

SPATIAL POLICY OF SUBURBAN MUNICIPALITIES. CURRENT DIRECTIONS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM AND RECREATION IN SUBURBAN AREAS

MARIUSZ SOŁTYSIK,¹ ANDRZEJ TUCKI,² WOJCIECH FEDYK,³
PIOTR OLEŚNIEWICZ⁴

¹ University School of Physical Education in Wrocław, POLAND
e-mail: mariusz.soltysik@awf.wroc.pl

² Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin, POLAND
e-mail: andrzejtucki1@gmail.com

³ University School of Physical Education in Wrocław, POLAND
e-mail: wojciech.fedyk@awf.wroc.pl

⁴ University School of Physical Education in Wrocław, POLAND
e-mail: piotr.olesniewicz@awf.wroc.pl

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ABSTRACT

The authors determined chosen measures and indicators of partial assessment of the spatial policy of the studied suburban municipalities, which allowed to synthetically evaluate the policy. In particular, the conceptual and administrative aspects of shaping tourist space were addressed. In the context of the presented analyses, a number of significant conclusions were drawn, proving a significant diversity in the directions and character of the municipalities spatial policy with respect to creating conditions for tourism and recreation development. The observations illustrate that significant changes are taking place in managing space and area resources, in the dynamic aspect, in the local government units. They also prove diversified interest of suburban municipalities in the development of tourist and recreational functions and of their management and pro-investment initiative in this respect. The current tendencies in spatial transformations observed in the analysed municipalities point at their different character both in organizational and substantial aspects in comparison with the previous periods of 'local spatial self-governance'.

Introduction

The problem of 'spatial order' in communal, district or regional areas is the most important and most discussed subject of the tourism policy of local government units in Poland. The tasks of public units at the local level are defined by local acts, and mainly concern the distribution, management and reorganization of the areas within their administrative borders as for their function, current purpose and accepted development directions.

Depending on the structural and functional resources of the local units, their managing institutions together with private and social entities operating within the municipality set the boundaries and define the purpose of particular areas to realize services referring to tourism and recreation. Unfortunately, very often a discrepancy occurs between the set directions planned by public units represented by expert institutions and the local society expectations.

The tasks of a municipality concerning spatial planning, economy and policy are usually treated as structural tools of tourism policy. They include e.g. groups of legal and organizational, planning, spatial, economic (financial), information and promotion instruments (e.g. Kornak, Rapacz, 2001; Panasiuk, 2007; Pawlusiński, 2005; Sołtysik, 2013; Tucki, Świeca, 2008, 2013). The impact of local government and private and social entities on tourism and recreation development usually varies in shape, direction and scale. The area management instruments used in practice to trigger tourism usually have complex and inseparable character.

To form and conduct the spatial policy in a municipality area, including the study on the conditions, directions and local plans of spatial development, with the exception of internal waters, territorial waters, special economic zones and restricted areas, is a municipality task.

The observed changes in the directions of the suburban areas development are the reason to study, analyse, compare and evaluate them in the country scale. Current syntheses and analyses of the research on tourism policy, including spatial instruments, of suburban municipalities near big Polish cities can lead to common results, creating uniform and rational directions of suburban areas socio-economic development, but respecting their individual character and regional attractions.

Aims and methodological assumptions

In order to define the spatial policy of the studied municipalities as for the whole range of activities described as tourism policy, partial determinants, components of a complex evaluation were isolated and analysed. The research referred to a broader substantial and spatial area and focused on the inter-sectorial tourism policy of the suburban municipalities (Sołtysik, 2013). A basic method of achieving primary and secondary data was applied, i.e. the monographic method using reports and plans functioning and available in particular municipalities (*Sprawozdania...; Studium...; Zbiorne zestawienie...*, 2012; *Zmiana Studium...*, 2012). Supplementary research data were achieved from individual interviews in the municipalities.

Spatially, the research covered local government units directly surrounding the city of Wrocław and forming the administrative structure of the Wrocław district: Czernica, Długołęka, Kały Wrocławskie, Kobierzyce, Siechnice. The selection of the municipalities depended on their location in the vicinity of the agglomeration (a direct border with the city, providing intense socio-economic impact on suburban areas) and a similar character of organization and administrative management, resulting from a structural dependence on the same district unit.

In the paper, selected indexes of a partial evaluation of the chosen suburban municipalities spatial policy were defined and, on their basis, synthetic evaluation was performed. In particular, we concentrated on the conceptual and administrative process of tourist space formation, e.g.:

- the spatial policy scale and dynamics in the chosen municipalities;
- priorities and directions of the suburban municipalities socio-economic development;
- current tendencies in the pro-tourist development of suburban areas.

Spatial policy in the organizational structure of municipalities

A very important area of a municipality socio-economic activity, including tourism policy, is creating and implementing spatial policy based on organizational structures (social and administrative), which determine the land development form and directions.

The character of spatial policy based on the existing socio-administrative system observed in the researched municipalities reflects the level of engagement of certain units in creating conditions for tourist and recreational development of the area.

The analysed municipalities differ significantly in the number of workers employed in spatial planning and land surveying units, clearly correlated with the municipality area and permanent population. The analysis of the organizational structure and the realization of tasks concerning public services connected with spatial planning and land surveying in the municipalities reveals certain significant features, e.g. (Tables 1 and 2):

- The number of local government employees is the highest in Długołęka and the lowest in Czernica. At the same time, these two municipalities are the biggest and the smallest ones as for the population number and the area.
- Statutory tasks concerning spatial planning and land surveying in Kobierzyce are much more detailed than in other municipalities. A strong differentiation of the municipalities as for task implementation effectiveness can be noticed, the most effective one being Czernica, and the least effective – Siechnice.

Table 1. Structural measurements of the organization and statutory tasks of spatial planning and land surveying units in suburban municipalities

Municipality	Number of statutory tasks per a spatial planning unit employee	Share of spatial planning units employees in the total number of the council employees (%)
Czernica	14.0	6.1
Długołęka	3.9	10.1
Kąty Wrocławskie	4.0	9.3
Kobierzyce	5.4	23.9
Siechnice	1.6	15.8

Source: own research.

- The share of the employees of spatial planning and land surveying units in the whole number of local administration workers can be connected with the number of spatial planning tasks. An increase in the number of these tasks measured by the ratio of planning units and other units employees can be noticed in Kobierzyce (almost 24%) and Siechnice (almost 16%).

- Serious differences can be noted as for the accessibility of the spatial planning staff to the citizens and the number of the staff compared with the municipality size, which influences the time needed to conduct administrative procedures and serve petitioners, as well as the quality of services.

Table 2. Differences in the indicators of 'public service' of spatial planning and land surveying units in suburban municipalities

Municipality	Population	Area (km ²)	Number of spatial planning and land surveying units employees per 10,000 citizens	Number of spatial planning and land surveying units employees per 10 km ² of the municipality area
Czernica	12,530	84	1.6	0.24
Długolęka	25,555	213	4.3	0.52
Kąty Wrocławskie	21,892	177	3.2	0.4
Kobierzyce	17,684	149	9.1	1.07
Siechnice	17,397	99	6.9	1.21

Source: own research.

Planning and financial aspects of municipal spatial policy

One of the most significant elements of setting the local tourism policy directions, especially with reference to determining the spatial range of tourist development and tourist function development, is qualitative and quantitative evaluation of documents in a particular administrative unit (Sołtysik, 2013).

Current tourist traffic and significant product and offer competition require that local government units undertake activities to increase the tourist function quality and direct the tourist traffic into a given area, allowing access to its attractions and balanced development.

One should notice the significance of the attempts to evaluate the relations between the socio-economic development degree in a given area as planned in documents, i.e. the study of spatial development conditions of a local government unit, and obtaining donations from the EU, which may impact the sustainable development and creating directions of local policies (Zajac, Wojewódzka, Stawicki, 2009; Fedyk, Krajewska-Smardz, Sołtysik, Ilnicki, 2013).

In the paper, available public documents concerning the studies of conditions and directions of spatial development prepared for five local government units of Lower Silesia were evaluated with the use of the desk research method.

The authors' choice of the units aimed at conducting a comparative evaluation. As a result of the study and auditing the local spatial development plans and conditions, a synthetic assessment of the researched documents was performed according to the assumed own measures and indicators allowing to draw broad conclusions.

The deep analysis of the documents, studies of spatial development conditions and directions in the chosen municipalities allows to conclude that:

- planning documents in the studied local government units are highly up-to-date,
- the studies of spatial development conditions and directions are hardly connected with planning and strategic documents concerning tourism development at both local and regional level,

- the model of describing local attractions and areas suitable to perform tourist functions occurs repeatedly and focuses only on enumerating monuments and protected areas of nature,
- there are single attempts to characterize tourist (accommodation, catering) or para-tourist (e.g. tourist tracks) infrastructure or to perform SWOT analyses to describe the level of tourist and recreational functions development,
- real pro-tourism aims in a municipality development are formulated in very general terms or not presented at all; they concern mainly the regulations and permitted forms of recreational development.

The importance of municipal spatial policy, especially aimed at creating conditions for tourism and recreation development, was also described by indicators defining the planning and financial activities in this respect. In the context of the conducted analyses of the main strategic documents and the set aims and directions of pro-tourism development, the intensity of spatial transformations according to the spatial development and financial plans (budgets) was identified. Planning and financial documents of the suburban municipalities for years 2009–2012 were analysed.

The studied municipalities differ significantly in the intensity of actions referring to spatial planning and changes in the current plans. The qualitative and quantitative analysis of the plans for suburban municipalities spatial development indicates several significant features, e.g.:

- There is a huge disproportion between the number of spatial development plans among the local government units (9–64), but also a significant variability of the phenomenon within the research period.
- Little engagement of local government units was observed (indirectly proved by a small number of documents) in the targeted planning of the tourist and recreational space despite the presence of pro-tourism resources and a visible development of this function (including pro-tourism aims indicated in the municipal development strategies).
- An interesting observation is the activity of Czernica and Kobierzyce, where a tendency to constant development of sport, tourism and recreation on the basis of prepared and updated planning documents can be noticed.

The analysis of expenditures (the amount, structure and dynamics of changes) on spatial planning and land surveying tasks in the local budgets under heading 710 (Service Activities), chapters 71004 (spatial development plans), 71013 (land surveying and cartographic works) and 71014 (land surveying and cartographic descriptions) allows to formulate numerous significant observations, e.g.:

- The observed disproportions and irregularities in the budget funds allocated by the municipalities for spatial planning and land surveying in 2009–2012 are probably caused by:
 - consequences of the turn of the local government term,
 - changes in the continuation of the spatial policy of the previous municipality authorities,
 - introducing and implementing new rules and directions of spatial planning,
 - allocating or changes in the allocation directions of external funds for investments in the municipalities.
- The worrying constant trend to decrease expenditures on certain tasks may lead to a significant decrease in the quality and topicality of the prepared planning documents.
- The activities of Kały Wrocławskie are focused on planning with the use of considerable funds that guarantee the quality of the prepared documents, but the number of the prepared plans is decreasing at the same time.

Conclusions

In the context of the conducted analyses, a number of significant conclusions were drawn, proving a significant diversity in the directions and character of the municipalities spatial policy with respect to creating conditions for tourism and recreation development. The observations illustrate that significant changes are taking place in managing space and area resources, in the dynamic aspect, in the local government units. They also prove diversified interest of suburban municipalities in the development of tourist and recreational functions and of their management and pro-investment initiative in this respect.

Practically, an assumption can be made (supported by local government practice observation) that a higher number of spatial planning and land surveying workers in comparison with the number of inhabitants as well as with the municipality area can imply decision-making efficiency and therefore more convenient and quicker administrative actions, which promote investment processes, including those concerning tourism and recreation.

The current tendencies in spatial transformations observed in the analysed municipalities point at their different character both in organizational and substantial aspects in comparison with the previous periods of 'local spatial self-governance'. This is caused by:

- the present conditions for the self-governments to use the external support of pro-developmental initiatives (including state and international funds),
- giving up spatial planning of small areas (e.g. particular allotments) and promoting transformations of bigger areas,
- limiting accidental spatial transformations in order to implement spatial policy based on planning and rational investment decisions,
- treating spatial policy as most important tasks to create conditions (public in character) for tourist and recreational economy, and thus for the socio-economic development of the municipality areas.

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