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GEOGRAFIA TURYSTYCZNA FRANCJI
[THE TOURISM GEOGRAPHY OF FRANCE]

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This book is an academic study of the tourism geography of France – one of the most attractive world tourism destinations. Its originality can be best evaluated taking into consideration its structure, organization and content.

It is divided into seven main chapters (each containing subchapters) and opens with a short introduction where the author defines the territorial range of the work, limiting it to mainland France and Corsica.

Chapter I, “The Natural and Cultural Diversity of France as the Basis of Tourism Development”, presents features of the natural environment, paying particular attention to types and areas protected by law. Cultural resources are described more thoroughly, and the chapter ends with a presentation of the effects of globalization in France (settlement network development, population distribution, economic growth, infrastructure, etc.). Personally, I feel there should have been more information concerning three main factors: the natural environment, history and contemporary image; which together naturally determine the position of France as a world tourism region. However, I am aware that the author has not focused on the tourism potential of France, but on its present situation, confirmed in the remaining chapters.

Chapter II (“The History of Tourism in France”) is very interesting as regards organisation and content. It begins with a short list of important dates related to the development of French tourism covering five major periods - from Antiquity to the Renaissance, the

18th c., the 19th c., 1900-50, and after 1950. This short review makes us aware of the long tradition of French tourism.

The second subchapter (“The Development of Organizational Types and Tourism Services”) includes a review of the factors influencing the development of tourism in France. The author discusses the significance of transport development, changes in the amount of free time, and visits from British tourists. She also describes early tourism guides, passport documents, etc.

The chapter ends with a presentation of very interesting large-scale structure plans for tourism development in France. The author presents development plans for four ‘flagship’ regions: Languedoc-Roussillon, Aquitaine, Corsica and the Southern Alps.

The next chapter is devoted to tourism development in France, and consists of four subchapters. The first, “Tourism Destinations and Communes”, presents different classifications of these administrative units according to the role played by tourism in their economic and social life. It is a very interesting review, especially in terms of tourism studies.

In the subchapter devoted to tourism accommodation, apart from presenting traditional facilities, such as hotels, camp sites, etc., the author mentions ‘furnished apartments’ and ‘second homes’ which are not included in statistics, rather like in Poland. The tourism ‘power’ of France may be demonstrated by the fact that in 2010 there were 229 000 commercial

tourism facilities which offered 5 783 000 beds. This figure should be enlarged by 3 028 000 'second homes' (15 139 000 beds).

In a separate chapter, the author discusses the development of nine particular forms of tourism. Apart from ski stations, seaside resorts, spas, etc., she also mentions conference and exhibition facilities, theme parks, golf courses, as well as infrastructure for the disabled. The chapter ends with a short analysis of the gastronomic infrastructure. As shown by the statistics, in 2010 there were 203 000 restaurants in France, employing over 544 000.

Chapter IV is traditionally organized and is devoted to an analysis of tourism. The author discusses French national tourism, trips abroad (in 2011 – 24 million trips), as well as arrivals of foreign tourists (in 2011 – 46.5 m). Each of the issues is presented along with the number of tourists, destinations, accommodation, geographical range, etc.

The author broadly discusses different types of tourism (Chapter V) in a classification based on three criteria: by intention (21 – including golf, wine, nudist, gambling and drug tourism), specific social groups (children, seniors, the disabled), and means of transport (eight).

Chapter VI presents the main directions of tourism in France. The author begins this chapter with a graph in which she shows the percentages of internal tourism: mountain (7.5%), countryside (28.3%), city (29.2%), seaside (35.5%). Further in the chapter, the author discusses specific destinations in the following order: coastal, mountains, cities, rural, natural areas protected by law, sites of tourist interest and tourism trails.

The last chapter (VII) is "Selected Problems in the Contemporary Phase of French Tourism Development". It is an attempt to evaluate the tourism policy implemented by France and its effects. Issues such as tourism management, the socio-economic effects of tourism, the position of France in global and European tourism, and the policy of tourism development in France, are discussed in more detail. It is worth quoting the calculations included in the book concerning

the expenditure of foreign tourists in France in 2011 which amounted to 33.4 billion euros, and the expenditure of French tourists (also in 2011) – 24.5 billion euros. This will enable the reader to see the scale and importance of tourism in the economic life of France.

In the Conclusions, the author recapitulates the content of the book and recommends interesting French ideas on tourism organization, statistics, etc. She also stresses original types of French tourism – food tourism, wine tourism and thalassotherapy.

In my opinion, Danuta Ptaszycka-Jackowska's work is a perfect example of a modern analysis of tourism geography, i.e. a work approaching tourism in a comprehensive way – exactly as defined by Leszczycki in 1937 (*Zagadnienia geografii turystyki*). To me, nevertheless, the title *Geografia turystyczna Francji* (*The Tourism Geography of France*) suggests that we are dealing here with the regional tourism geography of France. This is not the subject of the book.

A very important part is the set of colour photographs (228), in several inserts. They make knowledge about France more complete by presenting wonderful natural landscapes and selected cultural assets of this country. The text contains 56 easily readable statistical tables. At the end of the book, the author has placed a very useful glossary of geographical terms. The bibliography consists of 166 titles, mostly in French (which is understandable) as well as 75 websites.

The book is by all means worth recommending due both to a new and original structure and content range, as well as the factual content itself. It is a pioneering work which allows the reader to rediscover the tourism phenomena analysed by geographers with regard to one particular country.

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