

# THE SPECIFIC NATURE OF FUNCTIONING OF THE CENTRES WHERE LARGE RELIGIOUS EVENTS ARE ORGANIZED

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ABSTRACT The functioning of the centres, where the places of religious worship are located, is connected with the occurrence of periodic impediments resulting from the large influx of pilgrims in selected periods, so called pilgrimage peaks. The research conducted is aimed at developing a functioning model of the centres in which large religious events are organized on a regular basis to facilitate more effective involvement of the city residents in providing services for arriving pilgrims – tourists and to contribute to the sustainable development of the centres with similar characteristics.

The article presents selected procedures related to the organization and securing of seasonal pilgrimages and analysis of preparations for the celebration of the World Youth Day in Czestochowa, as well as presents the considerations on functioning of the city during this period.

## Introduction

The functioning of the centres, where religious worship sites are present, is connected with the occurrence of periodic impediments resulting from the large influx of pilgrims in selected periods, which are called pilgrimage peaks. Depending on the specifics of the city, each pilgrimage centre may have different periods in which significantly more pilgrims arrive to the centre. Because they are cyclical periods, people responsible for the course and safety

of pilgrimage peaks in the city have prepared a series of procedures, implemented almost automatically, ensuring the feeling of relative comfort relative and safety of both pilgrims and residents of the centre. The organization of non-standard events that will attract a lot more tourists – pilgrims is associated with a significant commitment on the part of the organizer and city authorities and means a number of difficulties for its residents

### **Tourism management at the level of the city**

The main purpose of tourism management at the level of the city is raising its competitiveness which results in its sustainable development (Scott, Baggio, Cooper, 2008) i.e. development of touristic functions and other socio-economic functions which are influenced by the above-mentioned competitiveness. That purpose refers to both: indirect competitiveness, which creates conditions for the functioning of touristic entities which enables increasing their individual competitive superiority, and direct competitiveness which acquires abilities helping each region to gain tourists and other benefits, for example: investors, large events organization, EU funds (Jędrzejczyk, 2003)

According to the World Tourism Organization, tourism management at the level of a city or region refers to the creation and implementation of a coherent tourism policy in accordance with its sustainable organizational system, and making effective decisions in this regard (UNWTO, 2010). Mezo-economic application of these actions allows simultaneous glance from the macro perspective and using experience of practice and theory of formal organizations management on the micro level. In the classical sense, the management consists of four interconnected sequences of logical functions: planning, organizing, leadership and controlling (Stoner, Wankel, 1992). Due to the complexity of urban development processes, they must be verified (Nawrot, Zmysłony, 2009). General principles and methods of strategy construction should be based on the concept of strategic management (Bryson, Alston, 2005), which specifies the manner of thinking, acting and learning, which on the one hand involves a comprehensive and broad view perspective, but on the other hand leads to specific and precise actions selection. It has more often visionary and proactive nature than reactive nature; it is also flexible and practical. Its bases include: outside orientation instead of internal development problems, and the involvement of all stakeholders in tourism development. Strategic management combines continuous analysis of environment, its resources and position towards competition. Due to the concentration in long time horizon it is also possible not to be submissive to short terms which are often treacherous. Therefore farsightedness cannot be confused with a lack of flexibility in the case of the new opportunities or significant changes emergence, which are compared with the previously accepted assumptions.

Development decisions involve many bodies with regard to the planning which therefore should take place in a collegial manner, through discussion and arrangements that affect making decisions and blurring responsibility for prolongation of their implementation. Moreover, development objectives of tourism in the city are multi-faceted, more generally formulated for marketing purposes, and due to non-market tourism functions which are partly irrational and immeasurable may be difficult to formulate (Murphy, Murphy, 2004). The time horizon covered by the planning is relatively longer than business plans, because the results of actions are visible in the long period. E. Inskeep says that this should take from 10 to 20 years, which reduces strategic records of concreteness (National and Regional Tourism Planning, 1995).

The organizational function must be adapted to the complete and complex organizational structure of the city on a larger scale than in formal organizations (Murphy, Murphy, 2004). Under these conditions, the most important

task is to build the partnership, which does not have hierarchical character, based on the sovereignty and equality of entities belonging to its composition. The establishment and functioning of the partnership structure is primarily a challenge to the existing structure of the tourist region (Machiavelli, 2001). In addition, the process of organizing tactical dimension is associated with the type, size and complementary to the investments of location programming.

It differs to the greatest extent from the activities undertaken by people in organizations. It does not refer directly to people, but to sovereign institution's entities, businesses and organizations whose activities are based on their own resources and it is consistent with the objectives. Therefore, conduction has participating character and it is implemented in the form of indirect influence on entities' behaviours who are involved in the creation of the tourist offer (Zmysłony, 2008). Due to the fragmentation and complementarity of the tourism economy of urban bodies, it is important for tourist organization to integrate local authorities, businesses and other institutions involved in the tourism development or to enable creation of partnerships (UNWTO, 2010). We cannot distinguish one universal form and structure of organization which is called Destination Management Organization (DMO) in English.

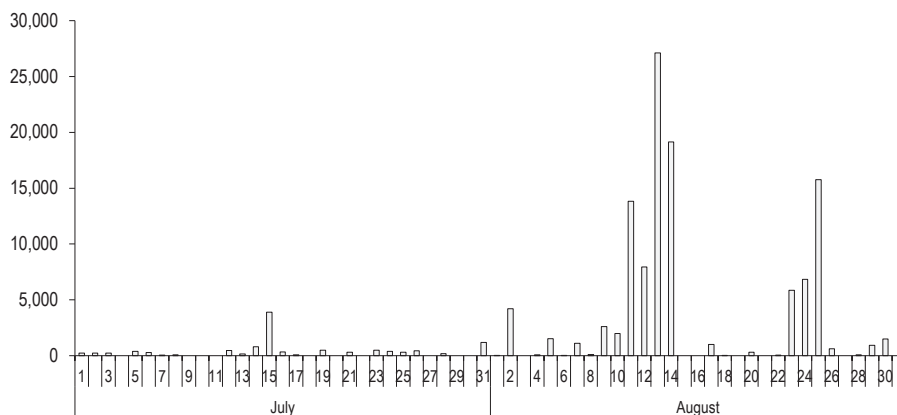
In Polish cities, this function is performed by public entities, ie organizational units of local government or institutions that are financially dependent on it, tourist organizations or other non-profit organizations, regional development agencies or enterprises established by private entities. The adoption of a particular formula in a city depends on the level of tourism development, the position and strength of municipal authorities, tourist entities interaction, the evolution of the authorities' organizational structure, legal solutions in the field of tourism or using external funds (Zmysłony, 2008; Wang, 2011). This emphasizes complex and large-scale nature of the territorial tourism product and it means that the DMO should be characterized by a flexible hierarchical structure that can be easily adapted to market demands and changes in the environment. It is worth mentioning that the organization created or extracted specifically for the needs of tourism management in the region or additional business, is able to guarantee a professional tasks performance level in this regard. The boundaries of DMO coincide with the boundaries of administrative units. The controlling functions also have to be understood in a much broader sense, because tourism directly or indirectly affects almost all spheres of social and economic life. To ensure effectiveness, it is important to create a control system, to indicate entities that are responsible for conducting it and gathering information needed for the measurement. One must determine whether tourist activity does not interfere with environmental, social, cultural and economic sustainability and whether it includes educational elements and associates with the involvement of the local community (Telfer, 2008). Controlling in the tourist region should apply to the following areas: tourists' needs satisfaction level, economic effects of social and cultural changes and the impact on the environment. Similarly to the previous tourism management functions, the key to success is cooperation (Uysal, 2013).

Active engagement of local tourist organizations is a vital input to the balanced progression of tourism in the region. Local Tourist Organizations are a basis for collaboration between companies of the tourism branch, industry entities and local government subjects. Their operation is directly influencing the dynamics of the progression of local tourism through the making-off and introduction of business strategy (Stefko, Nowak, 2014; Grabara, 2013).

## Preparations for the organization of the Holy Father's visit to Czestochowa during the World Youth Day in 2016

The World Youth Day (WYD) which was held in Krakow in 2016, took place from 25.07 to 31.07. As it is an international venture with the official participation of the head of state, nearly all state, regional and local services are involved in the organization of the visit. The planned part of the World Youth Day was the visit of the Holy Father in Czestochowa at Jasna Góra, which resulted in the inclusion of the city of Czestochowa for the official celebration of the WYD.

The city of Czestochowa is often referred to as the spiritual capital of Poland as it is the centre where the place of religious worship is situated - the monastery on Jasna Gora. The city of Czestochowa and its inhabitants are accustomed to a significant number of pilgrims coming to the area and to periodically occurring pilgrimage peaks. It is estimated that each year, 3 to 4 million pilgrims visit Jasna Góra. The pilgrimage movement is particularly intensified from May to October; however the most troublesome are the holiday months, which is why many of Czestochowa's residents are happy to leave the city at that time. In Czestochowa, one can especially point to two peaks which occur during the period: one on 14–15 August associated with the feasts of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary and on 25–26 August related to the celebrations of Our Lady of Czestochowa. Figure 1 shows the distribution of recorded average of daily visits to Jasna Góra in the summer months, which well shows the occurrence of pilgrimage peaks. The scale of the difficulties in organizing the celebrations of the World Youth Day and their impact on the functioning of the city is evidenced by the fact that on the day of the Holy Father's visit, about 300,000 young people arrived at Jasna Góra, and about 400,000 pilgrims took part in the main mass.



**Figure 1.** Average of daily visits to Jasna Góra in the summer months

Source: own study based on Jasna Góra data's.

In the city, the president of the city of Czestochowa who is responsible for organizing and securing the work of the World Youth Day, in a special regulation set up working teams covering areas such as:

1. Working team for security, mainly covering members of the Częstochowa Municipal Office.
2. Medical and sanitary team covering:
  - Department of Health,
  - Team of city hospitals,
  - Emergency Medical Service,
  - Sanitary Inspectorate.
3. Infrastructure and transport team including representatives of the Municipal Road and Transport Administration.
4. Team for maintenance of cleanliness, order, sanitation and local public transport including, among others:
  - Department of Crisis Management, Population Protection and Defense,
  - Municipal Transport Company,
  - Sewage Treatment Plant "Warta" S A,
  - Water Supply and Sewerage Joint Stock Company of the Częstochowa District,
  - Municipal Police,
  - City Treasurer.
5. Social communication team, which includes, among others:
  - Spokesperson of the Municipal Office,
  - Department of Culture, Promotion and Sport,
  - Representatives of the church.

The team was composed mostly of representatives of units subordinate to the President but it included also representatives of the church side and institutions independent of the President. The role of the team was primarily to coordinate activities to safeguard the organized event, streamline key information, and coordinate activities with the security services.

During the organization of the celebrations of the World Youth Day in Częstochowa, the event was secured by over 8,000 policemen, but also about 900 firefighters from the state and voluntary fire brigades. Their tasks included first aid; firefighters from 20 walking patrols provided first aid to 55 pilgrims. In addition, more than 350 people of the city's services were involved in medical coverage of the event, which included more than 50 walking patrols, 27 ambulances, 5 fixed medical service units (tents), 3 patrols on quads and the command unit of medical staff.

What seems particularly interesting is the case of volunteers who helped to secure the event. According to information provided by Jasna Góra information services, there were only about 150 of them. This amount may be due to the fact that the future volunteers had to buy packages which cost between PLN 50 and PLN 300 depending on which resources they included: a T-shirt, warm meal, transportation and overnight stay.

### **Functioning of the city during the celebration of the World Youth Day on Jasna Góra**

The inhabitants of Częstochowa are accustomed to periodic difficulties connected with the pilgrimage peaks, but the survey conducted directly before the WYD celebrations in Częstochowa showed that a large part of the inhabitants (38%) intended to leave the city during the celebrations. The most frequent reason for such a decision given by the respondents was a problem related to the difficulties of city functioning during the Pope's arrival. The second reason for leaving the city in the analysed period was the fear of a possible terrorist attack, which may directly or indirectly affect the safety of remaining residents.

During the main ceremonies of the World Youth Day in Czestochowa from 27 to 28 July 2016 further studies were conducted to demonstrate the real impact of WYD on the functioning of the city and its inhabitants. Surveyors were sent to check the functioning of businesses such as shops, bars, service companies and other businesses located within 500m from the centre where the celebrations took place. The interviewers conducted also structured interviews, which showed that the local entrepreneurs suffered heavy financial losses during the WYD celebrations in Czestochowa. The main cause of the situation was the accumulation of all the celebrations in the monastery on Jasna Góra and in the surrounding parks - the organisers did not manage to encourage participants to leave the area and visit the city - and the departure of a significant part of the inhabitants of Czestochowa in anticipation of the impediments to the city functioning in the analysed period. Due to the repeated inconvenience, there is a visible need to develop and implement a concept that will enable greater involvement of the local community in the organization and operation of existing pilgrimage tourism movements, which may improve the attitude of the residents towards arriving pilgrims.

## Conclusions

The research conducted by the Authors regarding the attitude of Czestochowa residents to arriving pilgrims - tourists in the context of the comfort of living in the city indicates the lack of special nuisance in functioning outside the main pilgrimage peaks and the low use of economic potential associated with a large influx of tourists-pilgrims among the residents. This leads to moderately negative attitude to the organization of large religious events which significantly limit the freedom of functioning of residents in Czestochowa.

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