

# TOURISM FUNCTION AS AN ELEMENT OF REGIONAL COMPETITIVENESS

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## Abstract

**Introduction.** Regions can gain a competitive advantage in different ways, among others by making rational use of their resources in creating regional tourism products. Among these resources, what is of major importance, apart from having natural and cultural resources, is the tourist accommodation offered, which not only makes it possible to increase tourist traffic in the region but can also give it a competitive advantage over other regions. The accommodation and the tourist traffic recorded there can serve as indicators of the level of the development of the tourism function of a region and its dynamics. The aim of the current study is to determine, describe, and analyse the nature of the changes in the tourism function of all sixteen provinces in Poland. **Material and methods.** The study used indices based on the size and type of the accommodation and the volume of tourist traffic. Statistical data for the years 2000-2015 concerning the size of the tourist accommodation as well as the types of facilities and their occupancy by tourists were obtained from the official publications of the Polish central statistical office. The tourism function indices for Poland and particular provinces were calculated based on data for 2000 and 2015. The results obtained made it possible to identify trends in the increases or decreases in the tourist accommodation capacity and tourist traffic in the facilities and to estimate the changes in the tourism function based on this analysis. **Conclusions.** The data that were collected and processed made it possible to determine the regional structure of the tourist accommodation offered as well as the level of its occupancy. In general, the largest concentration of tourist accommodation was found in regions of high natural and cultural value (the Zachodniopomorskie, Pomorskie, Małopolskie, and Dolnośląskie Provinces). According to the values of the tourism function indices, the following provinces were in the most favourable situation: Zachodniopomorskie, Małopolskie, and Pomorskie (with a Schneider index exceeding 100 and a Charvat index exceeding 300). A relatively high level of the development of the tourism function was also noted for the Dolnośląskie Province (with the aforementioned indices exceeding the values of 90 and approximately 250, respectively). The four provinces listed above also distinguished themselves when it comes to the values of the Defert index (above 100), that is the number of tourists relative to the surface. The provinces whose tourism function was the least developed were the Opolskie and Lubelskie Provinces (with a Schneider index below 80, a Charvat index below 80, and a Defert index below 30).

**Key words:** tourist accommodation, province, tourism function