LANDSCAPE VALUATION IN DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL TOURISM: CASE STUDY OF OSTFRIESLAND (GERMANY)

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Rural landscape of many European regions is an element of their identity. Therefore it should be a subject of multidisciplinary research. Landscape analysis allowed for spatial identification and evaluation of rural areas with a perspective of their socio-economical development. In regions with unique natural and cultural potential, the most recommended direction of development is sustainable tourism, based on landscape values. The aim of research was to reveal theoretical factors influencing landscape value and to validate them on the case study of development of rural tourism in Ostfriesland (Germany). Theoretical conclusions of the study was formulated on the basis of monographic and cartography studies. During the practical investigation the relevant and necessary essential elements were formulated for the formation of rural tourist facilities. They must be based on natural, cultural and historical values of assets.

\textit{Key words: evaluation, regional heritage, rural tourism, rural landscape.}

\textit{JEL kodes: Q010, Q560, L830, O220, R000.}

Introduction

The term „rural landscape” in agricultural sense originated from Germany. Agricultural landscapes as well as semi-natural and urbanism ones, constitute a group of cultural landscapes called anthropogenic ones (Jaszczak, 2010). It is also a subject of multidisciplinary research. Each of these disciplines has own interpretation and research methodology, even its different and allowed for complexity of issue.

According to Hernik and his book “Cultural Landscape-Across Disciplines” – the complete protection and preservation of cultural landscapes require scientific studies and practical activities from diverse scientific disciplines and diverse points of view (Hernik, 2009). Landscape analysis allowed for spatial identification and evaluation with a perspective of socio-economical development in some regions in European scale. Cavallo et. al. point the importance of traditional agrarian landscape for territory which urgently requires an examination of the study of transformation and evaluative dynamics (Cavallo, 2010). In regions with unique natural and cultural potential, the most recommended direction of development is sustainable tourism, based on landscape values. One of such types of tourism is rural tourism, including agritourism.

Rural tourism makes it possible to use the village space, agricultural environment and infrastructure in a rational way. Transformations of rural landscape are also connected with adaptation, rebuilding and preserving the old dwelling structures, the architecture of the region, therefore also with preserving regional qualities, customs and folklore. However, preserving cultural identity does not mean
isolating the rural community from civilization (Jaszczak, 2010).

The problem of investigation is to find solutions to evaluate rural landscape areas. It’s very important for rural tourism as well as for rural area development at all. The solutions of this problem are interesting for investors and managers of the organization in rural areas with different and unique conditions, potential, perspective of their socio-economical development.

The purpose of the investigation

The rural landscape management is a subject of severe and continuous transformations and functional changes in a great number of European rural areas. It is necessary to identify all components of landscape, especially these which are distinguishing features of regions and have influence for its diversity. The reasons of transformations are the result of progressive urbanizations and demographic processes. It is important to make people aware that the spacing of settlements, villages and arrangements (Owen, 2009) as well as system of roads or the shape of squares are all monuments of history and culture. The rural tourism among other things fulfil the educational function so it shows the necessity of such investigation.

The object of investigation – landscape evaluation in development of rural tourism.

The aim of research was to reveal theoretical factors influencing landscape value and to validate them on the case study of development of rural tourism in Ostfriesland (Germany). During research it was important to study of methods concerning planning, programming, controlling and all management processes of rural landscape with special attention to environmental protection and tourism development.

Methodology of investigations

The research and the choice of the area are a consequence of actions partly implemented in 2008–2010 in the Georg-August University in Göttingen (Germany) and University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn (Poland) under the project: „The role of rural landscapes in sustainable development of selected regions in Poland and Germany” (financed partly by DAAD, Germany).

There monographic and cartography studies were used for the research. Cartography studies based on the mapping and landscape assessment. The first stage was diagnosis and analysis of rural landscape and its elements which have influence on tourism development in Ostfriesland (Germany). In this stage the inventory and the evaluation of rural landscape were taken into the consideration. The evaluations with cognitive character have the significant role in all research of the environment (rural landscape) because they are the sources of fact interpretations and cognitive deduction. The evaluation and the estimation of cultural landscapes is a reflection process of the feature or features of object on characteristic position in receiving values system. The second step of the research was done when the direct interview technique complemented previous investigations.
Results of research

Ostfriesland is situated between the Dollart inlet and the Jadebusen bay. Over the centuries, Ostfriesland's culture has evolved to reflect a lifestyle determined by water and the sea, and it is still one of the region's greatest attractiveness. Rural landscape in region is composed of a number of characteristic features which evolved over time and should be preserved. This preservation can be passive or active but on the other hand it cannot block all necessary activities leading to rural development. According to Hernik “the occurrence of cultural landscapes cannot lead to a prevention or a significant impediment of economic land use in the areas where they occurred” (Hernik, 2010).

The analysis of landscape potential in region

The North Sea with never-ending coastal mudflats is typical for Ostfriesland. The unique type of landscape is created by “watt” and it is under protection. The huge area covered by watt marks the National Park “Wattenmeer”. The rural landscape is underlined by farm production, including animal production (sheep, cattle-breeding, pastures, grasslands with typical halophil meadows) as well as cornfields and rapefields. The results of analysis (tab.1) and interview with inhabitants show that the most important points for tourism product creation are: Watt landscape, fauna and flora originality, swamps, gardens and parks, road alleys.

From cultural elements inhabitants have chose: regional architecture, old mills, sacral elements, hydro and technical elements (ports, sluices), palaces and parks.

These elements could create tourism product in different scale and on different levels from small villages and settlements to regional ones. Some of them are part of tourism facilities, structures and infrastructure system, another ones are important for tourism trails and routes. However the most important stage in product description is identification and inventory of nature and culture values in Ostfriesland.

Location of settlements and types of villages in region based mostly on natural conditions and historical impact. The way of colonization of these areas (from 17th century) was related with drain systems. After drainage process the large areas were used as agricultural lands. From this time a lot of villages have in a name the word „fehn”, in Dutch „moor” – which means a fen, a moor or a swamp.

The typical farm building is “Gulfhaus” in which the living part is connected with a barn and a cowshed. It has approximately 70 m length. It is also characteristic for colonies. There are a lot of historical windmills mostly from 18th or even from 17th at the seaside zone. The oldest, Gallery one from 1741, called “Peldemülhe” is located in Wittmund. The canals have not only hydro technical function but they underline main compositional axis, too (1 table). The dikes separate all rural fields. The huge role play sluices as well as seaside embankments.
Characteristic of elements in rural landscape (RL) which are important for tourism products creation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group of elements</th>
<th>Selected elements of RL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farm building use</td>
<td>House apartments, production buildings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural potential and agriculture land</td>
<td>Watt areas, North Sea, fauna and flora, haliofil meadows and pastures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural elements</td>
<td>Buildings, including farm buildings, village architecture, technical architecture, infrastructure objects, planned green areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Historical objects (including sacred elements)</td>
<td>Architecture, including palaces and manors, old windmills, churches, cemeteries,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical objects</td>
<td>Harbors, canals, sluices, embankments, road infrastructure.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greenery areas and rural gardens</td>
<td>Garden exhibitions, summerhouse for “Melkhuske”- milk bar, picnic, outdoor party in rural park, bicycle route, road alley, tree solitary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visual elements</td>
<td>Panorama, dominants (churches, windmills), subdominants, accents, visual axis (canals, dikes), visual points.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

„Ostfrische” products of rural tourism

Rural accommodation facilities in Ostfriesland are used mostly in seasonal products. Rural tourism is spread quite evenly on the map of Ostfriesland but the most attractive tourism destination are islands (in German the „Ostfrisiche Inseln” – Borkum, Juist, Norderney) as well as the seaside areas (in German the “Ostfriesische Küste”) (Kattwinkel, 2008).

The offered accommodation of rural tourism are: rural hotels, motels, guest rooms, group rooms, separate housing units, small guesthouses (tab.2). There are an important element of touristic management in the region.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rural tourism</th>
<th>Guest houses, Guest rooms, Lodging, Motel, Rural hotel, Campsites.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other tourism facilities</td>
<td>Souvenirs shops, Restaurants, Pubs and bars, “Melkhuskes”.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most important role in tourism development plays regional, national and international programs or products. These programs should include preserving and continuing the architectural and landscape heredity and the regional, spatial and architectural order – in consequence, to increase the quality of living and the tourist attractiveness.

There are many good examples of tourism products for instance – the German and Dutch thematic trail “Dollart Route” or regional one - „Rhododendron Route” in west part of Ostfriesland (3 table). The interesting product for mobile tourist are milk bars, in dialect called “Melkhuskes”. The initial idea for “Melkhuskes” based on farm resources and necessity of the Dollart Route infrastructure development, including lavatory facilities (Jaszczak, 2009²). In 2009 they were started with a
number of 5 and grewed to 21 bars (in Ostfriesland), and 70 (in Lower Saxony) (Jaszczak, 2009).

3 table. Selected tourism products based on environmental and historical resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tourism products</th>
<th>Resources</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“Marine fest”-regional event</td>
<td>Harbors facilities, harbor restaurant, boat bar.</td>
<td>Summer event localized in each of seaside small town or village. Sometimes it is connected with a show of ships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Dollart Route”</td>
<td>Bicycle paths, road alleys, visual points, levees near Dollart Galf, small architecture (benches, seats, information points, tourism marking), visual points</td>
<td>Thematic bicycle route with great number of attractions, good tourism infrastructure and paths run along levees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Rhododendron Route”</td>
<td>Arboriculture centers, gardens, village buildings, farm objects, road infrastructure.</td>
<td>Thematic bicycle route, on which tourist could visit gardens with mostly rhododendron species.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Melkhuske” – milk bars</td>
<td>Farm buildings, garden arbors, garden space, car and bicycle park.</td>
<td>Small milk bars situated in farm buildings or treat as a separate objects (an arbor) The best place for “Melkhuskes” situation is rural gardens. This small scale objects serve milk products (milk, shake -milk, pudding, milk-rice), tea, coffee and cakes. They generate additional income for farmers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Guideline for rural tourism development

Rural tourism in Ostfriesland is characterized by good quality of accommodation objects and restaurants as well as natural and cultural attractions. However there are some aspects in tourism infrastructure, which could be increased. It is necessary to:

1) use old farm buildings with new tourism function;
2) create yearly, seasonal and weekend packages;
3) prepare new products for inhabitants from other regions and foreigners;
4) promote new form of activities based on natural and cultural resources;
5) used farm facilities (i.e. melkhuskes) for creating "nature schools" for city school trips;
6) promote regional cooking and „slow food” ideas in restaurants as well as eco-touristic farms,
7) design green areas in a centers of small towns and villages.
8) design rural garden with the idea of historical forms restoration.
Conclusion

1. Landscape analysis allowed for spatial identification and evaluation of rural areas with a perspective of their socio-economical development. In regions with unique natural and cultural potential, the most recommended direction of development is sustainable rural tourism, based on landscape values.

2. Landscape value (Watt landscape, swamps, road alleys, hydro and technical elements, green areas, parks, gardens and more) as well as many elements in cultural structure of village (farm facilities, buildings, monuments, sacral objects, road infrastructure, technical objects and more) influencing to the development of rural areas and rural tourism.

3. The potential is different and it distinguishes regions in Europe. It could be base for creation less or more advanced tourism products or packages. On the other hand these values should be protected against transformations or neglectfulness from rural space users.

4. The type of tourism with the least scale of impingement for environment, is rural tourism and its forms, including agritourism or eco-tourism.

5. The research in Ostfriesland region showed that tourism makes the connection between the active protection of traditional elements in rural landscape and the economic development. The analysis of cultural landscape showed the suitability of the particular elements to tourism space creation.

As a result of the analysis, several proposals have been made.
1. It is necessary to preserve indigenous local tradition as well as cultural identity.
2. The natural and cultural potential of region should be preserved. Moreover the characteristic elements should be used for tourism product creation.
3. It is important to promote a brand tourist product based on natural and cultural resources.
4. Rural tourism should use the village space, agricultural environment and infrastructure only in a rational way.

Literature

KRAŠTOVAIŽDŻIO VERTINIMAS VYSTANT KAIMO TURIZMĄ: OSTFRIESLAND (VOKIETIJA) ATVEJO STUDIJA

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Summary

Daugelyje Europos regionų kaimo kraštovaizdis yra to regiono tapatybės elementas. Todėl jis turėtų būti tarpdiscipliniinių mokslinių tyrimų objektas. To ir buvo siekiama vykdant tyrimą dėl kraštovaizdžio vertės nustatymo ir jos priklausomybės nuo įvairių kraštovaizdžio formavimui įtakos turinčių veiksnių. Vertinimo kriterijus suformulavo kraštovaizdžio architektai-inžinierių kartu su vadybos specialistais.

Kraštovaizdžio vertės analizė leidžia palengvinti teritorijų identifikavimą ir įvertinimą kaimo vietovėse bei numatyti teritorijų socialinės-ekonominės plėtros perspektyvas. Kaip žinoma, kaimo turizmą labiausiai rekomenduojama vystyti regionuose su unikaliomis gamtos ir kultūros vertybėmis. Todėl atlikto tyrimo tikslas – atskleisti teorinius veiksnius, turinčius įtakos kraštovaizdžio vertėi, pagrindžiant juos praktiškai atlaitais tyriniais Ostfriesland regione, Vokietijoje. Teorinės tyrimo išvados buvo suformuluotos remiantis monografinėmis ir kartografinėmis (kraštovaizdžio žemėlapių sudarymo ir vertinimo) studijomis.

Praktinė šio tyrimo reikšmė gali būti naudinga formuojant kaimo turizmo objektus, paslaugas bei produktus. Esminis ir bendras jų visų bruožas gamtos, kultūros ir istorinių vertybių integravimas.

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