

Research in tourism in the age of crisis

This issue of Poznań University of Economics Review is dedicated to economic and social problems related to tourism. The collected papers under the general title “Research in Tourism in the Age of Crisis” are written by foreign authors, four of them are members of the Tourist Research Centre and also researchers from the Department of Tourism at the Poznań University of Economics. It is worth mentioning that the current issue follows two earlier issues (no. 2 and 3) of the Poznań University of Economics Review 2012 that were devoted to the global financial crisis which changed the perception of the modern world economy including the tourism industry, as well as research in tourism.

Referring to the 40th anniversary of the Department of Tourism David Airey shares his reflections on scientific research and education in tourism paying particular attention to new trends. He believes that in this age of crisis “governments prompted by the massive growth of higher education and by the tightening of public budgets have sought to reduce the funding for universities”.

Grzegorz Gołębski discusses tourism research and education in Poland with a focus on the science and education drivers contributing to the development of tourism. The economic and demographic crisis has particularly stressed errors stemming from the uncritical use of the quantitative approach in tourism research and education.

The economic crisis has highlighted the role of consumer surplus and the macro valuation of tourism projects, which is discussed by Norbert Vanhove. He concentrates on finding an answer to the question: how should non-priced services be valued? The author considers five topics: nature of investment appraisal, externalities in tourism, identification of cost and benefit items, consumer surplus of non-priced tourism resources and social cost versus economic impact analysis.

Consumer surplus is related to investments into tourist projects. The problem of investment is touched upon by Łukasz Nawrot. His paper concentrates on the renewable energy sources (RES) market in the modern economy with particular regard to investment processes. Despite the economic crisis changes in renewable energy markets are so dynamic that just in Poland RES investment levels are estimated to amount to €27 billion by 2020. Naturally, capital transfer and innovation diffusion will be channelled into the tourism industry. However, these processes are not properly recognised which stresses the need for research in that area.

Investment results in a rise in wealth, which is one of the five factors that are considered to be a prerequisite for tourism. The factors (assets, amenities and accessibility on the part of a potential destination and ability and motivation to travel

on the demand side) are discussed by Martin Lohmann and Henrike Beer. They present empirical evidence based on large sample population surveys in Germany which illustrate the strong influence of these five factors. The result of the analysis is a model which is helpful in providing a basic understanding of the tourism system.

Amenities are one of the five factors mentioned above and depend on the tourism enterprises found in a tourist destination. In order to be able to deal successfully with the challenges of increased competition, the tourism enterprises have to take measures to acquire adequate human resources. The role of human resources in creating a competitive advantage of business entities is discussed by Marlena Bednarska, Marcin Olszewski and Dawid Szutowski. The aim of their paper is to create a conceptual model explaining relations between the quality of work life and the competitive potential in the tourism industry.

Human capital is the foundation for building a regional innovation system in which culture plays a crucial role. Therefore, Anna Bialk-Wolf, Harald Pechlaner and Christian Nordhorn believe that culture, creativity and regionalism seem to allow tourism to cope better with the troubles of our times. The aim of their paper is to contribute a better understanding of the ways culture and creativity influence the building of a regional innovation system.

The economic development results in an increase in expectations and demands on the part of customers, who become the so called prosuments. They are more active and interested in new forms of products. The problem is illustrated empirically by Agnieszka Niezgoda, who presents the results of direct interviews with representatives of various company types (tour operators, agents, airlines).

A further issue of Poznań University of Economics Review is published on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Department of Tourism in Poznan University of Economics. We do not believe this to be an opportunity to celebrate but we think it is worthwhile writing a couple of words about one of Poland's leading research and didactic centres that deals with economic problems related to tourism.

The Department was created in 1973. Since then it has been well managed and has had a consistent HR policy. For the last 40 years it has been run by only two people: Professor R. Gałęcki (between 1973 and 1999) and since then by the author of these words. Over the years over 1,200 people have completed their master's degrees, 27 of the people who have been supervised by Professors Gałęcki and Gołębski have obtained doctorate degrees in economic sciences, of whom five have become professors of economic sciences (A. Rapacz, K. Rogoziński, G. Gołębski, St. Bosiacki, A. Niezgoda). Currently, the Department has eight full-time members and two full-time doctoral students. The average age of its members is under 37.

Work of the Department's researchers currently concentrates on regional problems, companies and relatively new research issues concerning innovation and RES. The wide range of regional research includes sustained development issues in the context of regional development, methods of isolating tourist destinations, impact

of an urban area on innovativeness, productivity of the tourist sector and an integrated system of quality management in a region. What should also be stressed is the research analysing conditions of cooperation in a tourist region, competitiveness of a region as a result of globalisation processes and the role that the public sector plays in stimulating investment processes in tourist areas. Research at company level is concerned with the methodology of evaluating the quality of services in the hotel industry, risk management and methods of risk control, entrepreneurship in the Polish tourist sector, shaping a global product in a hotel and methods of measuring the effectiveness of tourist companies. Research activity on the part of the Department's members is reflected in the research grants that they have been awarded in recent years. Between 2010 and 2012 the following Polish National Science Centre grants were completed: "Knowledge Management in the Process of Quality-based Competition in the Hotel Industry" (M. Olszewski) and "Conditions of Competition for Tourist Development of a Region" (K. Czernek). A grant was also rewarded by the City Hall of Poznan – "Measuring and Conditions of Tourist Function Development in a City. Case Study – Poznan" by Gołembski *et al.*). Currently, our researchers are working thanks to three grants financed by the Polish National Science Centre on: "Tourist Function in the Internationalisation of Cities" (P. Zmysłony), "Determinants of ability to absorb innovations in the tourism industry in relation to renewable energy" (Ł. Nawrot *et al.*) and "Quality of work life in competitive potential development in the tourism industry" (M. Bednarska *et al.*).

Special attention should be paid to our research and didactic cooperation with foreign scientific centres and our members' participation in renowned international conferences. What must be mentioned is our long-term cooperation in the area of research with the University of Innsbruck (Department of Strategic Management, Marketing and Tourism) since 2005, in which virtually all our researchers have taken part. Between 2005 and 2009 two projects were carried out: "Entrepreneurship in Tourism. A Comparative Study of Austria and Poland" and "Destination Rejuvenation Strategies – Policies and Measures". Student exchange programmes for one semester are run jointly with the Catholic University of Eichstätt-Ingolstadt in Bavaria. Research into health resorts is conducted with the Széchenyi István University in Győr, Hungary. Joint research, discussions about various methodologies and workshops during which research results can be presented enable our members to gain experience in international contact. This is reflected in their participation in international organisations and their ability to present the results of their work during numerous international conferences. The Chair of the Department has participated in the International Association of Scientific Experts in Tourism Congresses (Cha Am – Thailand, Hangzhou – China, Marrakesh, Athens, Macao). He is a Tourist Research Centre member and has participated in meetings in Bruges, Tours, Bolzano, Kiel, Poznan, Vienna, Bodrum, Bern and Athens. Justyna Majewska is also a member of the elite TRC (which has only 30 members from the so-called

“old” European Union). Many of our researchers attend important international conferences (Calcutta – Ł. Nawrot, Brunico, Bournemouth, Sankt Petersburg - P. Zmyslony, Rijeka – A. Niezgoda) and participate in fellowships or scientific programmes in renowned scientific centres.

In recent years the Department has initiated and held important national and international scientific events. This resulted in the concept of organising meetings for researchers and practitioners in the tourist industry under the name of the Tourist Expert Committee. Our Department hosted the first Committee in 2003, which was called “Directions of Scientific Research Development in the Area of Tourism in the Context of Poland’s Membership in the EU”, the third Committee in 2006, which was titled “Tourism in the Subjective and Spatial Approach – Human-Space-Enterprise”, and the fourth Committee in 2008 – “Tourism as a Factor Determining a Growth in the Competitiveness of Regions in the Era of Globalisation”. We have also started Poland’s Conferences of Tourism Institutes and Departments in state run universities. In 2014 we are organising the fourth conference titled “Challenges in Tourism in the Contemporary World”, which will give researchers from the best universities in Poland an opportunity to integrate. The Department also had the honour of organising the 44th TRC meeting in Poznan in 2009, which was a European forum of scientific thought exchange.

The Department of Tourism in the Poznan University of Economics is Poland’s leading didactic centre which inspires new forms of teaching and fields of study. The university’s graduates boast excellent theoretical knowledge and practical skills that they can use in the labour market. As early as 1992 the Department started a two-cycle study programme with three-year Bachelor’s degree courses in the Hotel Industry School (Wyższa Szkoła Hotelarska) and two-year Master’s degree courses. Such a system was introduced in Polish education only 15 years later.

In 2011 a two-cycle field of study called Tourism Industry was introduced and supervised by the Department, which was new in Poland. It is still the only field of study to be taken up for a Master’s degree course. Setting up this field of study resulted from the need to ensure the best possible conditions in which a wide and deep knowledge of the tourism economy could be promoted. It combines macroeconomic and global dimensions with the knowledge of microeconomics and management. Now the field of study is taken up by over 250 people and despite the demographic crisis every year several candidates apply for each place. The field of study was deemed worthy of being subsidised from the European Social Fund Called “Human Resources for the Economy”. The project has set up the following study “Creating and Implementing the Field of Study Called Tourism Economy”. As a result the Department received funds to promote the new field of study, develop an electronic centre for supporting tourist education, purchase books and journals, conduct a students’ scholarly association and – what is worth stressing – organise lectures by researchers dealing with economic and social aspects of tourism. Since

2011 lectures have been given by Professor Norbert Vanhove, Catholic University of Leuven, Professor Peter Keller, the chair of AIEST at the University of Lausanne, Professor Harald Pechlaner from the European Academy of Bozen and Professor David Airey from the University of Surrey.

As for teaching, the Department pays particular attention to students having hands-on experience of the economy. Outstanding practitioners regularly conduct classes in English according to the relevant curricula. This is illustrated by our long-term cooperation with Owen Easteal, manager of hotels in Germany (lectures in Tourism Management, Personal Policy in Tourism). Classes have been run by directors of the Sheraton Hotels in Poznan and Sopot, the co-owner of the IBB hotel chain and the director of the Accor board (lectures in Hospitality Industry Management, Business of Tourism).

Intensive scientific research activities are conducted by the Student Centre for Research in Tourism, "Explorers". Recently (in 2012 and 2013) the Centre has implemented four research projects, including information and communication technologies and their use in tourist information or visitor centres. The students have written four papers later published by the Poznan and Wroclaw Universities of Economics publishing houses and organised five seminars attended by tourism economy practitioners and experts. They have presented the results of their research during three national conferences. We predict that our students will soon go international with their research activities.

The Department of Tourism's mission is to closely cooperate with economic practitioners at home and especially in Polish regions. This is manifested through the Department creating a tourist development strategy. We have participated in preparing guidelines for the inclusion of tourism in the National Development Plan for the years 2007-2013 (at the national level). We have developed a sustained tourism development programme for the Wielkopolski National Park and local activity groups in the Voivodeship of Lubuskie. We have co-authored a tourism development strategy for Poznan until 2030. We cooperate closely with practitioners during forums of the Poznan Local Tourist Organisation [Poznan local DMO] and Wielkopolska Tourist Organisation [Regional DMO – the Department is a member of the organisation]. Numerous initiatives undertaken by the Department include the realisation and implementation of the Poznan Tourist Barometer, the co-creation of the concept of an integrated tourism management system in Poznan, the research into the effectiveness of the "Half Price Poznan" project and into the MICE market network. The Department also offers consultancy in respect of methods of examining tourist demand. As part of promoting business practice the Department organises scientific seminars during Poland's biggest tourism fair – Tour Salon in Poznan. In the recent years the Department has organised over 10 such meetings called "Discussion Forums" devoted to, amongst other things, integrated tourism management in regions, the possibilities of using tourism as a stimulant to the de-

velopment of countries and regions, conditions of foreign inbound tourism development in Poland, and many other issues.

The importance of this cooperation for business practice can be illustrated by distinctions that the Department has received over the last years:

The Honorary Award for achievements in tourism awarded by the Ministry of Economy in 2003,

The Honorary Award for contributions to the advancement of the Voivodeship of Wielkopolskie awarded by the Board of the Voivodeship of Wielkoposka in 2008.

A Certificate of Appreciation for the idea and co-organisation of the four Tourism Expert Committees awarded by the Council of the Polish Chamber of Tourism in 2008.

We hope you will enjoy reading this issue. We would like to thank all our reviewers for their efforts to raise its quality and our authors for participating in the project, which is so crucial during the Department's anniversary.

Grzegorz Gołembski and Łukasz Nawrot
Editors of the volume