only for a short time and this is just the beginning of its development. The ‘newness’ may show in the new infrastructure, as well as the relation between the space and the tourists who have just ‘discovered’ it and undertaking different tourism activities.

Phase B – **mature tourism space**: the phase of optimum development and the use of tourism resources (from the point of view of the natural environment, reception possibilities and the local community, meeting the needs of visitors-tourists)

Phase C – **old tourism space**: has had tourism functions for a longer time, and exploited (tourism assets) or gradually degraded as regards tourism infrastructure. Possible directions of change include modernization in order to maintain the original character, or revitalization introducing new functions (possibly, replacing old ones). The symptoms pointing to the ageing of tourism space may be the changes in tourism intensity, the extent to which infrastructure is being used, the number of new investments, or the types and character of modernization activities.

Stage III – **post-tourism space**: it no longer has tourism functions and tourists have stopped visiting it for various reasons. In this case we cannot exclude the possibility that after going through consecutive non-tourism phases, as a result of the processes described below, this space will become a pre-tourism space and, consequently, tourism space again (WŁODARCZYK 2009).

### 3. TYPES OF SPACE FORMING PROCESSES

Below, the author presents the processes transforming geographical space and leading to the emergence of new tourism spaces and the ageing of existing ones.

**Process** – a sequence of consecutive changes resulting from one other, which are the stages or phases in the development of something, the development and transformation of something, e.g. a development process, a historical process, a social, evolutionary, creative process, etc. (*Słownik języka polskiego*, 1979).

In general, two basic types of process creating tourism space can be discussed: **restructurization**, which is usually supposed to lead to some expected and desired changes (e.g. functional) and increase the quality or value of the space; as well as **degradation**, which causes a decline, decreases both value and quality, and brings about a change or disappearance of some functions.

**Restructurization** – is a general term referring to restructuring and transforming in a general sense (industrial, economic, regional restructurization, etc.). It may refer to one or several areas of activity. As a wide-ranging concept, it refers to general transformations, therefore it is necessary to specify what exactly restructurization concerns and what falls into its range. (KACZMAREK 2001, p. 22).

According to the definition provided by KACZMAREK (2001), the context of activities is extremely important in space restructurization. In this article they will be understood as activities whose aims are an improvement of quality and an increase in the value of restructured space.

In old, mature and the new tourism spaces we may observe different kinds of restructurization process which change its character and functions (Fig. 2).

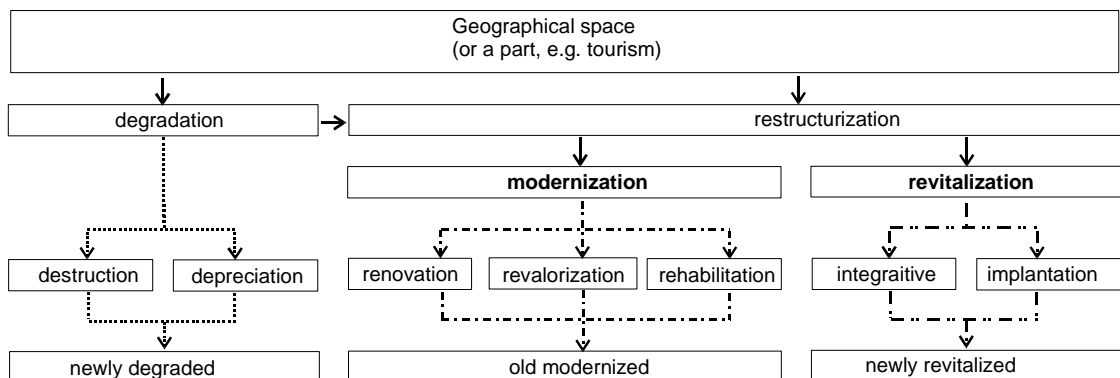


Fig. 2. Space (e.g. tourism space) restructuring possibilities  
 Source: author based on KACZMAREK (2001) WŁODARCZYK (2009 – modified)

### 3.1. MODERNIZATION OF OLD TOURISM SPACES

According to *Słownik języka polskiego* (1979), modernization means making something modern, contemporizing something. The modernization of old tourism spaces does not lead to creating functionally new ones, but only to some positive changes in the space already existing (a 'better', more valuable and more modern space is created, which meets the tourists' expectations). As shown in Fig. 2, modernized spaces (not only tourism ones) may appear as a result of different types of modernization (renovation, revalorization or rehabilitation), meticulously described by KACZMAREK (2001). Despite the fact that these types were identified in studies of urban industrial space, their universality makes them useful in reference to spaces performing other functions (including tourism). It is worth pointing out here that modernization usually begins at a certain stage of tourism space development. A very good example of tourism micro-spaces, whose quality and value increased as a result of modernization, are the historical hotels of Łódź. In the Polonia Palast Hotel, modernization meant both the renovation of the building and historical interiors and 'rehabilitation' – an 'overnight stay facility' was replaced with a 'hotel' again, regaining the stars which it had lost because it had not met the required norms before.

### 3.2. REVITALIZATION OF OLD NON-TOURISM SPACES

Revitalization is a relatively recent term in the Polish academic literature, but contrary to others which waited a long time to be included in dictionaries, it has made a quick and spectacular 'career'. In the geographical literature it is most often used in the context of structural and functional changes in urban and industrial areas (e.g. KACZMAREK 2001, MARKOWSKI, KACZMAREK, OLENDEREK 2010, KOZŁOWSKI, WOJNAROWSKA 2011). Urban tourism space is also an interesting object of study discussed in numerous publications (LISZEWSKI 1999, JANSEN-VERBEKE 2011, WŁODARCZYK 2011a). Therefore, we may safely quote some definitions, assuming that they can be applied not only to urban areas, but also to space as developed in general.

**Revitalization** – is a sequence of planned activities which are to revive the economy and change the spatial and functional structure of degraded urban areas. It is a process which may affect urban areas performing different functions, e.g. industrial, military or transport. (KACZMAREK 2001, p. 16).

**Revitalization** – a long-term and multifaceted process, integrating reparative activities in the spatial, social and economic spheres, applied to degraded urban areas which have lost self-recuperative abilities, in order to include these areas

into the urban system. (KOZŁOWSKI, WOJNAROWSKA 2011, p. 16).

From the two definitions quoted above, the former seems to be more suitable in this article, because apart from the improvement in space quality, it also mentions a change in its functions which clearly makes this process different from modernization, described earlier.

Space revitalization may run in two directions (Fig. 2), but tourism space is always one of the transformed or created spaces. The first way leads to creating new, theoretically 'better' (quality, infrastructure) non-tourism spaces as a result of tourism space revitalization. An example is the area of the former recreation centre in Taras on the Pilica River (*gmina* of Przedbórz, Łódź *Województwo*), which was turned into a family care home after tourism finished and after a thorough renovation (WŁODARCZYK 2009). In the other case, we deal with non-tourism space revitalization which leads to the creation of functionally new tourism spaces. An example here is the *Manufaktura* complex in Łódź (BIŃCZYK 2006, KOSTECKA 2007). The revitalization of historical residential and industrial complexes for tourism purposes has been recently discussed by many researchers (CYBULSKA 2011, POPOW 2011).

Revitalization as a transformation process may have a dual character. Following KACZMAREK (2001), we may talk about both **implantation** and **integrative revitalization**:

**Implantation revitalization** is the introduction of new functions and spatial forms into a selected and defined fragment of the city (space) whose former function has been degraded. This is usually an area which was heavily built-up and exploited, densely populated and its position in the urban space hierarchy was insignificant. The decisions regarding revitalization are taken outside the area itself, at higher levels of spatial management (regional or national). This is also where it is decided what the 'quality improvement' of the degraded space will regard and what form it will take. An important feature of implantation revitalization is the assumption that the users of the 'new' improved space will also be new, visitors, while the local inhabitants will take an indirect advantage, using new services or enjoying a more attractive and more interesting urban landscape. The result of such policy is a new organization of urban space. (KACZMAREK 2001, p. 27).

The procedure in **integrative revitalization** is the same as in implantation revitalization. The basic difference is that local communities are involved in the process of functional and spatial transformations, due to the activities which directly improve

their standard of living. Introducing new functions and investments should create new jobs, including for the inhabitants and enable them to gain new qualifications and find good jobs. Also spatially, new structures should form a spatial-architectural continuum, which would blur the sharp lines highlighting the barriers between the old and the new. In this sense, revitalization is a complex process, both spatial and economic. (KACZMAREK 2001, p. 27).

In integrative revitalization, which results in new tourism spaces, the benefits and their social significance are visibly larger than in implantation revitalization, where we face the risk of emerging tourism ghettos, hardly accessible or even totally inaccessible to the local population (e.g. in developing countries) (DIELMANS 2011). Numerous examples of successful space revitalizations, which at the final stage are used also by tourists, are presented by KACZMAREK (2001) and WOJNAROWSKA (2011).

### 3.3. DEGRADATION OF TOURISM AND NON-TOURISM SPACES

The creation of new tourism spaces is usually associated with positive processes which change the space function and give the space a new (better) quality and higher value: revitalization and modernization.

In recent years there have been many examples of un-revitalized and un-modernized spaces which are becoming interesting to a growing number of tourists. According to *Słownik języka polskiego* (1979) and *Słownik wyrazów obcych* (2007) (see Fig. 2):

**degradation** means less significance, lower position, declining value. The process of degradation may take place on two planes: physical, where the effects of **destruction** are structural changes (destroying elements of space), and psychological, where the value (significance) of space is downgraded through **depreciation**.

Regardless of the plane, the degradation of tourism spaces leads to negative changes in the existing space and may cause its ageing (partial degradation with maintained functions – emergence of negatively perceived, ‘worse’ tourism spaces) or create functionally new non-tourism spaces (Fig. 3). The result of complete degradation is some kind of abandoned space (fallow – transitory stage), which may be the starting point (in a short or long run) for introducing new functions and creating new types of space or recreating another type of tourism space. Until recently it seemed impossible for a tourism space to be created as a result of the degradation of other, non-tourism spaces. Its creation was associated rather with

the elevation of the area, not the degradation process. Similarly, the abandonment or disappearance of tourism functions in a given space as a result of degradation does not have to coincide with its decreasing quality (e.g. understood as its inhabitants’ standard of living).

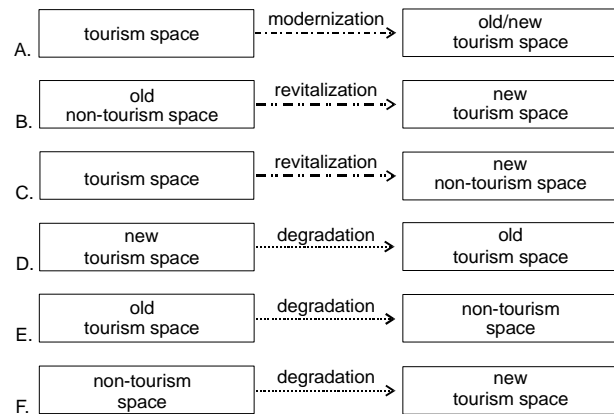


Fig. 3. Possible directions of changes in tourism space, depending on the type of causal process  
Source: Włodarczyk (2009 – modified)

In the cases described above, it could be intuitively assumed that a given process or phenomenon should lead to a transformation of tourism space, and in consequence to a functionally new or modernized, but always better quality, tourism space.

In the case of space degradation, such intuitive conclusions are not always plausible, because this process always leads to a decreased quality (and consequently value) of the space, morphological and functional changes, and as a result to a limited interest in the space or its complete abandoning on the part of its primary users or ‘consumers’.

There is a possibility, however, that together with decreasing space quality and value for one group of users, its significance is increasing for another. This may be true for tourism space which appears when as a result of some degrading process (gradual or rapid) the former space (non-tourism or tourism but performing other tourism functions) becomes useless or unwanted by its original users. In other words, the result of degradation may be new or functionally different tourism spaces.

We can quote here examples of spaces connected with ‘dark’ tourism, where tourists are interested in areas of natural and man-made disasters (TANAŚ 2007, 2008). The phenomenon itself may occur on different scales, as:

– individual objects (micro-scale) – e.g. ‘Wistom’ – former Chemical Fibre Factory in Tomaszów Mazowiecki, which after collapsing in the 1990s is currently

used for organizing strategic field games, paintball battles, etc.;

- towns and localities (meso-scale) - e.g. the Czech town of Most, which as a result of mining disasters resembles a ruined post-war town and is currently used as a film set and an area where cultural tourism trips are organized;

- regions (macro-scale) - e.g. the officially isolated Chernobyl area, degraded as a result of a nuclear disaster (reactor vessel rupture) and currently visited by tourists from all over the world (SHYTS 2011).

A very good example of where all the processes described above overlap, is the centrally located area called *Łódź. Nowe Centrum*, where we can observe the processes of modernization and revitalization taking place within degraded urban fabric and which may result in the creation of functionally new spaces, also used for tourism purposes (WIŚNIEWSKA 2009, BUDZISZEWSKI 2011).

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS

Geographical space, and especially its functionally distinct part, i.e. tourism space, is formed by numerous processes which can be divided into two groups. The first one includes restructurization processes as broadly understood, leading to the creation of improved, more valuable spaces (modernization) or functionally different spaces (revitalization). The other group includes degrading processes (destruction and/or depreciation), which result in the creation of objectively 'worse' spaces, but it does not mean that they are useless as regards particular or specialist forms of tourism activity. The study and analysis show that the majority of attractive tourism spaces are created as a result of modernization or revitalization, but we must not forget the degraded areas which are becoming increasingly attractive to quite large groups of tourists. They will certainly not replace the traditionally attractive tourism areas but they are becoming more and more significant in general tourism space.

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