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## Sports tourism: Real or virtual?

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relatively simple to estimate the number of tourists – sports fans present at the most important international sporting events (it is much harder as regards national events), but establishing the scale during holiday or weekend trips is a difficult task. I also believe that it is quite unnecessary.

Nowadays, academic terminology regarding tourism is adopting new, ‘fashionable’ terms which are not academically justifiable and make this terminology semantically chaotic. To my mind, ‘sports tourism’ is one of these terms. It is an expression currently widely used in Polish tourism literature, trying to transform the terms ‘specialised tourism’ and ‘active tourism’ into one joint conceptual aggregate, yet unsuccessfully.

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### SPORTS TOURISM: REAL OR VIRTUAL?

In as early as the 1970s, the Polish literature on the subject presented a classification of tourism by the motivations to travel and the types of tourism assets used. According to these criteria, the following types of tourism were distinguished: recreational (recreation as the motivation to travel), sightseeing (cognitive motivation) and specialised (an opportunity to pursue one’s hobby, passion, etc.) (ROGALEWSKI 1974). This classification, though at present a little outdated, is still useful, especially for didactic purposes. Its main drawback, however, is incompleteness, as it does not include certain new forms of tourism which have rapidly developed in recent decades. Its incompleteness also results from expanding the definition of tourism which has started to encompass business trips (business tourism). It seems, however, that in order to discuss the semantic range of the term ‘sports tourism’, the traditional division into sightseeing and specialised tourism may prove useful.

Let us start from establishing the semantic framework of the term ‘sports tourism’. In the literature, it usually includes the following four forms of tourism activity (BONCZAK 2013a, GIBSON 1998, p. 45, MOKRAS-GRABOWSKA 2015, pp. 121-2): 1) trips made in order to watch sporting events (fan tourism); 2) trips made in order to visit sports facilities (e.g. famous stadiums, not necessarily during sporting events); 3) trips made in order to participate in sporting events as competitors<sup>1</sup>; 4) trips made in order to undertake various forms of sports activity (without elements of competition<sup>2</sup>).

Even a superficial analysis of these forms of sports tourism shows that each of them can be ascribed to one of the types of tourism mentioned earlier. Thus, trips made in order to visit sports facilities as special tourism assets (attractions) are a typical example of sightseeing tourism. The situation is similar in the case of so-called ‘fan tourism’, which is a cultural variety of sightseeing tourism (a sporting event as an element of mass culture). On the other hand, active participation in sports competitions, as well as being involved in sports activities without the element of competition meet the traditional criteria of specialised tourism (participants’ skills, the ability to use specialist equipment). It can be seen from this that individual forms of so called ‘sports tourism’ are different in character, despite the fact that they often occur under the same name (Table 1).

This short terminological analysis, defining at least in general the semantic range of the term ‘sports tourism’ as well as its relation to other types of tourism, may be the basis for certain general conclusions. Firstly, is using the term ‘sports tourism’ legitimate (in the sense that it appears in contemporary literature)? It seems that from the cognitive point of view it is not justifiable and may introduce terminological chaos. The term ‘sports tourism’ covers (as was shown in the discussion) various, genetically distinct forms of tourism, while in order to accurately

<sup>1</sup> There are certain doubts whether trips of this type can be classified as tourist trips because a considerable part of them are work-related (professional sport) (BONCZAK 2013b). However, there is also a group of amateur athletes (in the literal sense of the word), who do not treat their participation in the competition as gainful activity.

<sup>2</sup> It must be stressed that in accordance with the Sports Act of 25th June 2010, “sport is all forms of physical activity which by incidental or arranged participation help to achieve or improve physical and mental strength, develop social relations or achieve sports results on all levels”. This means that competition may but does not have to be an attribute of sports activity.

Table 1. Relations between traditional types of tourism and forms of sports tourism

Types of tourism	Corresponding forms of sports tourism
Sightseeing tourism	Visiting sports facilities
	Watching sporting events (fan tourism)
Specialised tourism	Participating in sports competitions as competitors
	Undertaking various forms of sports activity (without elements of competition)

Source: author.

describe certain relatively new tourism phenomena (forms), it is necessary to clearly establish what form of tourism connected with sports activity is the object of our interest.

This conclusion means that in the ontological sense, there is no such thing as sports tourism. However, there are different forms of tourism which are somehow related to sports activity, but they are so far from one another that it is difficult to find a common denominator for them. For instance, what does a group of football fans travelling to see their team play in the neighbouring town have in common with a sailing trip around the world? At the same time, both forms fit the concept of 'sports tourism', as it is often presented in the literature.

Taking into account the conclusions above, more detailed analyses regarding predispositions to undertaking 'sports tourism', applicable measures, essential infrastructure or development prospects should be conducted with regard to its individual forms, at least those mentioned in this discussion.

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### SPORTS TOURISM: A VOICE IN THE DISCUSSION

In M. WEED's (2009) opinion, the concept of sports tourism has been present in the academic literature since the 1960s due to D. ANTHON's (1966) work. Therefore, it seems that the discussion over the fact whether the concept and phenomenon exist would be, in a sense, forcing an open door. However, the whole problem focuses around the definition of the concept, specifying what we understand by it. Finally, would it be a universal definition or 'only' a provisional one each time? It must be said that despite the 50-year-long history of using this term, it is still defined in a variety of ways.

Many researchers set very wide boundaries to sports tourism (e.g. GAWORECKI 2008, GIBSON 1998, 2003, KAZIMIERCZAK & MALCHROWICZ-MOŚKO 2013, MALCHROWICZ 2012, Standeven & De Knop 1999 after BRENT & DARYL 2004). They assume that it involves all forms of active physical activity, as well as passive attendance at sports and sports-recreational events, which require changing a person's everyday environment. It is important that this change may result from the necessity to take on professional duties<sup>1</sup> (e.g. professional athletes), or the activity may be undertaken in one's free time (amateur athletes).

<sup>1</sup> Here, it seems to contradict the definition of the tourist / tourism that is not connected with performing professional duties.