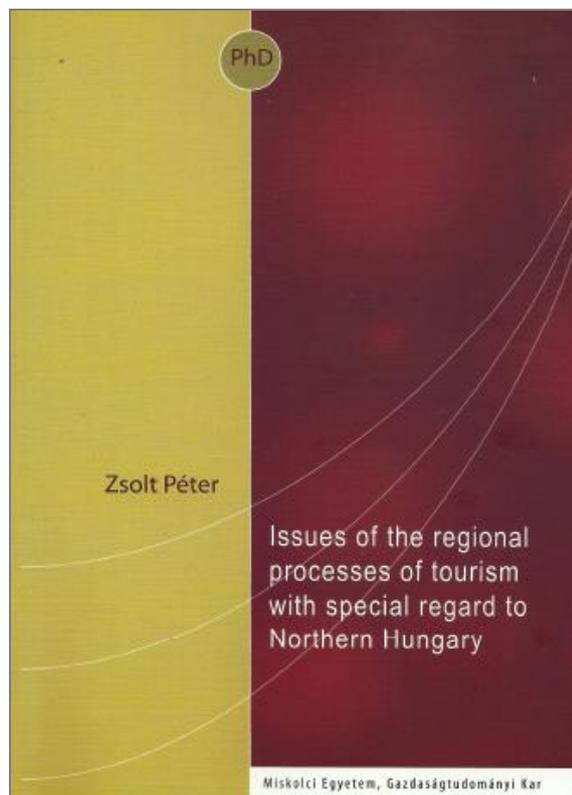


ZOLT PÉTER - ISSUES OF THE REGIONAL PROCESSES OF TOURISM WITH SPECIAL REGARD TO NORTHERN HUNGARY, Miskolc University Press, Miskolc, 2012, 129 p. ISBN: 978-963-661-984-8



The question of why tourism in some regions and settlements prosper while in others lag behind or fall into decay is an interesting one, and it is not simply a question related to the spatial distribution of natural or cultural assets.

In the first part of the book the author is summing up the basic concepts and models explaining the social, economic and spatial aspects of tourism, and some methodological aspects related to the research as well. His major statement for this part is, that the models explaining tourism can be misinterpreted when taken out of their context. We agree with this statement, which generally fits all models explaining complex systems, and it is among the authors main contribution in this work, that he

never explains processes with factors which are not included in the model.

Drawing on an extensive body of literature and on the HCSO database this book attempts to explain the regional disparities of tourism. It shows that tourist arrivals are highly concentrated, 80% of the guest nights being registered in 50 settlements located in 10 different micro-regions of Hungary. The growth of the domestic visitor turnover has counterbalanced the decrease of foreign visitor turnover nationwide. Northern Hungary has experienced a differentiated evolution of the main tourism indicators. While Borsod-Abaúj-Zemplén county is on a growing trend, the two other counties of the region (Heves and Nógrád) are declining. Some micro-regions (Edelény, Encs, Abaúj-hegyköz, Füzesabony) have profited from the first situation, being successful in developing lower-class accommodations.

In chapter four the author offers a very comprehensive evaluation of the factors determining visitor turnover, using an impressive number of indicators (33) and several advanced statistical techniques. The importance of economic, welfare and social factors is the central part of this explanation, while the public services provided at local level have no direct influence on the tourism performance.

Another major contribution is related to the evaluation of the impact of tourism development plans on the tourism phenomena. The results are as expected, they have a little influence on the evolution of tourism indicators, more worse: the micro-regional tourism strategies and planning documents conceive no clear objectives and priorities. The author is convinced that setting development goals like the attraction of foreign visitors in Northern Hungary would improve the quality of both tourism planning and stakeholder orientation.

In conclusion, the author reflects on the difficulties in establishing a comprehensive model for regional disparities of tourism, and he offers his well-documented work as one step in a long process of empirical analysis and theory building.

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