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Contributions to the Methodology of Tourism History Research

ABSZTRAKT

A XX. század folyamán több releváns turisztikai fogalom komoly tartalmi változáson ment át. Részben ennek is köszönhető, hogy a terminológiák egy jelentős részét szinonimaként is használták. Már a két világháború között történtek kísérletek ezek meghatározására, de egy egységes fogalmi használatra nem került sor a hazai szakirodalomban. A második világháború után a statisztikai adatközlések is változtak és több új – főleg a politika által indukált – társadalmi jelenséggel kellett szembesülni, amelyek tovább bővítették a turisztikai fogalmak variabilitását. Munkámban elsősorban ezen fogalmak egzakt determinációjára és statisztikai alkalmazására teszek kísérletet, illetve a tanulmányban alkalmazott néhány új mutató segítheti a hazai turizmus szélesebb spektrumú vizsgálatát.

ABSTRACT

During the 20th century the meaning of several relevant tourist concepts has undergone major changes. It is partly due to this fact that a significant portion of the terminologies were also used as a synonym. Attempts to define them had already been made between the two World Wars, but a unified conceptual usage has not been happened in the domestic literature. After the World War II, the statistical data releases have changed and with many new – mainly politically induced – social phenomena had to be faced, which further expanded the variability of the terms of tourism. In my work, I make an attempt at exact determining and statistically applying primarily these concepts; and a few new indicators used in the study may help a broader spectrum of investigation of domestic tourism.

Kulcsszavak: turizmus, idegenforgalom, vendégéjszakák minimális száma, minimális tartózkodási idő
Keywords: tourism, the minimum number of guest nights, minimal length of stay

INTRODUCTION

It is fair to say that tourism history may be the subject of several disciplines, with a number of possible perspectives offered by geography, historiography, sociology, and economics. At the same time, the interdisciplinary nature of tourism history means that researchers coming from the different branches of science primarily, if not exclusively, use terms and concepts that are established in their respective areas but their meanings are not necessarily the same.

Another challenge to research, the publication and mainly the comparison of findings, is that certain terms, such as tourism, have considerably changed their meanings in recent decades. While researchers often rely on the data line of the Central Statistical Office to analyse tourist turnover data, the available information resists comparison mostly due to methodological changes in data reporting. The reason is that there are basic differences between the data reports of the Hungarian Royal Central Statistical Office and its legal successor after World War II, with special regard to tourist turnover data. The post-war period did away with the established terms of “permanent and temporary guest” and the mid-1960s gradually introduced a number of indexes that had not been used in previous data reports, such as “number of guest nights”.

RESEARCH GOALS, SOURCES, AND METHODS

This paper aims to spell out the difficulties of interpretation and analysis entailed by some frequent terms of domestic tourism history, the semantic changes observed in a number of terms, and the problems about the comparison of different periods. An attempt is made to clarify some previous terms and the potential changes in their meanings, and the examination of the differences between the ways of statistical data gathering in the past and today. The primary source of this research includes data from the reports of the Hungarian Royal Central Statistical Office (Magyar Statisztikai Zsebkönyv [Hungarian Statistical Pocket Book], Magyar Statisztikai Szemle [Hungarian Statistical Review]) and of course the relevant literature.

Among the works on domestic tourism history as secondary sources I found especially useful for my purposes the 1937 book *Az idegenforgalom elmélete és gyakorlata* [The Theory and Practice of Tourism] by Endre Gundel (GUNDEL E. 1937). Other relevant research sources included the 1941 book *Az idegenforgalom* [Tourism] edited by Béla Markos (MARKOS B. 1941a), the 1942 paper *A magyar idegenforgalom története és jövő elképzelései* [The History of Hungarian Tourism and Ideas for the Future] by Béla Tausz (TAUSZ B. 1942), and the 1961 book *Idegenforgalom* [Tourism] by Béla Markos and András Kolacsek (MARKOS B. – KOLACSEK A. 1961). I also found important data and findings in the books by Oszkár Bársony (BÁRSONY O. 1929, 1933), István Kallós (KALLÓS I. 1934), Béla Marton (MARTON B. 1940), and in the papers by Gusztáv Thirring (THIRRING G. 1929) and János Tihanyi (TIHANYI J. 1983). I received considerable assistance in interpreting terms from tourism journals, including *Idegenforgalom* [Tourism] between 1964 and 1979, the 1970–1987 issues of *Idegenforgalmi Közlemények* [Papers in Tourism], the 1985 *Idegenforgalmi értelmező szótár* [Dictionary of Tourism Terms], and works by Gábor Michalkó (MICHALKÓ G. 2004).

CHARACTERISTICS AND DIFFICULTIES OF STATISTICAL DATA GATHERING UNTIL WORLD WAR II

A characteristic of statistical data until World War II was that data gathering did not record the actual number of guests or guest nights. Instead, guests were registered in the categories of “*permanent and temporary guests*”. People were classified as “permanent guests” who spent at least one week at a resort and those who stayed for less time were “temporary guests”. The statistical yearbooks did not reveal whether “permanent guests” stayed for only one or five weeks at a resort and if “temporary guests” spent only one or five days at a place. Clearly, the data published do not reflect the full number of guests or guest nights, not even the average length of stay. Another challenge to the analysis is posed by the differences between the data gathering methods and their deficiencies, which is why there is no way to know with absolute certainty whether the given resort considered people as permanent guests after spending six or seven guest nights. At the same time, there is an obvious opportunity to compare the data of individual resorts and to follow up the changes in tourist turnover.

At times the analysis of statistical data forces the researcher to conclude that not even the data of the Hungarian Royal Statistical Office are fully reliable, especially concerning Keszthely, due to the deficient and inaccurate data reports of spas. “Visitor statistics do not offer reliable numbers, nevertheless”, Lajos Lóczy claimed in 1920. “Some places regard visitors staying for one or two days as permanent guests while families making an extended holiday in other places fail to report all members to save the treatment fee. Keszthely does not record the number of ‘visitors’ at all. Likewise, there is a difference between data in the Magyar Balneológiai Értesítő [Hungarian Balneological Bulletin] and in the journal Balaton” (LÓCZY L. 1920: 185). Another possible reason for inaccurate data reporting was that the statistical authorities often obtained the required data from secondary sources, typically police records, but those did not serve statistical purposes (THIRRING G. 1929).

DISCOURSE ABOUT BASIC TERMS IN THE INTERWAR PERIOD

In the past, statistics and the literature used the term *idegenforgalom* (literally: *stranger turnover*) instead of the now common *turizmus* (*tourism*), even though domestic statisticians translated both *vendégforgalom* (*guest turnover*) and *idegenforgalom* with the word *tourisme* in the French abstracts of their papers in the Statistical Yearbooks. The Hungarian term *turizmus* probably comes from the French noun *tour* (‘round trip’) (LENGYEL M. 2007), which found its way to the language through German, became a synonym of *travel* across Europe, and occurred in the sense of ‘mass tourism’ in Hungary with a somewhat pejorative overtone as early as the 1930s (REHÁK G. 2011). Earlier, professionals (SÁGI J. 1909; CSÁKY Á. 1909) had noticed “the democratisation and embourgeoisement of tourism”, a phenomenon also known as “social or people’s” tourism (MÁDAY B. 1941). However, they did not necessarily consider this as something negative but often saw it as an opportunity (MARTON B. 1940).

The reason why the term *idegenforgalom* became common in Hungary to denote travel, guest turnover, and even the whole industry is that the Hungarian word *turizmus* was already reserved to mean ‘hiking’ and ‘mountaineering’ (THIRRING G. 1929). In the 1915 Annual Budget, Entry 6 of Title 18 uses the two terms side by side, assigning 30,000 crowns to advertisements, studies, and

investments required for enhancing turisztika and idegenforgalom. (The following Entry 7 assigned another 21,000 crowns to enhancing turizmus in the Tatras.) Today most authors of tourism history use the terms idegenforgalom and turizmus interchangeably despite the two concepts that they originally used to denote. Initially, the term *turizmus* only meant hiking, mainly in the mountains, which now mostly corresponds to *backpacking*. At the same time, the term idegenforgalom now has the same meaning as turizmus.

In the Révai Lexicon, Kálmán Gálos defined idegenforgalom as the turnover of travellers and guests in countries, cities, regions, and spas (GÁLOS K. 1914). “Tourism is mass traveller turnover aimed at a city, region or country at a high level of cultural development, where travellers leave their residence on a temporary basis without the intention to settle in the place designed for travel”, said Dr. Béla Markos in his lecture at the course in tourism (MARKOS B. 1941b: 21). In addition to these criteria, Jenő Czenner defined the term as “the spending of income from one [business] unit in another”, i.e. paying for accommodation, hospitality, and other services (CZENNER J. 1933). Other definitions proposed in the period focused on the lack of intention to reside, the temporary nature of stay, and the possible goals of recreation, recovery, education, study, and business acquisition (FELLNER F.1930). The definition of the term *tourism* mostly depended on the perspective of each author, including travel and rest (GÁLOS), balance of payment (FELLNER), economics (CZENNER), cultural factors and motivations (MARKOS), and statistical data gathering and analysis (THIRRING).

In spite of the diversity of possible approaches, the domestic literature of the period proved to be much more uniform in defining the subjects of tourism (GUNDEL E. 1937). The term *idegenek* (literally: *strangers*) meant pleasure travellers (in German: *Vergnügungsreisende*) and the term *turisták* was deprecated as it was “reserved” for “another type” of people “going to a place for seeing a country, a region or a town that is unknown to them, in other words, people who mostly travel for fun” (THIRRING G. 1929: 1132). As travel necessarily entails a place of departure and arrival, another key criterion was the place that a person left to become the subject of tourism: his or her state, permanent home or last temporary address. The interwar literature and statisticians viewed people as the subjects of tourism upon leaving their permanent residence (GUNDEL E. 1937). Leaving the permanent residence, which of course was much more an indispensable than a sufficient condition by itself, did not automatically mean becoming the *subject of tourism*. The discourse revolved around places of tourism and mainly the goals of travel. The question arose whether the term subjects of tourism included hospital and sanatorium patients, commercial travellers, people on study trip and official commission, and conference participants besides people seeking recreation and fun. At its meeting held in Cairo in December 1927, the International Statistical Institute adopted the position that hospital and sanatorium patients were not called subjects of tourism in Hungary, as opposed to people on study trip or official commission, commercial travellers, exhibition and conference visitors, and even people visiting relatives, as well as the masses of people seeking recreation and rest. Speaking of travellers called “qualified strangers”, i.e. the subjects of tourism, Thirring mentioned two important criteria that he believed were indispensable: the temporary, provisional nature of stay in a stranger place and the lack of intention to make permanent earnings. At the same time, he found that “people making a summer holiday in provincial towns or villages, spas or climatic places often constitute

the majority of tourism” (THIRRING G. 1929: 1133). Thirring’s two criteria combined with Czenner’s condition of spending money produce a definition that is quite close to the modern definition of tourism, by which it is a change of environment resulting in new experiences, where an indispensable condition is consumption by the parties involved (MICHALKÓ G. 2004).

In addition to *idegenforgalom* and *turizmus*, a number of terms have changed their meanings. For instance, the term *spa* has undergone a semantic change. In the early 20th century, the water and sludge of Lake Balaton were thought to have a healing power (SÜMEGI J. 1935) because of the beneficial effects of bathing especially on digestion, appetite, and blood pressure (LENKEI V. D. 1911). Therefore, the Hungarian Royal Central Statistical Office published the guest turnover of spas on the shores of Balaton among the data of domestic “renowned spas”. Interwar statistical reports were already more refined as the heading “Guest turnover in spas, health resorts, and hydropathical establishments” included the separate categories of “thermal waters”, “cold mineral waters” (i.e. “sour”, “sulphate”, “bitter” and “sulphur” waters), “Balaton shore spas”, “alkaline lake” baths, and “hydropathical establishments”. At the same time, the statistical heading of “Renowned spas” remained, including the guest turnover data of the spas at Balaton and Hévíz.

Under the Bath Act 1929, “a spa shall be an institution providing medical treatment alone by using medicinal water or spring water, or river water or lake water in its natural place of occurrence, or in combination with other therapies” (Act XVI of 1929, Sec. 1). The Act also defines the term of *health resort*: “one or more spas or climatic hospitals with the surrounding locality or area that directly serves the purposes of such spa or climatic hospital, especially fit for such purposes due to their equipment that greatly satisfies the needs of public healthcare and medical treatment” (Act XVI of 1929, Sec. 2).

The Act defined *resort* as a locality „which is ideal for recreation purposes due to its riverside or lakeside position or to its otherwise favourable natural position without satisfying all criteria of a health resort” (Act XVI of 1929, Sec. 3). The Statistical Yearbooks were only revised to comply with the Act at a later date. Inspired by the Bath Act, the term *spa* was first defined almost the same as today in the 1935 Statistical Yearbooks, which replaced the previous category “guest turnover in spas” with “guest turnover in renowned spas and resorts”. (Data reports after World War II already separated Hévíz from Balaton side spas within the category “Spas”.)

The term *hotel* also slightly changed its meaning during the 20th century, especially by today. In 19th and early 20th century sources, the terms *szálló* (hostel or lodge) and *szálloda* (hotel) were used interchangeably. In the interwar period *szálló* referred to any accommodation of a lower category. *Turistaszálló* (tourist hotels) did not offer the same service level as mainstream hotels, and neither did post-war *munkásszálló* (workers’ hostels) (TÖRZSÖK A. 2011).

CHALLENGES OF DOMESTIC TOURISM HISTORY RESEARCH IN THE POST-WAR PERIOD

After World War II, Hungary refused tourism as a matter of policy mainly on ideological grounds (REHÁK G. 2011). International tourism lost momentum and domestic tourism was mostly limited to what was called social tourism. When the political leaders decided again to develop domestic and international tourism, the primary and secondary superstructure of tourism was poor, and problems

of definition arose in journals of the period, such as *Idegenforgalom*, and in statistical reports. One of the problems was still related to the name of the industry. Professionals consistently used the term *idegenforgalom* instead of *turizmus*, although often mentioning its subjects by the name *turista* (*tourists*).

The term *turista*, which used to mean ‘hiker’ and ‘mountaineer’, was increasingly replaced by *kiránduló* (*excursionist*). This made excursion a separate category in domestic statistics, defining *excursionist* as a person seeking tourist attractions and natural spots for new experiences, sports, and as a pastime, rather than making money but without spending a single night. As this did not allow for describing excursionist turnover in terms of the number of guest nights, the expression “number of *guest days*” was introduced.

As Hungary found its way back to international tourism, statisticians came to face a new problem: where to classify foreigners that arrive in the country without staying for a single night? People who spent at least one *guest night* in Hungary were considered as tourists and the rest were called *visitors*. Of course, the number of visitors combined with tourists was equivalent to the number of foreigners that crossed the state borders.

Consequently, statistical data on international tourism, the literature and speeches by policy-makers sometimes referred to the number of foreigners arriving in Hungary (number of entrants), at other times to the number of tourists and yet at other times to the separate number of visitors. From 1965, the Statistical Yearbooks also published the number of guest nights beside the number of guests, laying particular stress on the data of foreigners.

Another post-war trend in statistical data reports on international tourism was to state foreign exchange revenues generated by the home countries and tourists broken down to political regime rather than geographic location. Hungarian statistics made separate records of people arriving from “capitalist countries”, “rouble settling countries”, and Yugoslavia. A similar principle was used to take account of revenues. Some tourism revenues were of course reported in forints and foreign exchange forints (the value of the given currency converted to forints), and others were reported in “convertible settlements” (capitalist currencies and Yugoslavian dinars) and “rouble settlements” (Documents of the Zala County Office of Tourism). These statistical terms and categories were used as a matter of course in the relevant domestic literature, so they came to extend the set of basic concepts.

The successive methodological changes in post-war statistical reports make it particularly difficult to analyse tourism turnover data. While the CSO (Central Statistical Office) regularly published county level Statistical Yearbooks, they initially reported only hotel data by locality, such as the number of rooms, beds, overall capacity, domestic and foreign guests, and guest nights. At times, they even included facilities built in the style of workers’ hostels within the category of hotels. This explains why in 1960, to take an example, 4,735 domestic guests were registered in the Palota Hotel in Várpalota, obviously less visited by tourists than a resort by Balaton, whereas only 928 and 924 were registered in the Hullám Hotel in Keszthely and in the Balaton Hotel respectively. Of course, the reason for the difference was that the Palota Hotel in Várpalota was used as a *workers’ hostel*. Workers’ Hostel No. 197 of Hungarian Railways was officially a hotel of Keszthely in 1960, but it was no longer reported in the statistics of the ensuing years except for 1965.

Of course, it makes a substantial difference in interpreting figures if tourist turnover data within places of accommodation include only the facilities that are especially meant for tourism or also the hotels used by workers that are engaged in socialist production and may be viewed as permanent residents. The hotels in Keszthely hosted a total of 17,073 guests in 1964, 19,156 in 1965, and 17,164 in 1966 but it would be a premature conclusion that Keszthely closed a good season in 1965. The main reason for the difference is that Workers' Hostel No. 197 of Hungarian Railways was stated as a hotel, which hosted a total of 2,586 guests. In other words, the number of hotel guests was actually less, specifically 16,570 without this accommodation, absent from the statistics a year before in 1964 and after in 1966.

But there is more to the analysis of the data from 1965. As mentioned before, the hotels in Keszthely, including the railway workers' hostel, hosted slightly more than 19,000 guests, whereas the breakdown by locality in the Statistical Yearbooks reported 18.1 in units of 1,000 people. This difference is even more marked in the 1966 data, where the addition of each hotel's turnover in Keszthely shows that they were visited by a total of 17,164 people. At the same time, the breakdown by locality in units of 1,000 individuals shows 5.2 and not 17.2. This is probably so because the Statistical Office's breakdown by locality only referred to the summer season from 1966.

A separate chapter is dedicated to the methodological challenges of campsite data reporting. As the way of statistical data reporting changed from 1975, it is difficult to compare data with information from the previous period. Before 1975, statistical reports contained the data of 2nd class county campsites rounded up and collapsed with the data of backup campsites, tourist hotels, and schools. The most accurate and hence the most reliable data refer to the period between 1975 and 1978. In these years, the CSO disclosed an accurate report on the data of the 1st and 2nd class campsites of Keszthely (overall capacity, number of guests and guest nights, including foreigners as a separate category) apart from the data of "transit accommodation" as opposed to previous practices. In 1979, the CSO changed its reporting strategy again and, contrary to the period from 1975 to 1978, it already released the data of the two campsites collapsed and not separated.

Perhaps the above examples (not an exhaustive list) illustrate well the research challenges posed by the analysis of data reports after World War II.

CONCLUSIONS

In studying tourism history, it is vital to interpret all terms used in sources of the period, including archive material, daily press, journals of tourism, and statistical reports, according to the meaning they had at the time and not taking the use of terms characteristic of our own discipline as a starting point. Part of the terms considerably changed their meanings over as little as a few decades (perhaps it is enough to think of the terms of spa and tourism) while other terms were introduced, such as *number of visitors* and *number of guest nights* after 1945.

In addition to the semantic changes in the terms, the biggest methodological challenge lies precisely in the appearance and currency of new indexes used for comparing guest turnover data as the researcher should compare data taken from two different reports. Primarily, the problem is that until 1945, the Hungarian Royal Central Statistical Office's data reports did not usually include

some of the indexes that are common today, such as the number of guest nights and the average time spent in one place. In general, statistic reports at the time stated domestic and foreign guests in two categories. Permanent guests were people who spent at least one week at the resort while temporary guests were people who spent at least one night at the resort. By contrast, the Statistical Yearbooks never revealed if permanent guests spent one or more weeks and if temporary guests spent a single night or several days at the resort.

Again, the number of guest nights and the average length of stay cannot be determined with accuracy. At the same time, the existing data allow for calculating the minimum below which no number of guest nights or average length of stay could drop. This already enables the researcher to analyse these segments of guest turnover. To this end, my analysis attempted to create two new indexes. The first is the *minimum number of guest nights*, the number below which the number of nights spent by all guests at the given resort could not drop. This index is the sum total of seven times the number of permanent guests and the number of temporary guests (number of permanent guests \times 7 + number of temporary guests). The second index is the *minimum length of stay*, actually an average number, the quotient of the minimum number of guest nights and the number of guests (minimum number of guest nights / number of guests). These two indexes helped me compare the resorts and revealed the changes in travel habits.

For the analysis of the sources on tourism it is vital to adopt a critical approach, even when examining the data of the Central Statistical Office, not only due to the sometimes inaccurate data reports but also to the methodological changes that have been presented sketchily above.

With discourse in progress concerning the basic terms of tourism, the current definitions were made as a result of both previous domestic debates and the international literature.

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