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Mobility and Sustainable Religious Tourism – Accessibility of Holy Sites

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Mobilność i turystyka religijna – dostępność miejsc świętych

Streszczenie

Poznanie społecznych i przestrzennych uwarunkowań zrównoważonego rozwoju turystyki kulturowo-religijnej wydaje się problemem ważnym i ponadczasowym, ponieważ zainteresowanie tą formą podróży w Polsce nie słabnie. Wśród turystów – pielgrzymów jest wiele osób z różnego rodzaju niepełnosprawnością (znacząco utrudniającą podróż i zwiedzanie miejsc kultu), osób starszych oraz rodzin z małymi dziećmi. Problematyka dostępności sanktuariów dla tych grup turystów nie była dotąd obiektem szerszych i pogłębionych studiów naukowych w Polsce, co zachęca do podjęcia rozważań nad tą problematyką. Szczegółowa analiza problemu możliwości znoszenia ba-

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rier dostępności sanktuariów wydawała się autorom szczególnie istotna w kontekście spodziewanego ruchu pielgrzymkowego w Polsce w roku 2016, w którym organizowano Światowe Dni Młodzieży. Jednym z założonych i osiągniętych efektów aplikacyjnych dorobku badań jest opracowanie „Karty Sanktuarium Dostępnego” (KSD), mogącej być pomocą przy praktycznej ocenie dostępności miejsc kultu religijnego dla osób z różnego rodzaju niepełnosprawnością. W przedstawionym tekście zaprezentowano dorobek badań projektu ds-245 AWF Warszawa (grant Ministerstwa Nauki i Szkolnictwa Wyższego na lata 2014–2018).

Słowa kluczowe: turystyka religijna, turystyka mobilna, sanktuaria dostępne.

Abstract

Getting to know the social and spatial conditions of the sustainable development of cultural and religious tourism seems to be an important and timeless problem, because the interest in this form of travel in Poland is not waning. Among tourists – pilgrims there are many people with different disabilities, the elderly and families with young children. However important, the issue of the accessibility of sanctuaries for these groups of tourists has not been the material of a broader and in-depth scientific study in Poland so far, which encourages us to consider these issues in our scientific research. A detailed analysis of the problem, focused on the possibility of removing technical, architectural and spatial barriers in the sanctuaries and in the surroundings of holy sites, seemed to the authors of particular importance in the context of the expected pilgrimage movement in Poland in 2016, in which year the international World Youth Day was organized. One of the assumed and achieved application effects of the research study was the development of the ‘Accessible Sanctuary Card’ (ASC), helpful for the practical assessment of the accessibility of places of religious worship for people with various types of disabilities. The presented paper contains the research final conclusions of the project No. 245 AWF Warsaw (grant from the Ministry of Science and Higher Education undertaken in 2014–2018).

Keywords: religious tourism, mobile tourism, accessible sanctuaries.

Introduction

The main feature of sustainable tourism is respect for the environment and harmonious development in the context of the natural, cultural and social environment. This last segment includes the principle of participation in various forms of tourism people with physical or sensory limitations, what is of great value as a part of their social inclusion. Accordingly to the World Health Organization (WHO), 15% of the world’s population (1 billion people) is estimated to have some form of disability. Tourists could be more mobile and visit any destination they want, unless the infrastructure, facilities, information and other services are accessible to all people regardless their limitations, different forms of disabilities, family situation and age. Therefore, the UNWTO is convinced that accessibility for all to tourist facilities, products and services should be a central part of any responsible and sustainable tourist policy [7, 9, 15, 20, 29, 34, 35].

In our society, this is already a significant group of people with physical limitations, and what’s more, along with the projected demographic changes – most

likely in the coming decades it will grow steadily [8]. The elimination of architectural and urban barriers, including the adaptation of public space to the needs of people with disabilities, is not only a formal right, a noble ethical obligation, but above all a rational social policy, which goal is to improve the quality of life and increase the mobility of people with special needs [15, 17]. To such a strategy, we are obliged by both EU recommendations and UN resolutions, not only in the general scope focused on the needs to remove spatial barriers, such as the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), but also specifically focused on mobile tourism, on the travel needs of people with different disabilities, such as the UN WTO Recommendations on Accessible Tourism for All (2014) [33, 34, 35]. The above-mentioned documents particularly emphasize the importance of providing broadly understood tourist space (infrastructure and services) for people with mobile, vision or hearing impairments. The Polish law regulations are compatible with these documents, including the Building Law and the accompanying executive regulations, as detailed instructions of the Regulation by the Minister of Infrastructure (2002) [31, 32].

This paper presents the research findings, gathered on the base of survives undertaken as statutory project (ds-245 AWF), and carried out at the Joseph Piłsudski Academy of Physical Education in Warsaw. These researches were focused on the diagnosis of the barriers encountered by tourists in places of religious worship. The aim of the research was to identify the material and non-material barriers for pilgrims with various types of disabilities, and the search for practical solutions enabling to overcome them. One of the assumed and achieved application effects of these researches output was the development of the ‘Accessible Sanctuary Chart’, helpful in assessing the availability level of places of religious worship for people with various disabilities.

Religious tourism and people with disabilities

According to the data of the Department of Geography of Religion Tourism of the Jagiellonian University and the Catholic Information Agency, in average as much as 7 million Poles (15% of the population) take part in the pilgrimage to the place of religious worship every year. Thus, Polish pilgrims constitute about 5% of all Christian’s pilgrims in the world, and estimate 20% of pilgrims in Europe [36].

In Poland there are about 500 sanctuaries, mostly associated with the St. Mary’s cult (about 430 shrines is dedicated to Holy Virgin). The most popular and the largest of them (Jasna Góra, Łagiewniki, Licheń, Kalwaria Zebrzydowska, Niepokalanów) are visited by millions of pilgrims per year, including the visitors from abroad. The spatial distribution of sanctuaries in Poland is not a uniform. In several regions there is a clear concentration of shrines (for example

at the south of Poland), and only in the Carpathian Region there are over 130 sanctuaries and pilgrimage centres, which accounts for nearly 30% of all religious places in Poland. According to the latest published data of the Institute of Statistics of the Catholic Church of the Pallottines in Poland, pilgrimage is invariably a phenomenon of Polish religiosity; the number of pilgrims is constantly growing. In our country, all generations, social and professional groups take part in pilgrimages, including families with small children, elderly citizens and people with various disabilities. Constant changes in the characteristic of pilgrimages are observed, the most significant are seen in relation to the way of traveling, age, permanent residence and possessed education [36]:

- The dominance of the rural population has decreased – compared to the end of the 20th century; the share of young and well-educated people is increasing; according to the Institute’s data, 22% of rural residents, 24% population from small towns, 16% population from medium-sized cities and 15% large cities residents participate in pilgrimages.
- The number of better-educated people is increasing: 20% of people with primary education, 17% with vocational education, 20% with secondary education and 18% with higher education take part in pilgrimages.
- The number of young pilgrims is growing steadily – while at the end of the 20th century among Polish pilgrims the elder people dominated, being even 70%–80% of total number, now there is an increase in the representation of young people as pilgrimage participants and the young people now make up almost half of the participants in the total pilgrimage (vast majority taking part in pilgrimage on foot).
- The increase of number of young families with small children (aged 0–4) participating in pilgrimages.
- Contemporary pilgrims travel in Poland on foot, by coach, by car, by bike, even on roller skates; however, a decreasing percentage goes on foot, and from year to year much more come to the shrines by car or bus; there are also new, not practiced before, ways of pilgrimage, for example walking pilgrimages are supplemented with ‘marathons’, sections of routes covered by running.

In this context, it is understandable that territorial authorities should include an element of the pilgrimage movement in their regional development strategies. For example, Kraków is one of the cities that included religious tourism (including people with various disabilities) in their sustainable regional development strategy as an important factor to be considered. The Tourism Development Strategy in Kraków for the years 2006–2013, document adopted in 2006, emphasized the special importance of the Sanctuary of God in Łagiewniki and the historical Benedictine Monastery in Tyniec [11].

The Institute of Statistics of the Pallotine Catholic Church does not currently have reliable data on the percentage of people with disabilities among pilgrim-

ages visiting religious sites in Poland. However, based on the observations of the organizers of the trips and the administration of the sanctuaries, it is observed that the number of people with different impairments visiting holy sites is constantly growing. To meet their needs when visiting the shrines, there are a number of improvements implemented to remove material and non-material barriers. Among the beneficiaries of these changes are today wheelchair users, visually impaired people, elderly citizens and carers with young children. Foreign trips of Polish pilgrims with disabilities to popular and well-known places of worship, such as Rome, Lourdes or Fatima, do not have major restrictions. Today modern travel, especially by plane, is far easiest and the famous sanctuaries are fully prepared for visits pilgrims with different impairments, accordingly to the 'mobile tourism' philosophy and recommendations. That explains why the number of trips to shrines abroad of the Polish elderly citizens and young families with small children (aged 0–4) has been increasing over the last decade.

As religious tourism of people with different impairments in Warsaw and the Mazovia Region have not yet been covered by the attention of other researchers, the authors undertook the study (ds-245 AWF) with a hope, that the final conclusions may be helpful in building theoretical foundations for strategic plans for the sustainable development of cultural and religious tourism in this area.

Research aim, methods and material

Focusing on mobility of pilgrims visiting Warsaw and Mazovia Region holy sites seemed important, because of the mass tourism observed in places of religious worship and a growing number of people with a mobility problem [5].

Our hypothesis was the assumption, that the travel experience could be enjoyed by all tourists, regardless their physical, sensory or cognitive abilities, unless the material and non-material accessibility barriers to the holy sites are identified and removed.

The research studies were carried out in three main stages:

- a) The critical literary readings focused on religious tourism, tourism sustainability and theory of tourism mobility, law regulations, UN and EU documents and recommendations (collecting secondary, published data of quantitative and qualitative character);
- b) The case studies in the selected sanctuaries in Warsaw and Mazovia Region, focused on identifying the material and non-material mobility barriers. Collecting primary data of quantitative and qualitative character, based on the analyse of structured interviews with sanctuaries administration and visitors results (respectfully author's design questionnaire forms 'B' and 'C'), as well as on structured field notes (author's designed questionnaire form 'A'), along with findings in structured participant observations and photo documentation.

All interviews were carried out as ‘face-to-face’ and ‘in situ’ method (PAPI method applied in collecting primary data on qualitative and quantitative character);

- c) On the base of collected and analysed survey material and withdrawn conclusions – design the proposal of assessment method, helping to identify material and non-material mobility barriers in the holy sites, with the use of the unified criteria, developed on the base of final conclusions withdrawn from the research material (stage ‘a’ and ‘b’).

The research project and case field studies focused on material and non-material mobility barriers in the holy sites was carried out in the years 2014–2018 in the sanctuaries in Warsaw and the Mazovia Region. Selected for studies were these holy sites, which, according to the information of the Warsaw-Prague Diocese, had this time the formal status of a sanctuary. These were following:

- a) Religious sanctuaries within the administrative boundaries of Warsaw (as in 2018)
- The Sanctuary Temple of God’s Providence (Wilanów, Warsaw) (330 000 pilgrims per year);
 - Sanctuary of Father Jerzy Popiełuszko, church of St. Stanisława Kostki (Żoliborz, Warsaw) (250 000 pilgrims per year);
 - The Sanctuary of the Holy Mother of Young Teachers (Siekierki, Warsaw) (10 000 pilgrims per year);
 - The Sanctuary of Our Lady of Grace and the St. John’s Cathedral (Old Town, Warsaw) (50 000 pilgrims per year);
 - The Sanctuary of the Mother of the Mercy (Śródmieście, Warsaw) (120 000 pilgrims per year);
 - The Sanctuary of Our Lady of Fatima (Ursus, Warsaw) (5000 pilgrims per year);
 - The Sanctuary of the Holy Trinity (Solec, Warsaw) [no data];
 - The Sanctuary of St. Andrzej Bobola – National Sanctuary (Mokotów, Warsaw) (100 000 pilgrims per year);
 - The Sanctuary of St. Anthony (Śródmieście, Warsaw) (30 000 pilgrims per year).
- b) Religious sanctuaries outside the administrative borders of Warsaw (as in 2018)
- The Sanctuary of the Holy Virgin (Powsin near Warsaw) (7000 pilgrims per year);
 - The Sanctuary of Our Lady (Lewiczyn near Grójec) (2000 pilgrims per year);
 - The Sanctuary of Our Lady (Secymin – Nowiny) [no data];
 - The Sanctuary of the Divine Mercy (Ożarów Mazowiecki) [no data];
 - The Shrine of the Primate Helpers (Rokitno near Błonia) [no data];

- The Sanctuary of the Blessed Virgin Mary in Niepokalanów (Niepokalanów near Sochaczew) (800 000 pilgrims per year).

All these listed above sanctuaries were open to parish members, pilgrims and tourists, which was a necessary condition for conducting the research [16]. It should be noted that in Poland, due to the security of the temple, the shrines are opened only on certain days and hours (usually information is available on the website and is displayed at the main entrance). A sanctuary being opened seven days a week is rather a rare example; such an exception includes Niepokalanów, visited by 800 000 pilgrims per year.

Research findings: religious shrines and people with different impairments

The research findings of studies conducted by other authors' in surveyed sanctuaries in Warsaw and Mazovia Region showed that religious shrines attract tourists not only oriented on spiritual experiences, but also oriented on cultural tourism. Based on the material collected during our research, especially on participant structured observations and structured interviews conducted among sanctuaries' administration representatives and visitors to the shrines in Warsaw and the Mazovia Region, we could distinguish three groups of tourists visiting the holy sites:

- People for whom the basic goal is prayer, contemplation, participation in religious ceremonies, Christian church ceremonies (pilgrims, usually participating in organized trips);
- People for whom, next to religious experiences, an important motive of travel is sightseeing, getting to know the history, architecture of sanctuaries (cultural and religious tourism, cognitive), getting to know the monuments located in the vicinity of the sanctuary, visiting relatives or shopping;
- People who visit religious sanctuaries not on a base of religious faith, but for the sole purpose of learning about culture, without a religious motive (cultural tourism).

The research findings of ds-245 AWF project showed, that as well in Warsaw as in the Mazovia Region representatives of the second listed above group dominate. For these tourists the religious motif is as important as sightseeing or other motivations (visiting relatives, visiting the city and the region).

This tendency is also noticed by many other Polish researchers, and also described in foreign literature as characteristic for pilgrimages in Europe [1, 3, 6, 10, 12, 13, 18, 21, 26, 27, 28, 30], confirming the earlier research of the authors [22, 23, 24, 25].

We could identify certain differences in accessibility for the disabled to the holy sites and their surroundings, especially serious mobility barriers in historic

buildings (The Sanctuary of Our Lady of Grace in the Old Town, The Sanctuary of Our Lady of the Mercy, sanctuaries in Lewiczyn and in Rokitno). However, it is to be underlined, that once our case studies were completed, the ramp has been constructed at the main entrance to The Sanctuary of Our Lady of Grace in the Old Town, providing now a secure and comfortable access for disabled. In the sanctuaries recently constructed (on the base of Building Act in 2002), the need to adapt buildings and their surroundings for disabled people are observed and accessibility barriers are eliminated (The Ursus – Niedźwiadek Sanctuary, The Sanctuary in Siekierki, The Temple of Divine Providence in Wilanów). In contrast, historical sanctuaries are generally not so well prepared for people with various disabilities, actually the wheelchair users may have great difficulties getting inside the temple, the main nave and side chapels. Some of the sanctuaries' administrations are deeply concerned and try to remedy this inconvenience, for example, by installing fixed ramps at the main entrance (St. Stanisław Kostka Church in Warsaw, The Our Lady Sanctuary in Warsaw, sanctuaries in Rokitno near Pruszków) or portable ramps (Sanctuary of Our Lady of the Mercy in Warsaw).

When the buildings of historic significance are in question, there were very concerned and meticulous preparation focused on introduction improvements for disabled pilgrims carried out at the church of St. Stanisław Kostka built in the 1930s (designed by Edgar Norwerth). A specially marked route makes it easier for a wheelchair person to orientate himself / herself and to find out how to enter the sanctuary by means of an external ramp (fixed by the east entrance), also how to move safely around the sanctuary. Unfortunately, located in the basement the museum and the chapel, as well as the Pilgrim's House premises are still not accessible for people with different impairments. The good news is that the introduction of further amenities is in the plans of the parish. There are no problems with the accessibility of the pilgrims to the baroque churches in Solec and Powsin, due to the significant increase in road layers and levelling of differences in levels between outside and inside of these sanctuaries [5].

Among the covered by our survey historic sanctuaries located outside Warsaw, the Sanctuary in Niepokalanów was considered as extremely well prepared for disabled pilgrims. The basilica was available to visitors, thanks to the convenient permanent solid ramp fixed at the main entrance. Furthermore, at the Sanctuary in Niepokalanów accessible for people with different impairments are museum, toilets, shops and catering services.

According to the responses given for our questionnaire, the analysed research case studies material shows, that rarely visitors with disabilities complain about the comfort of moving inside the sanctuary. Usually the passages in the main nave and side chapels are wide and even. If they are at a different level, the interior ramps might be helpful (St. Stanisław Kostka's Church). At these temples, where parking lots are located, places dedicated to the disabled (well marked and with

appropriate parameters of the width of the site) are generally conveniently located, close to the main entrance to the sanctuary.

Nevertheless, pilgrims with disabilities visiting Warsaw pointed out the problem of difficulties in reaching the sanctuary, too few parking spaces ‘with an envelope’ near the main entrance to the sanctuary. These remarks were mainly connected with opinions of the sanctuaries located in the Old Town, Powiśle and in the Downtown (Sanctuary of Our Lady of the Mercy). However, as it was mentioned before, that once our case studies were completed, the ramp has been constructed at the main entrance to this church, providing now a secure and comfortable access for disabled. Unfortunately, website information about if / or and how the sanctuary is prepared for the disabled pilgrims (wheelchair users, visually impaired) is still too rare. Dedicated information on sanctuaries and the conditions of visiting them, were missed either on websites (as pre-visit information) or on site (as in situ information). These deficiencies are a significant problem, due to the demographic cross-section of religious tourism participants, a large proportion of elder people who may have motor or vision problems. It is to be underlined that other researchers highlighted the issue as crucial, when considering the sustainable development of religious tourism [2, 4, 10, 20]. It should be emphasized that providing reliable information (online and on site on the information board displayed by main entrance to the sanctuary) is no longer limited by conservation or spatial recommendations and this lack is only an ignorance and failure of the sanctuary administration [Table 2].

Another problem difficult to solve is tolerating the presence of a guide dog in public places, including temples. According to the Polish law – blind people in the company of a guide dog have the right to enter and stay in commercial, cultural and educational establishments, sports facilities, banks and offices. Unfortunately, from everyday experience or media reports, we know that this provision is very often questioned, and in relation to the place of worship – it is still a sensitive issue that remains unambiguous and unsolved.

Overall, despite constant improvements of public space, we can still observe the maladaptation for people with different impairments the sanctuary surroundings: city streets, means of communication, gastronomic establishments, and museums. The public space requires further adjacent to the needs of the elderly and disabled. Moreover, disabled pilgrims have serious problems with accessibility to basic tourist infrastructure (hotels, gastronomic establishments, trade services, museums). In Warsaw only a few hotel establishments and few catering services may be available to them. What should be emphasized, the accommodation services without barriers are not the cheapest. It is difficult to find a hostel, pilgrim’s houses or retreat houses at shrines prepared to host guests with different impairments. And yet the participants of the pilgrimage, as many researchers interested in the problem emphasize, are very often elderly people, representatives of the least prosperous social group [4, 10].

In Warsaw, accordingly to the latest official government statistic data (Central Statistic Office CSO), the number of disabled people is over 200 000 [8]. Therefore, together with people aged 60+, this group already has over 350 000 inhabitants. It means that the problem of accessibility of places of worship studied, not only concerns disabled pilgrims, but also numerous faithful recruiting from members of local communities. Moreover, this amount, according to demographic forecasts, will continue to increase over the next decades, as the average Pole's age increases. However, due to the important urban and architectural barriers that are still present in our public environment, this social group has little chances for social inclusion, for participation in everyday social life, including religious tourism. And numerous studies (mentioned earlier) indicate that this is a social group particularly interested in this form of tourism.

Indicated in the Polish law regulations and under the scope of integrated planning aim, is the need to take into account the expectations of various social groups, including the removal of accessibility barriers. However, when in question are historic buildings, it is necessary to consider the provisions of conservation recommendations regarding the protection of natural values and cultural goods, which often prevents the adaptation of the sacred object to the needs of the disabled. Nevertheless, an example of good practice and that goodwill and efforts give the desired effect – is concern and preparation for disabled visitors the Sanctuary in Niepokalanów, which most facilities are fully accessible to disabled people.

According to our case studies and findings, the hope of improving the accessibility of places of worship for people with various disabilities are in plans of most surveyed sanctuaries in Warsaw and in Mazovia Region. Managers and administrators declared to introduce further improvements, often these actions and projects had to be supported by the local authorities. Only in 2017 improvements for mobility and accessibility in 200 places in Warsaw's public space were introduced. The same proposals, however on a smaller scale, had individual local authorities in places visited by pilgrims.

Evaluation of accessibility to sanctuaries – assessment method proposal

The method of assessing the availability of sanctuaries and their surroundings for people with different disabilities was a complex, multi-threaded task. Accessibility criteria related to both material (architectural, urban) and non-material barriers (such as pre-visit and in situ information services) should be taken into account. Furthermore, not only persons with different disabilities, but also the elderly and families with young children (aged 0–4) should be taken into account when identifying access difficulties. Overall, the following religious tourism

groups should be considered, who might suffer troubles with inclusion and benefit from an accessible environment:

- a) Tourists with physical impairments (such as wheelchair users), people using sticks or crutches, people with visual or hearing impairments, people with learning difficulties or mental impairments, elderly people with walking difficulties, a heart condition, problems connected with ageing;
- b) Tourists with temporary impairments (such as recovering from an injury), travellers carrying heavy luggage, woman in later stages of pregnancy, tourists with young children, especially those using prams (0–4 years).

The assessment method presented in this paper was developed in aim to propose a tool, which might be helpful in identifying difficulties in the accessibility in the places of worship for people with different disabilities (as mobility and visual impairments). It was based on the analysis of material collected during theory readings and field studies. The case studies were conducted in 15 selected sanctuaries: in Warsaw (9 buildings) and the Mazovia Region (6 buildings). The studies of literature were focused on theoretical works devoted to mobility tourism issue. To achieve greater clarity and practicality, it was decided to include the assessment method in the form of three evaluation tables, which could help to objectively distinguish mobility barriers in the sanctuary. This method was pilot-tested in all 15 sanctuaries selected for case studies, to the extent that it was possible (mainly based on the conditions imposed by the administration of the facility and the scope of information that can be gathered from other sources). It showed that an additional advantage of the method might be a practical help for administrators, when sanctuary modernization is in question.

The evaluation tables forming the ‘Accessible Sanctuary Card’ were designed to assess three distinguished segments: the interior space of the sanctuary and its surroundings, places of pilgrims’ accommodation (which can be such a variety of facilities as retreat houses, pilgrim houses, monasteries, hotels, guesthouses or private accommodation) and pre-visit and in situ information for pilgrims [Table 2]. As a result, the ‘Accessible Sanctuary Card’ consists of three tables, each built in form of questionnaire consisting of selected criteria:

- a) Table 1: indicators measuring the accessibility to the sanctuary and its surrounding, identifying architectural and urban barriers (30 criteria);
- b) Table 2: indicators measuring the accessibility to the places of pilgrim’s accommodation, food services, identifying architectural and urban barriers (28 criteria);
- c) Table 3: indicators measuring the accessibility to pre-visit and in situ information, identifying non-material barriers (8 criteria).

For the assessment method, as much as 66 criteria (accessibility indicators) of material and non-material barriers were identified and selected with the consideration of the basic spatial conditions and facilities helping the mobility of people with various disabilities. The assessment method of identifying barriers to

achieve the full availability of sanctuaries and their surroundings, which was developed in the form of the ‘Accessible Sanctuary Card’ and its tables, took into account both building standards and requirements of legal regulations in Poland as well as current EU recommendations in this respect.

It should be emphasized that the assessment method can be used only during the ‘in situ’ visit, directly on site, as it reflects the actual state of the sanctuary accessibility [Table 1].

The presented assessment method distinguishes only general criteria. Because the system assumes flexibility and openness of use, it is possible to expand the ‘Available Sanctuary Card’, its evaluation tables with further, more detailed criteria (accessibility indicators) – if only needed, in a given problem segment (for example, a very accurate assessment of compliance with the standards required for dedicated toilets for the disabled). For this reason, in the final part of the evaluation tables, there was space left for comments made by the person when assessing the availability of the object and its surroundings. It is to underline that any measurements, based on architectural and construction plans of the sanctuary, were not recommended to be considered, as they might not be accurate (for example changed during the implementation of the investment or renovation works and left without correction). Unfortunately, the constructor’s practice is not to mark any changes, deviations, when only few centimetres are in question. As a consequence these changes might significantly hinder (or on the contrary – enable) free and safe manoeuvring of the wheelchair or pram.

To use the assessment method no specialized preparation or tools are necessary, apart from the popular, commercially available rigid carpentry measuring tape with a standard length of 200 cm or 300 cm. It should also be noted that instruments for electronic measurements used for architectural and construction inventories are becoming more and more popular nowadays, but their proper use requires knowledge and practice.

It is recommended to use the assessment method and fill out the three evaluation tables when working in a team of minimum two people. It is necessary to have at least two people to take notes and take measurements at the same time (such as door widths, corridors width or manoeuvring area for a toilet trolley, etc.) [Table 1]. The time that should be spent on assessing the accessibility of the sanctuary and its surroundings for people with different disabilities, when using the assessment method of ‘Accessible Sanctuary Cards’ is difficult to determine in advance. It will depend on the size of the object (or even set of objects) and the level of detail of the assessment we want to achieve. However, one should expect that the larger and functionally complex buildings (as for example sanctuary in Niepokalanów or Jasna Góra) could require the multi-day work and a team of several people.

The developed assessment method was fully tested in two sanctuaries in Warsaw (Sanctuary of Our Lady of the Mercy and Church of St. Stanisław Kostka) in 2016 and 2017.

After analysing these results material, corrections were applied to the evaluation questionnaire forms. The assessment tables finally developed were an improved version of a primary attempt, in form of a mature design embracing 66 indicators (accessibility criteria) [5].

Final conclusions

The creation of the accessible tourist destination in religion sanctuary arises from the assumption, that travel experience could be enjoyed by all tourists, regardless their physical, sensory or cognitive abilities.

Our final research results showed that facilitating travel for people with disabilities might be an exceptional business opportunity. However crucial is a change in mind – set and in the model of tourism services provisions in order to meet market demands. It is to be underlined that accessible environments and services might contribute to improve the quality of the religious tourism product and can create more job opportunities, also for people with disabilities. Therefore, accessibility must be an integral part of any responsible and sustainable tourism strategy.

The research aim, undertaken by authors, was focused on creation an assessment method for assessing accessibility in sanctuaries and their surrounding. It was necessary to formulate and select certain indicators of mobility barriers, which could be also used as a tool to assess, control and manage other than sanctuaries, tourist destinations. The developed method, in form of three ‘Accessible Sanctuary Card’ tables, could be also used within tourist destinations when considered are actions to improve their accessibility. As accessibility must be present throughout the wide tourism chain: sites, services and activities – this wide range of factors was considered in the ‘Accessible Sanctuary Card’ tables content and it embraces 66 accessibility indicators. These include in sanctuaries: tourism destination management, tourism information and advertising (pre-visit and in situ), urban and architectural environments (sanctuary and its surrounding), modes of transport and stations, accommodation (as hostel, pilgrim’s house), food service and conventions, cultural activities (as sanctuary museum) and other tourism activities and events [Table 1, 2].

As a final statement, it is to be underlined that mobile tourism policy involves a collaborative process among all stakeholders. It should be emphasized that the removal of accessibility barriers will certainly be more effective if their participation is ensured at all stages of the plan (from the idea to the implementation).

Potentially interested in such projects might be representatives of local government authorities, government institutions, international agencies, tour – operators. Furthermore, a successful tourism product requires effective partnerships and cooperation across representatives of the local community and non-governmental organizations (including organizations representing the interests of people

with disabilities). Their voice is of a crucial value, when decisions, important for the entire territorial community, are in question.

Finally, it is to emphasize that although it was an intention to make the assessment method universal and timeless, it should be constantly verified and replaced by the results of the latest research, also adapted to current legal acts requirements. For example, with the progress of technology and the production of increasingly better bio-prostheses or innovative wheelchair designs (for example, reducing the turning radius, improving stability), some of the indicators adopted for the proposed 'Accessible Sanctuary Card' will have to be revised and corrected over time.

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Table 1. Basic spatial parameters (indicators) that should be taken into account to facilitate the basic activities of people with disabilities (public facilities, sanctuaries and their surroundings – including hotel rooms in retreat houses, pilgrim's houses, private accommodation), unified criteria adopted in the evaluation method chart

No.	Basic indicators: dimensions and dimensions of rooms in places of religious worship and their surroundings should be taken into account for the faithful and tourists – pilgrims visiting the sanctuary, taking into account in particular:
1.	Wheelchair user: frontal dimension, lateral dimension
2.	Wheelchair user: wheelchair-manoeuvring surface, surface for transfer
3.	Wheelchair user with accompanying person: frontal dimension, lateral dimension
4.	Wheelchair user: at the washing basin
5.	Wheelchair user: using a toilet (transfer surface)
6.	Wheelchair user: using a shower
7.	Wheelchair user: using a bathtub
8.	Wheelchair user: in the door, in the corridor
9.	Wheelchair user: at the table
10.	People walking with crutches: frontal dimension, lateral dimension
11.	People walking with crutches: in the door, in the corridor
12.	Person walking with a cane (blind): frontal dimension, lateral dimension
13.	Person walking with a cane (blind): in the door, in the corridor
14.	People with limited ability of walking on stairs
15.	People with a pram

Source: authors' elaboration, based on the field survey performed in 2014–2018 (ds-245 AWF), carried out on the Józef Piłsudski Academy of Physical Education in Warsaw on the base of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education grants.

Table 2. Basic infrastructure and services within the sanctuary and its surroundings, considered in the assessment method ('Accessible Sanctuary Card' tables content) as important indicators of accessibility and important condition for tourist mobility

No.	Basic infrastructure and services segment	Basic infrastructure and services details
1.	Tourism destination management at sanctuary	Reasonable accommodation for pilgrims and food services, responsible information, safety, staff training
2.	Tourism information and advertising provided by sanctuary	Pre-visit, in situ, to enable preparation and booking
3.	Urban and architectural environments in the vicinity of sanctuary	It includes: parking areas, communication, signage, vertical and horizontal movement, public hygiene facilities, prices
4.	Modes of transport	Modes of transport, stations, passenger terminals, related facilities used by pilgrims to get to the sanctuary site
5.	Accommodation, food services, establishments and conference facilities (recollection facilities)	Accommodation facilities provided for pilgrims, food service establishments, conference facilities (recollection room and prayer facilities)
6.	Sanctuary and its surrounding	Accessibility to the main nave and side chapels, accessibility to the sanctuary surrounding (for example outside located chapels, Holy Cross route), calvarias chapels on the premises or its surrounding
7.	Cultural and sport activities	Sanctuary museum, library, amphitheatre, sport and recreation grounds within sanctuary premises, green space and natural environment, other buildings of tourist interest, excursions to surrounding areas

Source: authors' elaboration, based on the field survey performed in 2014–2018 (ds-245 AWF), carried out on the Józef Piłsudski Academy of Physical Education in Warsaw on the base of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education grants.

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