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Sports tourism: An attempt to define the concept

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the season and region, all year round (LIPÓŃSKI 2012). Naturally, the romantic atmosphere of natural conditions is irreplaceable.

6. It seems that to make planning research on sports tourism easier, as well as to establish clear categories and parameters, we should distinguish the following segments: a) passive and active sports tourism; b) travel whose main purpose is to undertake sports and not other reasons and motivations; c) the division into professionals and amateurs (GAMMON & ROBINSON 2003, LOMINE & EDUMUNDS 2007, RITCHIE & ADAIR, ed. 2004, UNWTO 2003).

It must be stressed that sports tourism (like other forms) rarely occurs in a 'pure' form. It can be assumed that during a trip its participants will be also taking part in cognitive (cultural, sightseeing, educational), business or recreational tourism. Therefore, attempts to define, study and measure the scale of involvement using statistical methods may turn out to be quite complicated because it is sometimes difficult to identify the main purpose of travel (KORSTANJE 2007, RITCHIE & ADAIR, ed. 2004, THEOBALD 2005).

To conclude, here is a general remark concerning the potential danger of trying at any cost to precisely define and categorise concepts which by their nature lie on the borderline of various phenomena. This is often impossible and as regards sports tourism, it may lead to the excessively expanding (or narrowing) of this term, distorting this concept and diverting from the popular meaning applied intuitively in everyday language by the whole of society.

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SPORTS TOURISM: AN ATTEMPT TO DEFINE THE CONCEPT

The attempt to define the concept of 'sports tourism' requires reference to the meaning of the basic terms, 'tourism' and 'sports'. Tourism is a subset of journeys and is defined as "all activities performed by persons who travel and stay for recreational, business or other reasons, for not longer than one year without breaks, away from their everyday environment, except trips where the main aim is earning activity, paid at a given destination" (UNWTO 1991, after KUREK & MIKA 2007, p. 12). Thus, the basic criteria for identifying tourism trips include the following: a temporary change of the place of stay, a change of the surroundings (a trip away from the everyday environment) and the motivation to travel (presented in detail in *International Recommendations for Tourism Statistics* 2008). Sport, on the other hand, signifies "all forms of physical activity, which by occasional or organized participation have an influence on building up or improving one's physical and mental condition, the development of social relations and achieving sports results at all levels" (Sports Act of 25 June 2010).

In the context of the above definitions, in the classification of tourism types based on the travel aim criterion, we may distinguish sports tourism, understood as a kind of tourism where the main aim is physical activity, participation in sporting events or visiting sports facilities (GIBSON 1998, ROSS 2001, MOKRAS-GRABOWSKA 2015). Diversifying the aims of travel and the degree of physical activity undertaken by tourists (Table 1) is the reason

Table 1. Sports tourism classification by aims of travel

Main aim of travel	Type of tourism	Physical activity
Visiting sports facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nostalgia sports tourism • Supporters' tourism ✓ <i>Groundspotting</i> 	low  large
Travelling with athletes, following athletes (relatives, idols)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporters' tourism: ✓ Event sports tourism ✓ Fan tourism ✓ <i>Groundhopping</i> 	
Participating in sporting events	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active tourism • Specialist tourism • Specialised tourism 	
Amateur physical activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Athletes' tourism 	
Professional physical activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Athletes' tourism 	

Groundspotting – visiting sports facilities (outside sporting events).

Groundhopping – ‘jumping from pitch to pitch’ in order to take part in the maximum number of sporting events.

Source: author, based on: H.J. GIBSON (1998), D. ROSS (2001), J. MOKRAS-GRABOWSKA (2015), A. STASIAK & B. WŁODARCZYK (2015).

why sports tourism cannot be treated as a homogenous phenomenon. From the point of view of sports tourism – the tourist – participating in this type of trip may on the one hand (scale of activity) not require any special physical predisposition (visiting, observation), but on the other, it may refer to trips made by professional athletes.

Including trips made by professional athletes (training, competitions), tourism travel is analogous to travel related to work as a part of business tourism (STASIAK & WŁODARCZYK 2015).

The large diversity, not only as regards the activities and fitness of sports tourism participants, but also the objects and subjects of their interest (facilities, events, sports teams, competitors – athletes), is the reason why it is very difficult to define the conditions of sports tourism development, related to the type of necessary infrastructure. Trips of this kind may not require any infrastructure (e.g. swimming in a lake, climbing mountains), but they may also strongly depend on the occurrence of specific sports infrastructure (e.g. visiting stadiums, attending mass events on stadiums, arenas and sports halls).

The diversification of sports tourism types also causes problems with measuring its scale and its features (e.g. seasonality, kinds of tourism, directions of travel, sites). In the case of sports tourism connected with visiting ticketed facilities, using paid equipment (e.g. ski lifts) or attending events, one of the basic measures is the number of tickets sold. Monitoring changes in the attendance, those visiting facilities and using infrastructure make it possible to establish the scale of these forms of sports tourism and their variation over time. The source of information regarding trips made by professional athletes are sports organizations, clubs (number of trips, number of athletes, directions of travel, length of stay, seasonality, cost of travel, etc.), as well as the accommodation facilities where they stay. The most difficult is to define the scale of the sports tourism phenomenon related to the activity of amateurs, which does not require paid infrastructure. Identifying this type of tourist among all travellers requires research concerning motivations for travel.

The growing diversity of types of tourism, which can be defined as sports tourism, their rapidly growing popularity (e.g. marathons, hiking, trips of the groundspotting and groundhopping type) reflects the changes/transformations taking place in the style of living of contemporary societies, increasingly oriented towards physical activity. Adding tourism development forecasts (*Tourism towards 2030*), we may expect further growth in sports tourism in the near future both in the quantitative and qualitative sense (an increasing number of participants and a growing diversity of forms, respectively).

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