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## Sports tourism: A voice in the discussion

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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.

Other authors narrow the meaning of sports tourism down, for example to the form of tourist activity involving attendance at sporting events as a spectator or a competitor (BRENT & DARYL 2004, DZIĘGIEL & LUBOWIECKI-VIKUK 2013, HADZIK 2010, 2014, OLSZEWSKI 2010, BOŃCZAK 2013a, WOJDAKOWSKI & FORMELLA 2009, WYRZYKOWSKI & MARAK 2010). Sports tourism also involves visiting sports facilities (e.g. stadiums, ski jumps) built in contemporary times or as a part of historical heritage, as well as visiting museums of sports (BRENT & DARYL 2004). The term sometimes also encompasses trips whose main goal is active recreation, such as kayaking or horse-riding (Siwiński 2007 after BOŃCZAK 2013b, TALEGHANI & GHAFARY 2014, MERSKI 2002).

The literature on the subject presents several classifications of sports tourism. The most popular one distinguishes the following forms: active sports tourism, event sports tourism and nostalgia sports tourism. The latter refers to visiting historical and modern sports facilities and museums of sports (BERBEKA 2010, BRENT & DARYL 2004, FUNK & BRUUN 2007, ISKRA & WALASZCZYK 2015).

Following some literature studies and an analysis of the findings described above regarding the term 'sports tourism', we would like to present a proposition concerning its content range (Fig. 1). It is necessary to have a comprehensive approach to the understanding of and defining the term 'sports tourism'. In this way, it may be understood as travelling away from the place of everyday life, for the maximum period of one year, when at least one of the main motivations for travel is:

- passively attending sporting or sports-recreational events as a spectator (fan);
- actively participating in sporting or sports-recreational events, for personal (e.g. to do sport as an amateur), or for professional reasons (as athletes);
- visiting sports facilities and museums of sports;
- actively undertaking chosen form(s) of recreational and/or specialised tourism, e.g. skiing, horse-riding, sailing, etc.

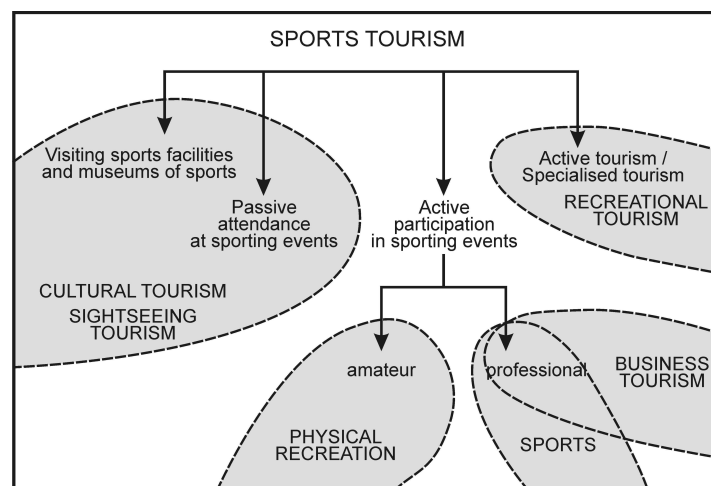


Fig. 1. Forms of human activity constituting the content range of sports tourism  
Source: author, based on a literature review

At present, the proposition can be treated as an attempt to look globally at the content range of sports tourism.

In part, defining sports tourism in this way does not refer to and seems to 'contradict' the classical understanding of the concept of the tourist, of who the tourist is. Therefore, the term 'sports tourism' is more of a convenient expression used in media jargon. Despite the fact that we are aware of the confusion concerning the content range of the term, we believe it justifiable to include one-day visitors as 'sports tourists'. In this way we propose a discussion whether this form should include tourist activity lasting less than 24 hours, during which visitors do not use or are not made to use tourism infrastructure and/ or they do not purchase any products or services (e.g. free passive or active participation in sports-recreational events in the neighbouring destinations, lasting several hours). Here, we again come to the question whether it is still tourism or only moving from place to place, mistaken for tourism, where the main motivation is sport. In this way, the whole problem seems to result largely from the changeable nature of the times in which we live, which are ahead not only of statistics, but also the academic world which has trouble describing and understanding the complexity of phenomena and processes. As a result, all problems related to sports tourism, its description and measurement come from the lack of a generally acceptable definition. It is largely due to the fact that the component forms of sports tourism are included in the conception of other types of tourism, such as pop-cultural tourism (MIKOS VON ROHRSCHEIDT 2008), business tourism

(WYRZYKOWSKI & MARAK 2010), or active recreational tourism (BRENT & DARYL 2004). An equally important issue in this case is specifying the subject of sports tourism, defined one way or another. At the same time, we must not forget that in a large part of research we deal with the fragmentariness of presenting sports tourism. It shows in studying 'one' of its manifestations through selected parameters, which results from the complexity of the term and the visible lack of interest in capturing it in official statistics.

Just like other forms of tourism, in sports tourism the basic measures which may define its scale are the number of participants and the amount of income, analysed as absolute or relative in comparative studies. Currently, with the lack of statistics, establishing any measures/indicators would certainly be unrealistic, and it would be impossible to check their usefulness in describing the phenomenon and the degree of diagnostic potential. An equally important element determining the choice of indicators is to assume a given level of spatial reference, or a description of individual events. The lack of clearly specified spatial reference units, as well as multidimensionality, do not allow us to state straightforwardly that seasonality is a feature of sports tourism. To our mind, it is possible to provide evidence of seasonality but at the same time demonstrate that this seasonality does not occur. Moreover, it is important in this discussion whether we talk about sports tourism as a whole or about certain aspects: how to define the time over which we will try to define seasonality (a year, month or week), as well as what differences between individual values will entitle us to confirm its occurrence.

We are convinced that sports tourism, no matter how it is defined, does not require infrastructure dedicated especially to it, apart from that which is necessary to undertake various types of tourism, physical recreation and sports, which constitute sports tourism.

As for the future of sports tourism as an area of academic research, opinions expressed in the literature vary. However, in this case, all depends on the interest of the researchers themselves. The fact that they have been interested in sports tourism for 50 years and that they are discussing it perhaps does not suggest any boom in the research in this field, but proves a constant interest in studying these and related issues. It cannot be denied that sports tourism is gaining in significance.

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