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## EVALUATION OF Ph.D. DISSERTATION

The Ph.D. dissertation of Ms. Ewa Monika Kubin entitled “*Perception of attractiveness of Poland as a tourism space by the population of Czechia*” is composed of two parts: one theoretical and methodological, and one empirical. I do not have any major objections to the theoretical part; in my opinion, the Author rightly made references to theories of perceptions and preferences, and also to theories of stereotypes which look at their origin and occurrence. Having read the work, however, I do not see any reason for discussing the R. Butler’s tourist area life cycle (TALC) theory. I have more objections to the empirical part of the work, as discussed below.

As mentioned above, in some of its aspects the dissertation is a study, largely sociological in character (and occasionally even akin to political science research), of tourist preferences and their determinants, while in other aspects it is an analysis of marketing activities (including territorial marketing). The dissertation does not have very many attributes of a geographical work. For instance, it lacks an assessment (by the Author or one based on geographical literature, and not marketing strategies) of Poland’s tourist resources and assets.

In her Ph.D. dissertation Ms. Ewa Monika Kubin used several techniques:

- 1) Delphi technique with the participation of experts (from Czechia and Poland)
- 2) Structured interviews with employees of travel agencies
- 3) So-called mystery shopping within travel agency
- 4) Questionnaire research with students of primary school

- 5) The analysis of regularly accessible sources of information about Poland on the web sides
- 6) Semi-structured interviews with employees of the authorities
- 7) SWOT analysis
- 8) Analysis of travelogues
- 9) Analysis of textbooks
- 10) Analysis of Internet sources
- 11) Analysis of printed media (newspapers)
- 12) Analysis of a content of a documents

Although basically I do not have any objections to the research methods applied by the Author, some comments need to be made.

Firstly, the research underpinning the dissertation was conducted in the period 2008-2011. In social studies, such a lengthy research period is fraught with some risks. One such risk is the lack of consistency in the timing of the research. In the reviewed work, the considerable time intervals between the individual stages of the research may have affected the ultimate findings. I would like to point out that, for example, the socio-economic situation in the Czechia (Czech Republic) was different in 2008 than in 2011. Similarly, the years 2008-2009 in Poland differed from the years 2010-2011, mainly due to the developments on the political scene. In my view, a serious methodological error was carrying out the travel agents' surveys in 2008, and the printed media (newspapers) surveys - in April-May 2010. As a result, we cannot be sure if analysing the press from the year 2008 (or 2009) would have yielded the same results as in the case of 2010, when press coverage was largely focused on issue (so-called Smolensk tragedy on April 10, 2010), and one very distant from the matter under research. This problem would have been avoided had the press coverage included the year 2008 or 2009.

Secondly, in my opinion, including students of primary schools (teenagers) in the questionnaire surveys might not have been a very good idea, as their answers (frequently referring to events which took place several years earlier) could in fact be the opinions and experiences of their parents (projection of somebody else's experiences).

To me, a significant strength of the Ph.D. dissertation of Ms. Ewa Monika Kubin lies in using research methods typical of other scientific disciplines. Another

advantage of the adopted research approach is the diversification of the research tools, which are largely complementary to one another, in effect producing a multi-dimensional and coherent view of the investigated issue.

The significance and relevance of the analysed issue can also be considered as a strength of the Author's research. I believe that tourist exchange is of considerable importance for both countries, mainly owing to its multiplier effect for the tourist industry (economic role) and expanding the knowledge about the neighbouring country. I find with appreciation that the latter aspect was recognised by the Author in several parts of the text; quoting the respondents, she demonstrates that their visits to Poland have helped overcome some stereotypic ways in which Poland is perceived.

The third asset of the dissertation is a very interesting mode of narration throughout the text. In my opinion, the fragment discussing the "3 I's" (Internet – Individualization – Information) concept, partly drawing on the views outlined in the dissertation and expounded a long time ago by S. C. Plog and E. Cohen, should be particularly commended.

While reading the dissertation, I didn't notice any serious linguistic mistakes or errors, although occasionally the Author spelled the word "Polish" as "polish".

In conclusion, despite the objections outlined above, in my view the dissertation submitted by Ms Ewa Monika Kubin fulfils the requirements set for Ph.D. dissertations. The research that she conducted was done in compliance with the principles of scientific rigour. I also find her knowledge of the literature satisfactory.

In view of the above, I request the Scientific Council of the Faculty of Science, Charles University in Prague, to admit the dissertation to a public defence procedure.

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