Sports tourism: An attempt to define the concept

Alina Zajadacz
Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Department of Geographical and Geological Sciences, Faculty of Tourism and Recreation

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the season and all year round (Liponski 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.

Bibliography


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Alina Zajadacz

Mickiewicz University in Poznań

Department of Geographical and Geological Sciences

Faculty of Tourism and Recreation

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
Tourism towards 2030. Global Overview.

very difficult to define the conditions of sports tourism development, related to the type of necessary infra-
objects and subjects of their interest (facilities, events, sports teams, competitors – athletes), is the reason why it is

difficult to define the conditions of sports tourism development, related to the type of necessary infra-
structure. 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 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
difficult to define the conditions of sports tourism development, related to the type of necessary infra-
structure. 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 par-
ticipants and a growing diversity of forms, respectively).

Bibliography


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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.