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INFLUENCE OF TOURISM ON THE SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT OF SEASIDE RESORTS: SELECTED ASPECTS

Abstract: The paper presents the main trends in the development of seaside resorts worldwide and in Poland. Particular attention is called to the spatial aspects of this development. Based on their morphological differentiation, two forms of seaside resort in Poland can be distinguished: locations with a clearly heterogeneous spatial-functional structure, in which areas used for tourism are adjacent to others; and locations with a heterogeneous spatial-functional structure in which the tourism function is, to a certain extent, spatially isolated.

Keywords: seaside resorts, spatial development, tourism function, development of tourism facilities.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Baltic seashore is undoubtedly one of the most attractive tourism regions in Poland. Thanks to its wide sandy beaches, coastal dunes and forests stretching behind the dunes, the region was already visited by tourists in the late 19th c. As a result of the development of tourism in seaside towns, not only their socio-economic function changed, but spatial development occurred as well. Numerous research studies show that the development of seaside towns undergoes several stages resulting in the development of areas farther removed from the seashore. In recent years, on the other hand, one can observe that some elements of tourism development, mainly large accommodation facilities, are being constructed next to the shore itself. Therefore, tourism development is entering areas valuable for the natural environment: stabilised dunes and dune sands. The purpose of this study is to present the main directions of the tourism development of seaside resorts in Poland (based on selected examples), with particular emphasis on contemporary processes which influence the formation of tourism space in these resorts.

2. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT OF SEASIDE RESORTS WORLDWIDE

Tourism is a complex and multi-faceted phenomenon, causing various natural, economic, social and cultural as well as spatial consequences. The main factor in spatial change is the process of the development of tourism facilities whose purpose is to adapt space for the needs of tourism. The intensive process of tourism development in specific areas globally since the 1950s for mass tourism, has contributed to spatial change in many places (MIKA 2007, p. 458). These changes are particularly apparent in seaside towns, especially small ones which are more prone to all kinds of change, due to their density of tourism facilities (WARSZYŃSKA & JACKOWSKI 1978).

In general, seaside resorts have been established in places which were previously fishing villages or small ports, and their main tourism facilities were a pier and a beach with sea bathing. In their vicinity, usually along a promenade, hotels, pensions and catering facilities were built. Near the accommodation facilities, parks with numerous gazebos and fountains were established. In the late 19th c., on the other hand, sport and recreational facilities were created more often (for instance tennis courts), and in larger towns, racetracks, golf courses, concert halls and theatres

(KOWALCZYK & DEREK 2010). In the 19th c. the largest number of seaside towns transformed into resorts were in such countries as Great Britain (e.g., Brighton, Blackpool, Scarborough), France (e.g. Cannes, Menton, Trouville), Germany (Heiligendamm, Kühlungsborn, Heringsdorf), and Italy (e.g. Rimini, San Remo). The characteristic features of 19th c. seaside resorts were, according to A. KOWALCZYK & DEREK (2010), a similar spatial-functional layout and a similar architectural style of private residences, hotels, and public buildings.

But the most intensive process of tourism development, and therefore of spatial transformation, was observed in 1950-80, mostly as a result of leisure time increase and the development of the use of the car. It was the Mediterranean basin, in particular the coasts of France, Italy, and Spain, that was then the fastest growing tourism region in the world (KUREK 2007); the typical resorts created at that time were Port-Camargue, La Grande-Motte and La Cap d'Agde in France; Benidorm, Torremolinos and Marbella in Spain; and Positano and Bibione in Italy. It was also a time of very intensive development of tourism facilities in other world regions, in particular Hawaii and the Caribbean (often in the form of so-called vacation villages). In some countries, newly created centres took on the character of tourism enclaves (e.g. Hurghada and Al Gouna in Egypt).

As regards the tourism development of seaside areas, this period is often marked by the creation of urbanized areas stretching in a narrow strip along the shore and by chaos in the development (Cazes *et al.* 1993, after KOWALCZYK & DEREK 2010), which is exemplified in the linear development of almost 100 km of the Costa del Sol in Andalusia or in Languedoc-Roussillon.

The main criterion determining tourism development was land rent. This is evidenced by the results of an analysis of the spatial development of an individual seaside resort. Usually, several stages are distinguished characterised by the development of areas located increasingly farther away from the shore. A good example is Benidorm (Fig. 1) where accommodation facilities were first created in the mid-1950s, and the investment boom occurred in 1967-73 when high-rise hotels and apartment complexes, often more than 10 storeys tall, were built in the immediate neighbourhood of the beach (KOWALCZYK & DEREK 2010).

According to A. KOWALCZYK & DEREK (2010), the majority of seaside resorts created in the 1950s and 1960s, were developed without an earlier spatial development plan. This had an important impact on the transformation of the seaside landscape, which was evident in the gradual development of coastal zones at the expense of forested areas. Moreover, the

development of tourism facilities in the seaside zone brought in many cases an almost complete isolation of the sea from areas for which the sea was previously a characteristic landscape feature (WARSZYŃSKA & JACKOWSKI 1978). Thus were created urbanised seaside resorts with their characteristic high-rise buildings (e.g. Benidorm and Torremolinos in Spain), which in the literature are picturesquely described as 'coastal walls' (French: *murailles littorales*) or 'Manhattan resort' (French: *Manhattan balnéaire*).

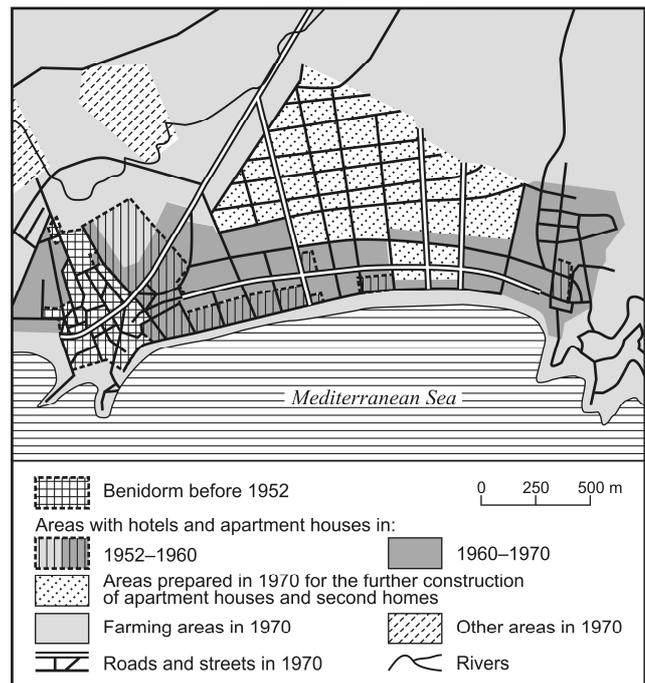


Fig. 1. Tourism development in Benidorm (Spain) in 1970
Source: A. KOWALCZYK, M. DEREK (2010, p. 74)



Photo 1. A hotel in the Corralejo Dunes National Park
(Fuerteventura, Spain)

Source: www.riu.com/es/Paises/espana/fuerteventura/clubhotel-riu-oliva-beach-resort/index.jsp (25.03.2012)

The intensive development of tourism in coastal areas in the 1990s and the early years of the 21st c. was

the cause of the further expansion. Often, this proceeded onto environmentally valuable areas, especially onto dunes and sands, an example of which is the construction of two large hotels on the dunes of Corralejo in Fuertaventura (Photo 1).

3. SELECTED ASPECTS OF THE SPATIAL DEVELOPMENT OF SEASIDE RESORTS IN POLAND

Seaside resorts have played a very important role in the development of tourism in Poland and the Baltic seashore is one of its most attractive tourism regions. At the same time, it is a region characterised by a very high intensity of land use for recreational purposes and the largest density of visitors per unit area. This is particularly true for the beach strip, where – according to T. LIJEWSKI, B. MIKUŁOWSKI, J. WYRZYKOWSKI (2002, p. 273) – on a sunny day, the density of visitors often exceeds 1000 per hectare (Photo 2). This density is thus comparable to that of the population in large, high-rise housing estates. This is confirmed by direct measurement of holidaymakers on the beach in Rowy on 11 and 13 July 2005 by JAŻEWICZ (2006). On those days, around 3500 were recorded.

The popularity of seaside regions is evidenced also by the values of the Baretje & Defert and Schneider indices. In 2012, they were, for the gmina¹ of Władysławowo, 738.7 beds per 1000 inhabitants and 9375.4 overnight visitors per 1000 inhabitants, while for the Jastarnia community, 1238.4 and 17462.2, respectively (www.stat.gov.pl).



Photo 2. Crowded beach in Władysławowo during the so-called 'long weekend' in June 2006
Source: photo M. Durydiwka

The first seaside resorts began to be created in Poland fairly early. Already by the late 16th c. development had begun in Sopot, in the 18th c. in Kołobrzeg,

and in the 19th c. in Świnoujście, Międzyzdroje, Krynica Morska and Dziwnów. But in the majority of seaside towns, tourism was developed during the period between the two world wars, in form of so-called holiday centres or spas (e.g. Jastarnia, Władysławowo, Chałupy, Rewal), and in some others, as late as after World War II (e.g., Mielno, Rowy, Dąbki). We can therefore distinguish, depending on the time when tourism began, three groups of seaside tourism centres (DZIEGIEĆ 1991):

- centres which have existed for a long time (over 150 years);
- centres in which tourism began in the inter-war period, thus having a tradition of over 70 years;
- new centres following World War II.

Three fundamental factors influenced the development of the tourism function in seaside localities in Poland. First, an attractive sandy seashore with its characteristic coastal dunes and a strip of forest behind them. This type of seashore along such a long stretch can be found in only a few European countries (LIJEWSKI *et al.* 2002). The second, a stimulating climate, often moderated by compact forest areas, which strengthens the human body and has a beneficial influence on the action of the respiratory and circulatory systems. An additional asset is the high level of iodine and ozone in the air. Third, the occurrence of mineral springs (mostly sodium chloride, bromine, iodide) and of peat pulp and peloids, the discovery of which significantly influenced the development of the spa function in such towns as Kołobrzeg, Dziwnów and Ustka.

Seaside towns in Poland have been formed mostly as a result of evolutionary transformations of previously existing settlements. According to S. LISZEWSKI (2002), the development of these towns consists of three phases. The first one is related to the influx of those arriving for the purpose of recreation; the local economy is still dominated by traditional activities (fishing, farming). It means that at this stage of development, there is practically no investment in the development of tourism facilities whatsoever. The second phase is related to a change in the economic basis, which – as a result of the growing influx of tourists – is transformed from a fishing or farming village into a resort where tourism-related services become a more important factor in the employment structure and the income of the local population. In this phase, the first tourism-related investments occur; they mark the presence of the tourism function in the town morphology. The third phase is related to the growing affluence of the local population who gradually invest more in the construction of tourism facilities. This process often attracts outside investors as well. More and more often, large tourism facilities are built, resulting in a permanent transformation of the town morphology. An example is the village of

Rowy where development began soon after WWII, but the process of developing tourism facilities has accelerated in the last two decades. Nowadays, this locality is one of the most dynamically growing seaside gminas in Central Pomerania, evidenced by the fact that in 1991-2007, 189 building permits were issued there for the construction of holiday homes and other housing (RYDZ & JAŻEWICZ 2009).

The development of the tourism function in seaside resorts has therefore an important impact on their spatial development. E. DZIEGIEĆ (1995) points out several fundamental aspects of spatial change. First, it is related to changes in the capacity and appearance of housing adapted for tourists. This process was particularly evident on the Hel Peninsula where the traditional countryside settlements are preserved, but new accommodation facilities, stylised and often of rather 'foreign' appearance were being built (LISZEWSKI 2002). A characteristic feature of the tourism development of seaside resorts in Poland was the creation of holiday centres (in particular 1960-80) owned by FWP (Employees' Vacation Fund, a state-owned institution organizing subsidised vacations for state employees)². Usually, these were large-capacity facilities or campsites, often located at a distance from the central district of the town, and forming a kind of enclave.

Second, spatial transformations related to the development of tourism settlements are often connected with the expansion of the existing spatial system or with the creation of new districts or areas with characteristic spatial layouts. As shown by analyses of pre-war maps, most of the villages from that time were fishing and farming settlements, while there were few typical tourism resorts (ŁABUZ 2002). For instance, in 1915 in Mielno there were practically no facilities for tourists. Nowadays, it is one of the best known seaside resorts in Poland. Another example is Ustka. According to W. SZYMAŃSKA (2012), tourism-related areas have been very important for the development of this town. Investments into permanent tourism developments there are very varied spatially, in 2010, there were 40 accommodation facilities for tourists (not counting rooms in private houses), of which the most numerous were holiday centres (15) and hotels (14). Tourism facilities are concentrated mostly in *Ustka Wczasowa Wschodnia* and *Stara Ustka*. Next to the development of tourism facilities and the building progressing there, worth noting is the share of areas with tourism-related services (Fig. 2), since they are derived from the tourism function of the town (SZYMAŃSKA 2012). In 1998, service areas had an insular character and were strictly connected with the tourism located directly behind the beaches, mostly in the eastern part of the town. In the following years, the expansion of service

areas took place: their scope expanded, but the layout remained similar. In the areas primarily for tourism,

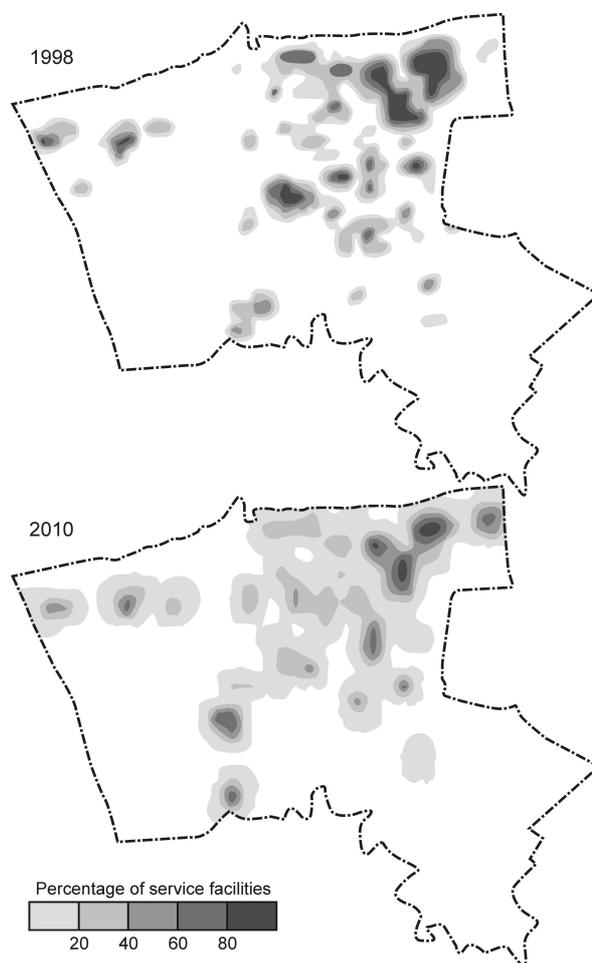


Fig. 2. Layout of service facilities in Ustka in 1998 and 2010
Source: W. SZYMAŃSKA (2012, p. 227)

service areas consist mostly of accommodation and catering facilities. This situation occurs in *Ustka Wczasowa Wschodnia* and *Ustka Wczasowa Zachodnia*.

Third, spatial transformations of seaside resorts are related to the creation of a new, tourism- and recreation-related form of land use. The clearly tourism-oriented districts of seaside towns, such as *Hallerowo* in *Władysławowo*, are an example of this. They are often created as a result of building over forest or farmland. Nowadays, in many seaside areas (e.g. on the Hel Peninsula, on the Vistula Spit, or in *Władysławowo gmina*), the surface area of investments significantly exceeds the allowed capacity; as a result elements of tourism facilities are located on dunes and flat areas on the Bay of Puck side of the peninsula (KISTOWSKI & KORWEL-LEJKOWSKA 2005). An example is the construction of the apartment-hotel complex '*Gwiazda Morza*'³ in *Władysławowo* (*Hallerowo*) (Fig. 5A), *Dom Zdrojowy Jastarnia* (Fig. 5B), the apartment



Photo 3. Location of the apartment and hotel complex 'Gwiazda Morza' in Władysławowo (A) and of *Dom Zdrojowy Jastarnia* in Jastarnia (B)

Source: www.twojdomnadbaltykiem.pl, www.zdrojowy.com.pl



Photo 4. Location of Villa Ibiza (A) and Jeanette Apartments (B) in Rowy

Source: www.noclegi.pewniaki.pl, www.apartamentyjeanette.pl

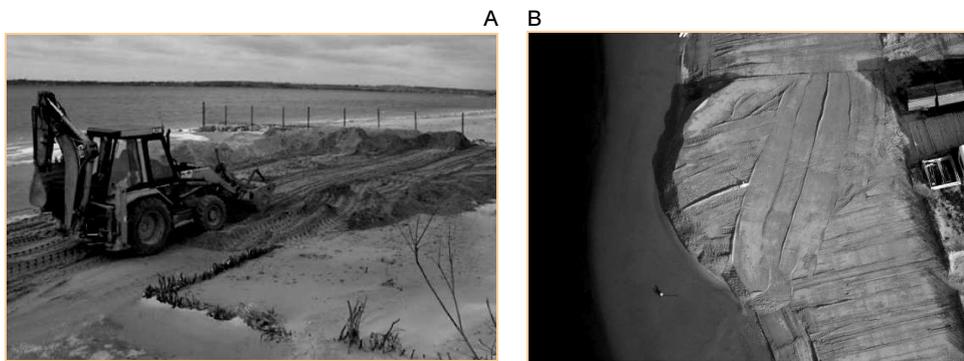


Photo 5. Illegal dumping of sand on the Polaris campsite in 2007 (A) and an artificially created beach on the Solar campsite in 2009 (B) in Chałupy

Source: J.M. WĘŚLAWSKI *et al.* (2011, pp. 18 i 26)



Photo 6. Expansion of the campsite area by dumping of sand on the Solar campsite in Chałupy

Source: J.M. WĘŚLAWSKI *et al.* (2011, p. 42)

complex *Playa Baltis* in Międzyzdroje, and the Baltic Park complex in Świnoujście consisting of 12 buildings. These facilities are all large and high quality, located on a strip of stabilised dunes and in the direct neighbourhood of a forest complex.

In smaller towns, accommodation facilities are also built in very close proximity of the sea, but they are usually smaller and of lower quality. Examples of such facilities are Villa Ibiza (Photo 4C) and Jeanette Apartments (Photo 4D) in Rowy, located on the dune strip and directly surrounded by a pine forest.

A somewhat different situation occurs on the Hel Peninsula. This is an exceptional region as regards its natural environment and therefore very attractive for tourists. As mentioned earlier, tourism is very intensive in the summer season which often results in an uncontrolled and extensive expansion of tourism facilities. In the period from November 2003 through to August 2004 only, 94 decisions concerning development and construction on the Hel Peninsula were issued, most of which were permits for development and the construction of tourism facilities, especially in Chałupy, Jastarnia and Jurata (KISTOWSKI & KORWEL-LEJKOWSKA 2005).

Unfortunately, on the Hel Peninsula, increasingly often actions can be observed leading to the development of tourism infrastructure which violate existing regulations and are hazardous for the natural environment. Examples of such actions are the dumping of sand and soil onto campsites on the Bay of Puck side of the peninsula, to expand the campsites or to create a beach (Photos 5-6). The sand is extracted from the shore, which is in danger of undergoing erosion from the open-sea side, and moved to the protected areas: brackish⁴ wetlands and reed beds. This way, on some campsites, a beach 30-40 metres wide has been created (WĘSŁAWSKI *et al.* 2011).

In general, according to A. SZWICHTENBERG (2001), in almost the entire post-war period, there has been a constant expansion of investments onto the most valuable environmental areas, that is, onto dunes and the seaside pine forest. The exceptionally fragile sea-shore structures and the processes occurring on them, natural habitats which are not very resilient to use by tourists, require that some pressure be taken off the seaside zone. Increasingly often, the necessity of reducing the intensity of seaside resorts is being raised.

4. SUMMARY

As a result of the growth of tourism, resorts have been created on the coastal areas in Poland, with a fairly well developed tourism function. Most of them are in

the form of latitudinal strips in direct proximity of the shore. This settlement pattern is characteristic for most seaside towns worldwide. On the other hand, what distinguishes to some extent Polish resorts from the long linear zones of tourism developments characteristic for some stretches of the Mediterranean, are the fairly wide zones between them. This is beneficial both for the natural environment and for conditions of recreation (SZWICHTENBERG 2001).

Based on the morphological differentiation within individual seaside resorts in Poland, however, we can distinguish two basic forms. The first comprises centres with a clearly heterogeneous spatial-functional structure, in which facilities (areas) used for tourism are adjacent to other facilities (areas). These are usually resorts with a moderately developed tourism function, which lack, as a rule, large tourism facilities, including accommodation. This means that the accommodation structure is dominated by rooms in private houses or small pensions, and the spatial layout of the town has not been transformed as a result of the development of the tourism function. Another group, more numerous nowadays, consists of centres with a heterogeneous spatial-functional structure, in which the tourism function is, to a certain extent, isolated (e.g. Jastarnia or Hallerowo in Władysławowo). These are localities with a clearly developed tourism function, in which the growing demand for tourism services is forcing the development of new areas, often of ones which are environmentally valuable and prone to human pressure.

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