

Joanna Kowalczyk-Anioł

University of Łódź

Institute of Urban and Tourism Geography

jkaniol@geo.uni.lodz.pl

THE USE OF HOLIDAY BIOGRAPHY IN GENERATION-BASED 'TOURISM SPACE' RESEARCH

Abstract: The article presents the concept of generation-based 'tourism space' research using the holiday biography method. The author refers to her earlier research conducted among three generations of Łódź families. She discusses the biography method used in the research and approaches it from a geo-biographical point of view, showing possible ways of recording the phenomenon (the particular character of the source material collected) and the various options available at later stages of research – interpretation (choosing the analysis, measurement and presentation methods) – and generalization.

Key words: biographical method, geo-biography, holiday biography, tourism space, holiday space, tourism, tourist activity, holiday trips.

1. INTRODUCTION

The author's aim is to present the use of holiday biography in research in the tourism space of different generations, using the example of Łódź families. The article refers to the methods and research presented by the author in her doctoral thesis, *Holiday space development of families of University of Łódź students* (KOWALCZYK-ANIOŁ 2007).

Tourist activity (during summer holidays, at weekends and on individual days) of Łódź inhabitants has been broadly discussed by researchers from the Łódź centre (e.g. DZIEGIEĆ & LISZEWSKI 1985, KEGLER 1990, LATOSIŃSKA 1998, ZARĘBSKA 2001). By examining different groups, chosen according to their occupation, place of residence, and age, the authors defined the spatial range of this tourism, as well as its determinants. Having arrived at many interesting conclusions, the author treats holidays as a measure of the quality of life and development of society (LISZEWSKI 1995a, LATOSIŃSKA 1998). In *Holiday space development of families of University of Łódź students*, the author claims that a good way to demonstrate that holiday space reflects the development of a society is to compare the holiday behaviour of consecutive generations. The method of research chosen was the holiday biography. The subject was Łódź families consisting of at least two generations of indigenous city inhabitants, the youngest of whom were students of the University of Łódź.

2. GENERATIONAL HOLIDAY BIOGRAPHY: RESEARCH CONCEPT

The idea to research holiday biography (a type of thematic biography) derives from the biographical method. Quoting Denzin, generally speaking¹, "a biography presents the experiences and definitions of a given person, group or organization in the way this person, group or organization interprets these experiences" (HELLING 1985, p. 95). Thematic biography refers to an individual area of life, e.g. occupation, with a theme such as tourism. J. KACZMAREK, A. STASIAK & B. WŁODARCZYK (2002, p. 10) understand tourism biography as a human life path defined by "(...) a set of destinations visited for reasons other than work, research, or permanent settlement". Holiday biography refers to one selected tourism megatype (LISZEWSKI & BACHVAROV 1998) – long-term trips (holiday trips).

At this point, it is worth mentioning that biographical research has a long tradition in social research (especially sociology), while it is rare in geographical sciences. It is usually research into migration and so called residential biography (concerning inhabitants' movements within a city), as well as of human behaviour over time, which is the domain of time geography (Lund School – Hägerstrand). We should also mention the works by J. KACZMAREK (2004, 2005), concerning geo-biographical research, which introduce space into biographical sociological research. This author treats tourism biography as a type of geo-biography.

Traditionally, the biographical method focuses on analysis of data coming from private documents: diaries, notes, letters, or literary works. They are sources of direct data, which include non-standardized survey data, police reports, personal questionnaires, medical records or court statements (HELLING 1985). A much broader range of biographical sources, reaching beyond personal documents, was presented by J. LUTYŃSKI (2000). They included questionnaires based on indirect contact with respondents, or self-responses in research on home budgets. Biographical materials, acquired directly and indirectly, are the subject of much controversy, just like the biography method itself. The most common reservations concern lack of objectivity, oversimplification or deformation of reality due to imperfect memory or a tendency to forget unpleasant events (KACZMAREK 2005). That is why it is so important to evaluate the content of the collected material, assess its worth and usefulness. At the same time, the advantages of this method, such as the chance to present changing human awareness and activities, are the reason why it is not rejected. On the contrary – we can observe its revival (e.g. biographical seminars organized at the Institute of Sociology, University of Łódź, by Kaźmierska).

While researching holiday biography, the author did not use existing sources, and the data was collected by means of a retrospective questionnaire. It consisted of two parts: one with questions regarding the subject and one with the respondent's personal details. The questionnaire included both categorized and uncategorized (open) questions. They partly concerned the respondents' present behaviour and opinions, others referred to their past. The key question referred to the respondent's holiday experience. It was highly retrospective, referring to all holidays remembered, from childhood to the year of the survey (2000). In this way, the research took the form of a thematic biographical method – the holiday biography.

The purpose of the research was to compare the holiday space of consecutive generations of Łódź inhabitants. To accomplish that the respondents' individual holiday biographies were aggregated. Therefore, we may speak of a collective biography, or pro-sopography known through Pierre Bourdieu (KACZMAREK 2005).

Taking into consideration the range, context and form of the holiday biography, we may point to its place in the system proposed by J. KACZMAREK (2005) – Table 1. As regards its range – it is a collective biography, its context – a thematic biography, and its form (in most cases a simple record and illustration of facts) – a recorded biography (Type E). From a researcher's point of view, we may speak of an attempt to explain and draw conclusions from the

collected material, and at the same time describe the method which was used for Type G (interpretative).

Table 1. Holiday biography of generations set against J. KACZMAREK'S (2005) types of biographical approach

Bio-graphical approach types	Biographical method parameters					
	Biographical range		Biographical context		Biographical form	
	biography					
	individual	collective	thematic	'global'	recorded	interpretative
A	√	-	√	-	√	-
B	√	-	-	√	√	-
C	√	-	√	-	-	√
D	√	-	-	√	-	√
E	-	√	√	-	√	-
F	-	√	-	√	√	-
G	-	√	√	-	-	√
H	-	√	-	√	-	√

□ parameters defining generational holiday biography in J. KOWALCZYK-ANIOL (2007).

Source: author based on J. KACZMAREK (2005, p. 123).

The author's idea was to conduct research among three subsequent generations of Łódź families. As random sampling was impossible due to the lack of official records grouping families according to birth-place, stratified sampling² was applied, based on the following criteria:

- the youngest group of respondents (population of students) had to be homogenous as regards age (2nd year students of the University of Łódź) and made up exclusively of indigenous Łódź inhabitants;
- the students' parents had to be born in Łódź³.

As a result of the research and its later verification, the author used 98 family sets, containing a total of 427 questionnaires, including 98 filled in by students, 182 by their parents and 147 by grandparents, 68 of whom were also indigenous Łódź inhabitants.

The survey was presented in the form of a table, which (apart from the historical perspective as divided into decades) showed a division into a nuclear family's life cycle phases⁴ (FRĄTCZAK 1999), supplemented by pre-marital life stages (Table 2).

It should be stressed that the phases of human life cycle and family development are chronological but they are not on an ordinal scale; they do not have to necessarily occur in a respondent's individual life cycle and their duration measured in years (calendar time) varies. However, they allow a cohort approach, which is as important as a historical one for conducting further research. The pilot study revealed that this procedure made it much easier for respondents (especially the elderly) to sort out and recall their holiday biographies. Each respondent matched destina-

tions and information about them (main aim, organizer, form of stay, company, number) to the individual phases of their life cycle, or explained the reason for lack of travel.

Table 2. The phases of the human life cycle and family development; the size of the research generations at a given stage in their life cycle

Phase	Individual and family life cycle	S	P	GPL	GPOL
I	Childhood - 7-15 school	98	182	68	79
II	Childhood - 15-19 school	98	180	54	46
III	Higher education*	98	92	6	7
IV	Young adult (from end of school until marriage)	-	178	59	67
V	Forming a family (from marriage to birth of first child)	-	161	57	69
VI	Developing family (from birth of first child to birth of last)	-	152	46	60
VII	Stabilizing the family (from birth of last child to when the first leaves home)	-	119	45	60
VI+VII	*	-	30	22	19
VIII	Shrinking of the family (from when the first child leaves to when the last leaves)	-	13	49	55
IX	Empty nest (from when the last child leaves to the death of wife or husband)	-	-	46	60
VIII+IX	*	-	-	13	15

S - students, P - parents, GPL - grandparents born in Łódź, GPOL - grandparent born outside Łódź*.

Apart from those with higher education, it includes all the students included in the research, as well as respondents from the generation of parents and grandparents who continued education after secondary school, and indicated this stage in their life cycle*. There were additional phases VI+VII and VIII+IX, distinguished for couples with only one child.

Source: J. KOWALCZYK-ANIOL (2007, p. 86).

At the 'conception' stage of the work, it was assumed that the holiday biography method offers a good chance to identify and define changes in the holiday space of an individual, family and generation. Holiday space is treated as a geographical subspace, "(...) whose environmental and anthropogenic assets create possibilities of recreation which is necessary for the normal functioning of the human body, and chosen by the individual" (after LATOSIŃSKA 1998, p. 13). It has a dual character, both objective (natural and human environments), and subjective (decisions on choice). Holiday biography, similar to the geo-biographical method, makes it possible to research on two analytical levels. The first is the factual level, referring to real space (LISOWSKI 2003, WŁODARCZYK 2006, 2009), activity space (WŁODARCZYK 2006, 2009) or work space (ALDSKOGIUS, STACHOWSKI 1993, WŁODAR-

CZYK 2006, KOWALCZYK-ANIOL 2007), which is a set of visited destinations. The other analytical level is emotional, i.e. mental-perceptive space (WŁODARCZYK 2006), related to impressions, emotions, and associations, also known as tourism perceptive space (LISZEWSKI 2006). In *Holiday space development of families ...* the author concentrates on the analysis of work space, i. e. at a factual level, while respondents' memories of places visited are used to provide a more detailed description.

3. RESEARCH OPPORTUNITIES

Using the holiday biography as a research method allows the collection of sufficient and varied material. Stratified sampling, together with the selection criteria necessary in generation research, allows different approaches and directions of research, such as holiday biographies of a family or families. It gives a chance to research a social phenomenon (e.g. socialization for tourism) through a biography analysis, but also, perhaps most of all, with regard to changes in the (holiday) tourism space of an individual, family and generation.

Depending on the method used for aggregating data from individual holiday biographies, further analyses can be conducted on the individual, familial and generational levels or within a cohort, e.g. with reference to the life cycle phase. Taking into consideration potential levels of aggregation and the kind of data, the holiday behaviour of respondents may be presented as spatial (in cartographic form) or through various measures of tourism activity. As a result, eight research foci on the collected material (Table 3) are taken up, five of which have been used in order to achieve the research aims.

Table 3. Possible focus in the analysis of generational holiday biography materials

Focus of research	Aggregation level				Type of data	
	individual	familial	generational	life cycle phase	spatial	holiday activity
A	√	-	-	-	√	-
B	√	-	-	-	-	√
C	-	√	-	-	√	-
D	-	√	-	-	-	√
E	-	-	√	-	√	-
F	-	-	√	-	-	√
G	-	-	-	√	√	-
H	-	-	-	√	-	√

□ considered by J. KOWALCZYK-ANIOL (2007).

Source: author based on KOWALCZYK-ANIOL (2007).

For instance, in order to assess the influence of holiday space in early childhood (first category) on the space of an adult individual, the author analysed the biography of the parents' generation, on an individual level. The general conclusions are as follows:

"It was noticed that the higher the education level, the higher the number of people travelling more often in adult years than in childhood ($C_{skor} = 0.37$). It was noted that people who were brought up in the tradition of organizing individual holidays tend to continue this. The way trips are organized largely depends on education level ($C_{skor} = 0.343$) - the higher the respondent's education, the more trips organized as an adult (...). The sub-population studied did not show any correlation between the predominant type of holiday destination from childhood to that from adulthood. (...) It turned out that nearly $\frac{1}{3}$ of respondents spent at least one 'adult' holiday at a childhood holiday destination, usually self-organized. The most popular destination among respondents who returned, was Zakopane" (p. 121).

Wanting to examine the influence of the human life cycle (and family development) on an individual's holiday space, the author analysed a cohort. Observing the behaviour of consecutive generations, it was shown that the rate of holiday activity, frequency of trips and reasons for no longer going on them vary,

depending on life cycle stage. The author documented an important correlation between phases of the human life cycle and typical forms of leisure trips.

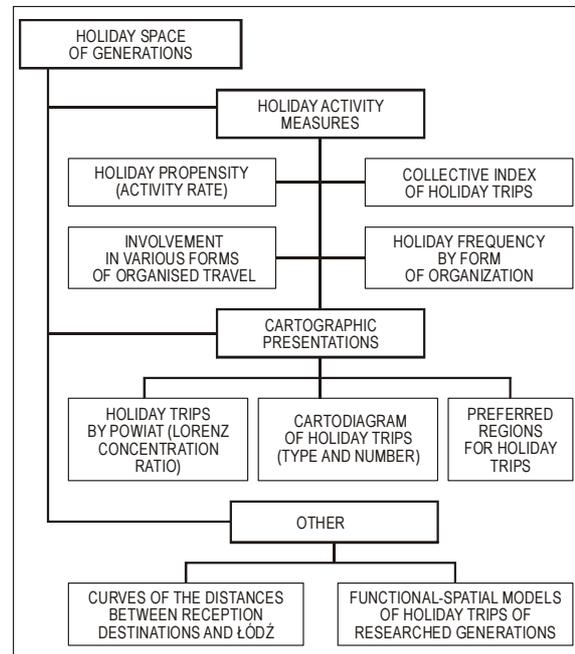


Fig. 1. Methods of presenting and analyzing the holiday space of Łódź generations

Source: author based on J. KOWALCZYK-ANIOL (2007)

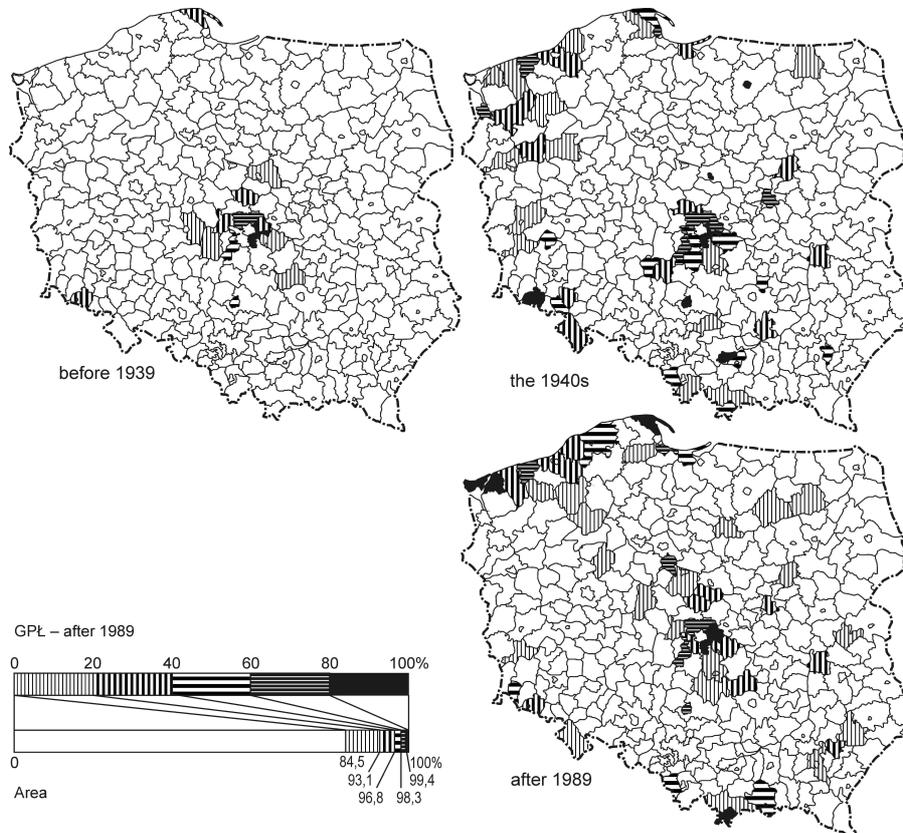


Fig. 2. Concentration of holiday trips of indigenous Łódź inhabitants from the 'grandparents' generation

Source: J. KOWALCZYK-ANIOL (2007, Fig. 8)

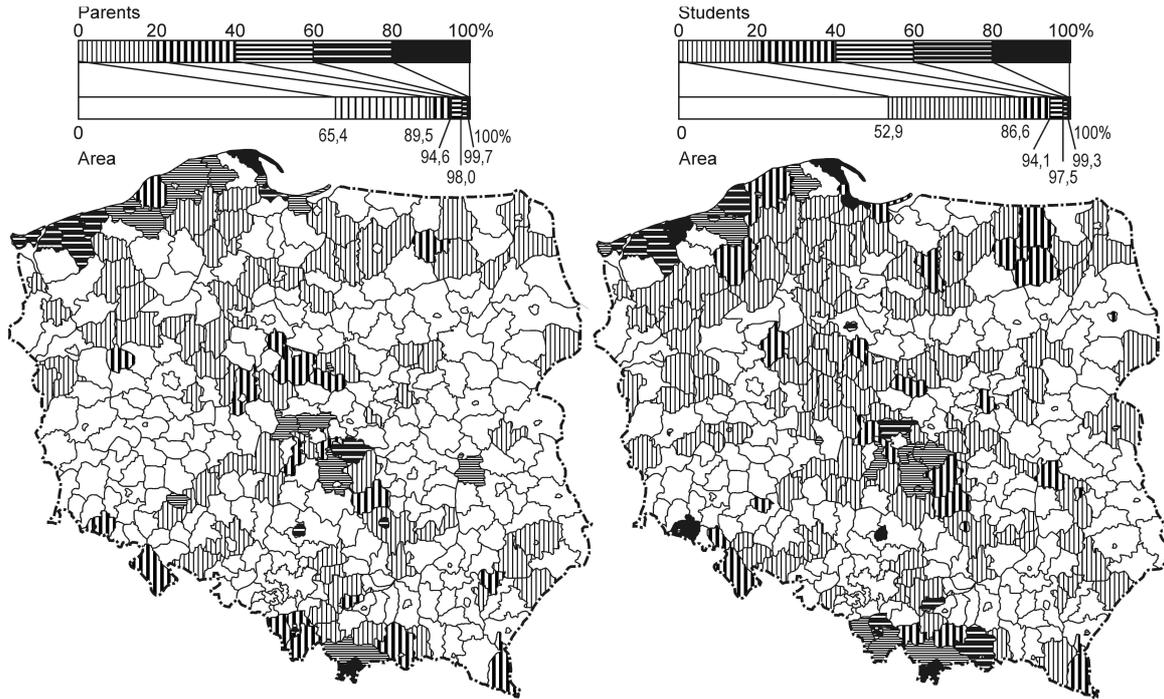


Fig. 3. Concentration of holiday trips of indigenous Łódź inhabitants from parents and students generations: 1990-2002
 Source: J. KOWALCZYK-ANIOŁ (2007, Fig. 9)

The source material collected allows the author to present respondents' holiday spaces in different ways, as well as to complete its description by using tourist activity measures (Fig. 1). Further in the article, due to technical limitations, the author presents only selected examples of statistical and cartographic processing of the data.

Changes in domestic holiday space (tourism space) for each generation were illustrated by the following research conducted from a historical perspective (before 1939, consecutive decades of the Polish People's Republic and 1989-2002):

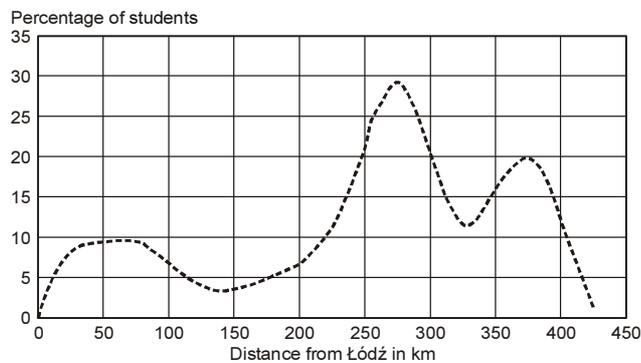


Fig. 4. Distance curve of reception destinations of student respondents: 1990-2002
 Source: J. KOWALCZYK-ANIOŁ (2007, Fig. 12)

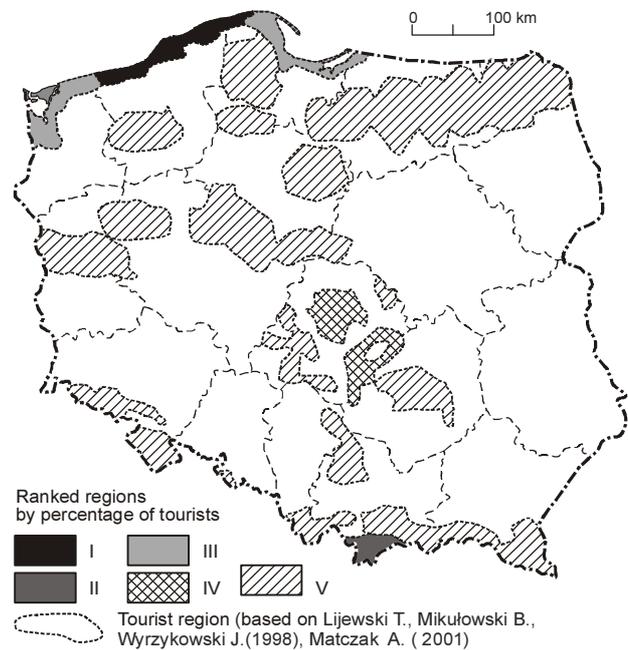


Fig. 5. Holiday regions preferred by students: 1990-2002
 Source: J. KOWALCZYK-ANIOŁ (2007, Fig. 14).

- concentration using the Lorenz concentration ratio, based on the administrative division of Poland into *powiats* as in 1999 – Figs 2 & 3,
- the curves of the distances between the reception sites and Łódź (calculated on the basis of

theoretical equidistance, established every 50 km from Łódź) – Fig. 4,

- maps of holiday space, in the form of cartodiagram presenting types of travel and the number of travellers,
- preferred regions for holiday trips – Fig. 5.

The identification of holiday space was supplemented with an analysis of measures defining the changes of the holiday activity of the studied generations. The following parameters were analysed:

- holiday propensity (Figs 6 & 7);
- collective index of holiday trips, constructed by the author in order to present different levels of holiday activity of the studied groups in intervals of several years;
- participation in different forms of holiday trips;
- holiday frequency for different forms of travel organization.

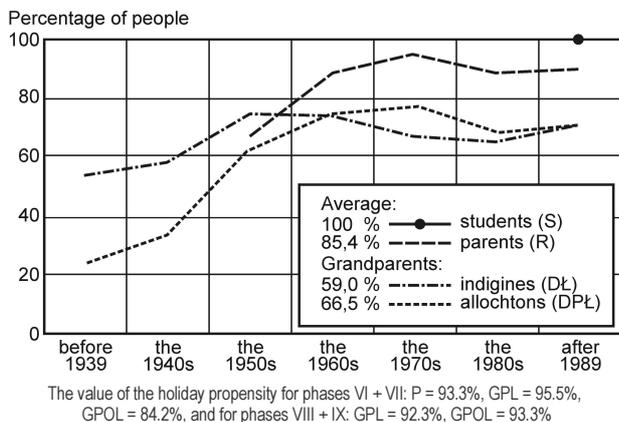


Fig. 6. Holiday propensity across generations
Source: J. KOWALCZYK-ANIOL (2007, p. 39)

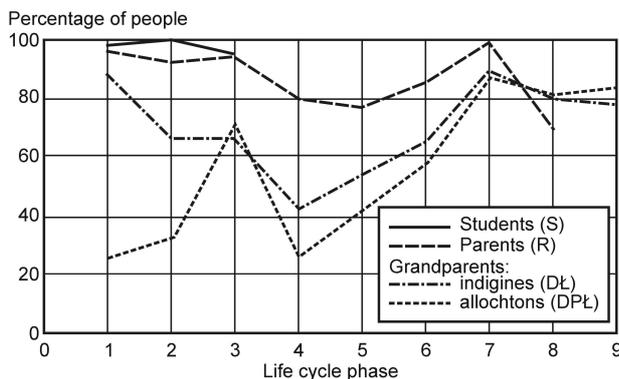


Fig. 7. Holiday propensity of generations by life cycle phase
Source: J. KOWALCZYK-ANIOL (2007, p. 88)

Holiday propensity (activity rate) is a popular measure which, unlike similar ones presented by authors⁵, shows the percentage going on at least one holiday over a given period of time (much longer than

one year!). It was used in the quoted work twice. First, as a part of the dynamic approach in which the changes are observed in historical time (Fig. 6), and then the author referred to phases in the life cycles of the generations (Fig. 7). Division into generations and the research of trends offers similar possibilities elsewhere (BABBIE 2005).

The holiday space of generations and their sub-populations, whose spatial and functional aspects (holiday activity measures) are presented in the work quoted in this article, is a dynamic phenomenon, different for each generation of respondents.

“Subsequent generations take up an increasingly large area of Poland for their holiday purposes, but the predominant regions for Łódź inhabitants’ remain the same. They are the most attractive tourist areas – Gdańsk district, the Słowiński, Tatrzański-Podhalański regions and districts near Łódź. This last has been flourishing in recent years, mainly due to the development of summer plots. As shown by the research results, changes in respondents’ holiday activity have become more visible. Indices have grown through consecutive generations (...). Referring to these indices, we may, for example, speak of different models of recreation among the groups included in the research” (KOWALCZYK-ANIOL 2007, pp. 119-120).

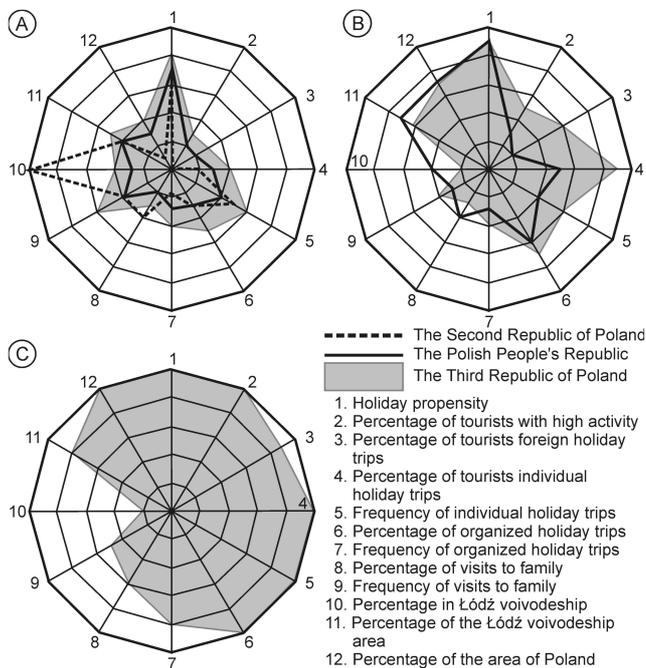


Fig. 8. Functional-spatial models of holiday trips of the research generations born in Łódź: A – grandparents, B – parents, C – students
Source: J. KOWALCZYK-ANIOL (2007, Fig. 18)

Constructed in the form of polar graphs, the functional-spatial models (Fig. 8) highlight the differences between generations. The holiday biography of the

oldest (and – to a smaller extent – the middle) generation allowed the author to show changes in the tourism model for each of the three historical periods covered: The Second Republic of Poland, The Polish People's Republic and The Third Republic of Poland. It is also a good illustration of societal progress – in this case in Łódź.

“Despite changes in travel organization, it must be stressed once again that the main holiday regions chosen by Łódź inhabitants have remained the same (only their hierarchy has slightly changed). It was discovered that their popularity has resulted from traditions established at the time of mass social tourism (especially in the 1960s and 1970s), based on the holiday infrastructure belonging to Łódź factories, FWP (Workers' Holiday Fund) and industrial plants from outside Łódź. Changes in the predominant modes, including participation, frequency and foreign travel, are clearly related to the political and economic situation of Poland at each of the studied periods” (KOWALCZYK-ANIOŁ 2007, p. 120).

4. CONCLUSIONS

Holiday biographies based on questionnaire surveys offers a lot of opportunities, both at the level of recording (the collected material is abundant and varied), and later at the interpretation and generalization stages. An unquestionable advantage of this method is the chance to dynamically present the phenomenon in relation to the same group of respondents, which is rare practice in tourism geography. Apart from spatial issues, selected social issues can be studied from a biographical perspective (e.g. the life cycle of an individual and family, 'upbringing' for tourism, etc.). Naturally, this method has its weak spots. Some of them result from the character of the research itself (e.g. content subjectivity), and others from, for instance, the need to aggregate and generalize data, difficult research conditions (time-consuming), and in the case of generational research – limited sample choice. Despite these limitations, the opportunities offered by a skilful use of the holiday biography in holiday space research or, to put it more broadly, of tourist biography in tourism space research, unquestionably point to its usefulness in spatial analyses of tourist activity across generations (individuals, other demographic and social groups). This method also gives researchers great satisfaction from learning about the world, as well as encouraging reflection on their own biography, including the tourist one.

FOOTNOTES

¹ Biography studies take various forms corresponding to various research orientations. The terminological and methodological assumptions of the biographical method are widely discussed by J. KACZMAREK (2005).

² The studies were of the non-probabilistic type.

³ “The choice of such groups was for many reasons. The first was the conviction that Lodz inhabitants had developed a spatial model of holiday which was slightly different than that developed by the inhabitants of other large Polish cities. At the same time it was assumed that a sample selected in this way will make it possible to examine and understand this model. Another reason was the fact that it was relatively easy to conduct the study – look for families who would take part in the survey through 2nd year students of the University of Łódź, i. e. through a group which was homogenous as regards age and available during classes” (KOWALCZYK-ANIOŁ 2007, pp. 2-3).

⁴ A nuclear family (FRĄCZAK 1999) is a married couple or a single parent together with their unmarried children, who do not necessarily live in one household. This definition complies with the one proposed by the UN.

⁵ For example holiday propensity (MEDLIK 1995), tourist activity rate (ALEJZIAK 2000, 2011; WŁODARCZYK 1999), participation in tourism (MATCZAK 1992).

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