

**TOURIST AND RECREATIONAL CAPABILITY OF SMALL TOWNS WHICH RECEIVED  
THE TOWN CHART IN THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY AND ARE LOCATED IN WARSAW  
METROPOLITAN AREA**

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**Abstract:** Mazovia Region is the biggest region in Poland and it contains 85 cities including the capital – Warsaw. The main goal of the article is to describe the tourist and recreational capability of small towns and its role in their development. The evaluation of tourist and recreational capability of small towns located in Warsaw Metropolitan Area is an introduction to the research into conditions for the tourism development in small towns. There are three criteria which are used to select towns:

- statistical criteria based on population – population under 20 thousand inhabitants;
- spatial and functional criteria which perform certain town functions - location in Warsaw Metropolitan Area
- legal-administrative criteria – having received the town charter in 20<sup>th</sup> century.

There are ten towns which fulfill of criteria: Józefów, Kobyłka, Milanówek, Podkowa Leśna, Sulejówek, Zielonka, Brwinów, Ożarów Mazowiecki, Konstancin-Jeziorna, Błonie. Most of them are located about 20 km of Warsaw and are situated in the near neighbourhood of forest hence, their location is suitable for tourism and recreation. Among mentioned above small towns three are described in the article: Józefów, Konstancin-Jeziorna and Ożarów Mazowiecki.

**key words:** small towns, urban tourism, Warsaw Metropolitan Area, Warsaw Protected Landscape Area

## **Introduction**

Tourism is the important branch of economy and its significance is increasing. In contemporary cities and towns tourism and recreation are becoming very important part of social life. Going out to restaurants, participation in sports and cultural events, taking part in exhibitions, conferences are relatively new forms of urban tourism (Kowalczyk, 2005). Moreover,

increasing role of business tourism is observed too. Shopping, entertainment, mass events and many other attractions are characteristic for urban tourism in metropolises and big cities. Small towns have not such varied offer as big cities, however, they have specific environmental and social conditions. Most of mazovian small towns which received the urban status in 20<sup>th</sup> century are concentrated in near neighbourhood of Warsaw. Only four of them are located in the province of Mazovia region. The development of villages and towns located next to Warsaw was very rapid at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century, when chalets were established in Warsaw suburbia and the main function of surrounding was summer resort. After WW II most of these estates received the urban status. Reconstruction of war damages and industrialization of the country resulted in the growth of urbanisation. The goal of intensive urbanisation process of surrounding zone of Warsaw was to create a new living space for inhabitants of the growing capital city (Jokiel, Miszewska, 2007).

### **The Warsaw Metropolitan Area**

The Warsaw Metropolitan Area covers 6,205 sq km and it consists of 72 administration units, where 2,943,6 thousand people live (Czerwińska-Jędrusia, 2008). Warsaw is surrounded by forest areas, which create the Warsaw Protected Landscape Area, which includes many others protection areas, often with restricted access like Kampinowski National Park, Mazovian Landscape Park or many other reserves. These specific surroundings cause that Warsaw is surrounded with areas which have really good environmental conditions for tourism and recreational development. Moreover, the characteristic trait of arrangement of small towns in Warsaw Metropolitan area is their location next to the forest. Besides, in many cases the forest area is a part of the town, so the high percentage of green zones is typical for space structure of small towns, thereby the environment of small towns should foster tourist development.

The goal of this article is to check if small towns which received the town charter in 20<sup>th</sup> century have real tourist and recreation capability. In this article the author focused on natural and cultural values of the towns and its tourist infrastructure, which together create conditions for development of tourism and recreation. The first criterium which was used to select towns was population, number of inhabitants under 20 thousand. The second one was a date of receiving the town charter and the last one was location in Warsaw Metropolitan Area. Among 85 cities of Mazovia region only ten fulfill this criteria. The insufficient data on all of them resulted in a choice of three towns only: Józefów, Konstancin-Jeziorna and Ożarów Mazowiecki (table 1.). The comparison of data of Central Statistical Office with

**Tab.1.** Availability of statistic data on tourism for small towns located in Metropolitan Area of Warsaw which received the civic rights in 20<sup>th</sup> century

Town	No. of accomodation places	No of beds	Anual visitors	Average lenght stay (days)
Sulejówek	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Józefów</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>66</b>	<b>4619</b>	<b>1,7</b>
Kobyłka	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Zielonka	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Konstancin-Jeziorna</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>158</b>	<b>3311</b>	<b>4,5</b>
Milanówek	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Błonie	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Brwinów	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>Ożarów Mazowiecki</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>9409</b>	<b>1,1</b>
Podkowa Leśna	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Moreover, available data are incomplete because they do not take into account all possible form of accomodation, which result in inaccurate estimation of accommodation places. In consequence, the inventory of accommodation was necessary and was made by the author. The collected data differd from presented above and showed huge discepancy between data of Central Statistical Office in Poland and reality. It is worth to mention, that collected data was used to describe capability of the towns.

### **The urbanisation of Mazovia region in 20th century**

The beginning of urbanisation in Poland dates from 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> century. At that time more than half of Polish cities and towns were established. Between 15<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> cenury the dynamic of urbanization was steadily decreasing and only 20<sup>th</sup> century brought the increase of number of cities and towns, especially in the south part of the country and in the industrial regions like Upper Silesia (Jokiel, Miklaszewska, 2007). The spatial diversification of development of cities and towns is shown in a table 2.

**Tab. 2.** Spatial diversification of urbanisation of Poland in 20th century

Province	Number of towns with civic rights from 20th century	Numer of towns in general 2000r	Percentage of small towns with civic rights from 20th century
dolnośląskie	22	90	24,4
kujawsko-pomorskie	4	52	7,7
lubelskie	7	41	17,1

lubuskie	5	42	11,9
łódzkie	2	42	4,8
małopolskie	11	55	20,0
mazowieckie	23	84	27,4
opolskie	6	34	17,6
podkarpackie	5	45	11,1
podlaskie	3	36	8,3
pomorskie	15	42	35,7
śląskie	30	71	<b>42,3</b>
świętokrzyskie	5	30	16,7
warmińsko-mazurskie	2	49	4,1
wielkopolskie	5	109	4,6
zachodniopomorskie	2	61	<b>3,3</b>
<b>Polska</b>	<b>147</b>	<b>880</b>	<b>16,7</b>

The most intensive urbanisation of Mazovia province was in 14th and 15th century, so it was later than in the other parts of Poland, but the stagnation for the following four centuries is characteristic for this region as well as for the whole country. The 20<sup>th</sup> century brought the increase of number of towns such as in the other parts of Poland. It is worth to mention, that Mazovia province has one of the highest percentage of towns which received the civic rights in 20<sup>th</sup> century. The table 3 presents history of cities' location in Mazovia province.

**Tab. 3.** Location of cities and towns in Mazovia province

Area	Century							
	13th	14th	15th	16th	17th	18th	19th	20th
	Number of new cities and towns							
Mazovia	7	18	19	8	4	3	-	24
Poland	230	240	108	65	35	27	20	155

The above table shows that the most of towns was established in 20<sup>th</sup> century. It is worth to mention, that the most significant development of satellite towns and cottage estates around Warsaw culminated in the sixties of 20<sup>th</sup> century (Jokiel, Miklaszewska, 2007).

## **Tourist and recreation capability of small towns**

Tourism and recreation have many common features but also there are many significant differences between them. Both are elements of leisure time and have a spatial context. It is worth to mention, that leisure is one of the highest value determining the quality of life (Baharov, Dziegiec, 2005). Moreover, the process of shortening the time of work results in increasing role of tourism and recreation.

According to the Modern Dictionary of Geography (2001) recreation is activity voluntarily undertaken during leisure time. It is defined as a leisure pursuit involving less than a day's absence from home. Some authors emphasise that recreation includes part of time spent actively or passively at home or near it, so movement is not required (Baharov, Dziegiec, 2005).

On the other hand, tourism is defined as a leisure-time activity involving at least an overnight stay away from home, thereby distinguishing it from recreation (Modern Dictionary of Geography, 2001). Tourism as well as recreation occurs during leisure time and it can take place in the same space (Baharov, Dziegiec, 2005). However, in case of tourism the most important and required factors are longer timescale and travel, often over longer distances.

The recreation capability is defined as a possibility of positive influence of natural environment on the human being, which gives physical and mental stimuli and results in relaxation, regeneration of the body and mental health (Zajadacz, 2004). What is important in this definition is a role of natural environment as a surrounding which has significant influence for improvement of our well-being. On the other hand, the tourist capability is more complex and encompasses all integrated tourist goods whose main aim is to fulfill tourists' needs. It embraces three types of capability: natural, cultural and infrastructural (Naumowicz, 1993). According to Bellinger (1994) the tourist capability includes natural conditions, tourist infrastructure and social factors of tourist traffic. Another author indicates the following elements create a structure of tourist capability, which are similar as those mentioned above (Zajadacz, 2004):

Natural resources:

- Natural values
- Environmental pollution

Tourist infrastructure

- Accessibility
- Accommodation
- Food and beverage establishments
- Recreation facilities

Social resources

- socio-cultural resources

- socio-economical resources
- socio-psychological resources

According to Sołowiej (1992) the most important environment features which have considerable significance for tourism are: topographical feature, surface waters and type of land use. However, in case of a town the following are more important for its attractiveness: monuments of history, cultural heritage, collections of art, sports centres and events, cultural centres, natural landscapes, parks and gardens (Stalski, 1985).

The relationship between tourism and urban areas was examined by Christopher Law (2002), who distinguished three elements of city resources. Primary elements such as cultural and facilities, amusement facilities, physical characteristics and socio-cultural features provide the main reasons of tourist visits. Secondary, such as accommodation, catering facilities, shopping and markets are very important elements but are not the most significant. The last one group are additional elements such as accessibility, transportation and parking and tourist information, which are also very important for urban tourism success.

As mentioned above, tourism and recreation are strictly connected with a space. According to Liszewski (1995) the tourist space is a subspace of the overall geographical space, that is comprises both natural and social elements. The functional tourist regions are one of the main elements of the recreational-tourist space and some authors distinguished two types of these regions: a metropolitan recreational-tourist region and a peripheral recreational-tourist region (Liszewski, Baczworow 1998). The first of them is created around large cities as a natural recreational resource for the human conglomeration and it does not show clear correlations with natural advantages. The characteristic feature of this type of region is endogenic functions' predomination. Unlike, the mentioned above region, a peripheral recreational-tourist region is based on the supply and unique character of the natural and cultural advantages and is focused on holiday recreation and tourism. In case of peripheral recreational-tourist region the exogenic functions prevail (Liszewski, Baczworow 1998).

### **Józefów case study**

Józefów is an example of a small town which is located 22 km south-east of Warsaw. The most important nature resources for tourism and recreation development are Mazowiecki Landscape Park and Świder River Valley including Świder Reserve which creates favourable conditions for various forms of activity. Moreover, there are two more reserves within Józefów, Świdorskie Islands Reserve and Zawadowskie Islands Reserve. Existence of many forms of protection confirms the high values of this natural environment and its important

role for tourism and recreation. Unfortunately, the environment is endangered by pollution, such as communal wastes and deficiency of sanitation. Furthermore, there are many landfill sites in the forest, which poses a problem.

As mentioned above, there are many important factors for tourism, such as accessibility and transport infrastructure, accommodation, food and beverage and recreation facilities and services. Accessibility is not a problem in case of the towns located in Warsaw Metropolitan Area. In case of Józefów, its location along the railway track enables easy communication with Warsaw. The other possibility to reach Józefów is Warsaw city transport or just by car. Józefów is located next to crossroads of two regional ways one of which connects the town with the capital.

Two large hotels are located in the town, providing accommodation in Józefów. One of them is Holiday Inn hotel, which belongs to InterContinental Hotel Group, the largest hotel chain in the world, so it has a really high standard and a potential to be the base for business tourism. Almost 150 rooms, 11 conference rooms, restaurant, carpark for 220 cars and facilities like a swimming pool, SPA, golf course and many other services are at the guests' disposal. The second, smaller hotel is the Training Centre of GDDKiA (General Board of National Roads and Highways) which can hold 66 people. There are 4 conference rooms, restaurant room (only for guests), carpark for 50 cars and tennis court.

The business profile is characteristic for both however, any other form of tourism is possible too. There is one more characteristic feature of these hotels. Both are a kind of enclaves, which results from their peripheral location but also from highly developed services, thanks to which the guests do not have to take advantage of other services located in the town. There is only one restaurant and café, which can be treated as an eating place. Moreover, there are three low-standard bars.

It can be said that the recreation facilities in Józefów are well developed. There is Integrated Centre of Sport and Recreation with swimming pool and fitness centre, cinema, skatepark and Local Culture Centre, but the fact is, that the neighbourhood of Warsaw, which offers much more possibilities for recreation and events, causes that most of facilities located in Józefów are not used effectively. The element of town space, which could be helpful for its exploration is the city information system. Many signposts in the town make the sight-seeing clear and easy.

There are three tourist routes in Józefów. The first of them is over 20 kilometers long sandy hiking trail, which runs through pine forest of Mazovian Landscape Park and along dunes and moors. It is one of the most interesting landscape trails around Warsaw. It crosses other interesting trails and thus a opportunity for a diversified exploration of the area is made possible. The other

trail, almost fifteen kilometers long track along the Vistula Valley is not very challenging, but it can be difficult for exploration or even inaccessible in early spring and late autumn, when Vistula waters are high. This trail connects Warsaw with a small town, Karczew, established in 1548. The last track is a communication trail which provides links with above mentioned trails and a railway station. Unlike the other two tracks it does not run out of Józefów. One of the interesting spots situated along the trail is a monument of South-African aviators, who were shot down in this place during WW II.

The socio-cultural resources embrace cultural heritage, uniqueness of culture and events. What is important for Józefów town space is its specific architecture. There are many wooden houses which were built at the turn of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century. The main designer and creator of a style characteristic for this area was Michael Elviro Andriolli. Porches, sun-palors and floral ornaments are its characteristic features, which creates specific atmosphere of Józefów. (Krakowiak, 2002). Unfortunately, many of these buildings have been disappearing because of fragility of their building material, wood.

### **Konstancin-Jeziorna case study**

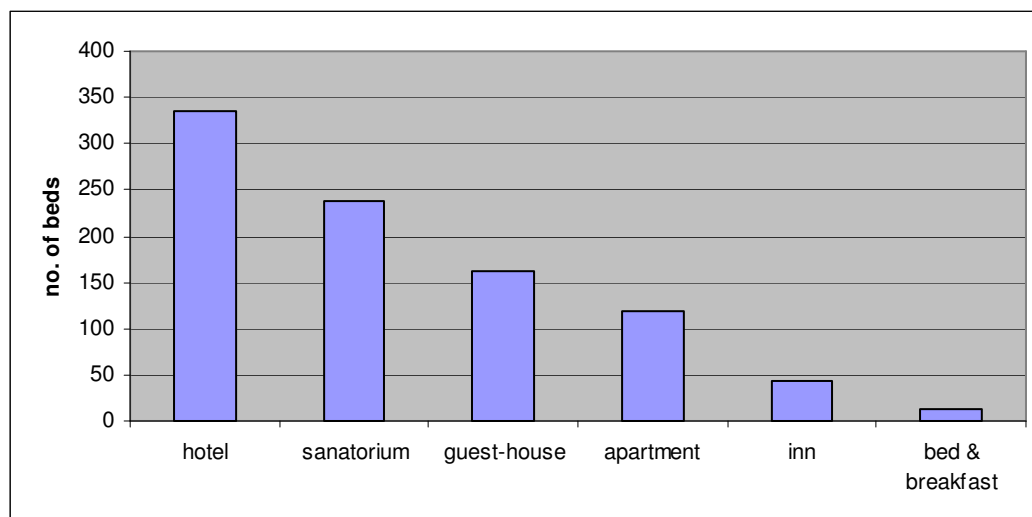
A health-resort Konstancin-Jeziorna is located south of Warsaw on the opposite side of Vistula Valley than Józefów and its population is over 16 thousand people. The town was created in 1969 by combining some of villages and has an interesting collection of historic villas and newly built mansions. The main values of the town are its microclimate and architecture. The natural system is created by Jeziora River Valley, nearby forest areas, includes Chojnowski Landscape Park, and municipal park with old trees. Warsaw Protected Landscape Area embraces the part of the town with unique historical villas, which is also protected area and has unique natural values. There are similar environmental threats as in Józefów. Especially the deficiency of sanitation in surrounding municipality poses a major problem. Moreover, activity of purification plant which is located in the neighbouring town is insufficient.

Accessibility of Konstancin-Jeziorna is good, the only problem is permanent traffic jam on the road from Warsaw. The town is located next to crossroads of two regional ways one of which connects the town with the capital. As in case of Józefów, Konstancin-Jeziorna can be reached by Warsaw Transport Authority bus (Warsaw city transport), despite, it is commuter belt. Furthermore, there are few private companies which provide comfortable communication with Warsaw by shuttle buses.

There are many possibilities of accommodation in the town, so it can be called well-developed, nevertheless some places of accommodation have access restrictions. It results from health-resort character of the town and its role as a

rehabilitation centre for Warsaw. Among 18 hotels there are 4 with sanatorium character, which are not accessible to everyone, as medical referral to sanatorium is required. The structure of accommodation is shown in chart 1.

Chart 1. The structure of accommodation located in Konstancin-Jeziorna



In Konstancin-Jeziorna there are 18 food and beverage establishments operating all year round and 6 which operate in the summer season only. Most of them are Polish restaurants, however, there are some with Italian cuisine and one with Japanese food. Furthermore, four cafés and cake shops are located in the town.

The most important attraction of the town is Stara Papiernia (Old Paper Factory), a 19<sup>th</sup> century buildings complex restored in 2002, where a museum and commercial centre are located. In the Museum of Paper historical and common methods of paper's production are presented, but the most interesting part of the museum is a possibility of individual paper production by an individual person. However, the museum is available only for package tours after booking in advance. Moreover, there is Local Cultural Centre in the town which arranges events and meetings with interesting people.

Konstancin-Jeziorna and its surroundings can be explored through four tourist trails and two educational paths which are related to history of the town. There are following trails:

- Main Trail of Chojnowski Forest
- Trail along Vistula Valley
- Trail of Architectural Monuments
- Nature Reserves Trail

All of them have beginnings in the centre of Konstancin-Jeziorna, however, only fragments of these trails run through the town, excluding the Trail of Architectural Monuments whose greatest part is located in the town. It runs

among historical villas, intersects the municipal park and gives a possibility to explore the most interesting places in the town.

Both educational paths were created for 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Stefan Żeromski's death, who was the famous Polish writer and author of many novels. The trajectory of paths is strictly related to places connected with his life. One of them runs along Jeziorka river to Old Paper Factory and then to the villa where Żeromski lived. The second one runs along streets to municipal park. Unfortunately, the signage of both is insufficient and shortage of maps and booklets with some information about them results in small number of tourists visiting them.

As mentioned above, the main cultural resources of Konstancin-Jeziorna are monuments of architecture. Many of the villas located in the town were designed by famous architects like Marconi, whose activity had significant influence for urban development of Konstancin. The villas located in town are built in many styles like neogothic, secession style, neoromantic or modernist style. 278 monuments of Konstancin are protected, and many others wait to become protected.

### **Ożarów Mazowiecki case study**

Ożarów Mazowiecki is the industrial town with rural history, which is located about 15 km on the west from downtown of Warsaw. In this case the natural values are not as important for tourism as in other mentioned towns. The location on Błomska Plain, where occur one of the best soils of region resulted in development of agriculture. The shortage of forests and spatial shambles within the town resulted in low quality of cultural landscape. The main polluters are factories and inhabitants, whose do not benefit from sanitation and water supply system.

Ożarów Mazowiecki is accessible by train or by car or any other form of transport including the buses of Warsaw Transport Authority bus (Warsaw city transport). As the other small towns located in Warsaw Metropolitan Area are easy to be reached as Ożarów has good communication with the capital city.

There are 3 hotels in the town which provide accommodation in town. One of them, Best Western Hotel Mazurkas, has high standard and well-developed facilities and services. It is located along an international road which links Warsaw and Poznań with Berlin. There are 158 rooms, including one adapted for the disabled, 12 conference rooms, restaurant with varied international cuisine. Moreover, gym and sauna are at the guests' disposal. There is a new Conference Centre next to the hotel, which is directly connected with hotel and consists of 34 conference rooms which occupy 3400 square meters and the biggest one can hold 1000 people. Furthermore, there are 5

smaller accommodation forms like bed and breakfast places, which can be used by individual tourists and families, because they are not as expensive as hotels.

There are 7 restaurants in the town. One, as mentioned above, is situated in Hotel Mazurkas, the rest is located mostly along the main road. It can be said that food and beverage services are well-rounded. The interesting place is "Karczma na Piwnej" (The Piwna Street Inn) which offers traditional Polish cuisine and has pleasant to the eye decoration with a nice, rustic climate. There is one swimming pool with fitness centre in the town. Moreover, two sports clubs, which offer many forms of recreational activity, including gym. There are no trails crossing the town.

History of the town is connected with agriculture and later industrialization. There are not many monuments and cultural values, excluding Old Glass Foundry, which was built at the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century. The significant influence for town development had The Cable Factory, which was one of the biggest in the country but it was closed in 2003 because of workers' strike. Nowadays, there is a special zone with preferential terms for investments such as lower tax rates. Ożarów Mazowiecki does not have a high-value natural and cultural resources, but it has well-developed business sector, which makes up its attractiveness.

## **Conclusions**

The imprecise data and its shortage results in some methodological problems and difficulty of research. The discrepancy between resources of statistical data base and reality shows the inaccuracy of them.

The tourist and recreational capability of small towns located in Warsaw Metropolitan Area, which received the civic rights in 20<sup>th</sup> century mostly results from environmental conditions and historical aspects. The primary function of the town and its development are significant factors because affect to the architecture and spatial situation of small towns. Józefów and Konstancin-Jeziorna, as a past summer-resorts, have more interesting architecture than Ożarów Mazowiecki. However, all mentioned above towns have specific spatial structure without the town market square, which can pose a barrier for tourism development.

The location in Warsaw Metropolitan Area fosters new investments, including tourism investments such as hotels and restaurants. The occurrence of high-standard hotels, such as Holiday Inn hotel, in a commuter belt confirms tourist capability and attractiveness of Warsaw suburbia. The small towns located near Warsaw, especially these with well-developed infrastructure and transport, are a very interesting area for investors. It resulted from larger land resources and its lower price than in Warsaw. On the other hand, neighbourhood

of Warsaw results in that the most of inhabitants are employed in capital city, so the labour-market and services in Józefów are not developed.

The natural and cultural heritage of these towns and their surroundings creates good conditions for tourist and recreational activity. Moreover, they create positive image of the town and improve its attractiveness. Well-developed communication with Warsaw ensures their good accessibility. It is worth mentioning, that all mentioned above towns were developed along the tracks and the railway has significant influence for these towns development. High-standard tourist infrastructure creates good conditions for business tourism development. However, despite high-standard accommodation development in the small 20<sup>th</sup> century towns it cannot be said, that their potential is fulfilled. The natural and cultural resources are not used effectively. Moreover, There is an other problem connected with tourism in examined towns. The hotels which are a kind of enclaves do not have the significant impact for economy of the town. The well-developed services and facilities in the hotel, results in that its guest do not have to benefit from services located in the town. On the other hand, the level of tourism infrastructure development influences the amount of tourists' traffic.

The tourist and recreational capability of small towns which recived civic rights in 20<sup>th</sup> century is not impressive, however, they heave natural and cultural values which improve their attractiveness for investors and inhabitants.

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