

TOURISM ROLE IN THE REGIONAL ECONOMY



SOCIAL, HEALTH-RELATED, ECONOMIC AND SPATIAL CONDITIONS OF DISABLED PEOPLE'S TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

EDITORS

JERZY WYRZYKOWSKI

JANUSZ MARAK

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Janusz Marak, Jerzy Wyrywowski

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Łukasz Musiaka

CURRENT STATUS OF ACCESSIBILITY OF CHOSEN CASTLES AND PALACES OF LODZ REGION TO THE NEEDS OF DISABLED PEOPLE

Abstract: Article refers to the extremely important social issue of the widespread accessibility of the surrounding our space. Particular attention was paid to historic buildings, which are invaluable historical and national heritage. The article analyses the accessibility of chosen castles and palaces of the Lodz Region for people with motor and sensory disabilities (hearing, sight).

Key words: castle, palace, monument, disability and accessibility

Introduction

A modern man, even though surrounded by a number of scientific and technological achievements, faces barriers that make his/her performance in a society difficult. Accessibility of space depends on many factors. It is the sum of people's personal qualities and characteristics of the environment in which they live. Especially big problems, about which occurrence the able-bodied do not realize, affect people with different types of disabilities.

Not only the movement in space, but also the usage of everyday objects, equipment, etc., designed in such a way that make its usage problematic by all people, regardless of age, sex, or limitations (and/or diseases). The usage of these seemingly ordinary devices may cause huge problems which disabled people encounter in their daily lives. The space is designed for the young and able-bodied, it may be difficult to access for the disabled¹.

According to the Online Polish Language Dictionary², the term "disability" means: "unable to achieve completely physical or mental abilities".

1 One should remember that the problems with accessibility, especially urban (ex. urban areas) and architectural (individual buildings) affect not only people with disability certificate, but also the elderly with temporary restriction of mobility (ex. patients moving on crutches), passengers with heavy luggage, pregnant women, parents with a pram or, finally, the children.

2 *Słownik Języka Polskiego* – PWN, available at: sjp.pwn.pl/slownik/2489264/niepe-

Disability is not just a medical term, but it also touches upon social issues³. International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health – ICF (Międzynarodowa Klasyfikacja Funkcjonowania, Niepełnosprawności i Zdrowia), adopted at the World Health Assembly in 2001, emphasizes that disability concerns all humanity. However, social minorities can not be blamed for the disability problems, because each person can experience deterioration in health and become a person with disability⁴.

For the research purposes, the disabled were classified into:

- physically disabled and wheelchair users,
- visually impaired and blind,
- hard-of-hearing and deaf.

Despite the adjustment of law and physical space for the disabled, the scale of problems connected not only with the accessibility of buildings, but also transportation, education, participation in society and others is huge⁵.

At this point, one should consider what does the word “accessibility” mean. According to the Small Dictionary of Polish Language (Mały Słownik Języka Polskiego), “accessible” means: 1. able to be reached or easily got, and 2. not difficult to be reached, achievable⁶.

According to the Integration Association (Stowarzyszenie Integracja), the accessibility of the environment *means that disabled people have the equal rights as others when it comes to the usage of facilities, services, physical environment, transportation, technology, information and communication systems*⁷.

In conclusion, accessible should mean attainable for all.

Accessibility and barriers' elimination are of the vital importance to the European Commission's Strategy, which identified them as the first and primary area of action for the next decade. The European Commission proposes the usage of different legal instruments in accordance with the projects: the Digital Agenda for Europe and Innovation Union. These documents set out actions for equal opportunities and participation in society for all

%C5%82nosprawny_I [access 2011-02-18].

3 Grabowski J., Milewska M., Stasiak A., *Vademecum organizatora turystyki niepełnosprawnych* (The handbook for tour-operator of disabled people), Łódź: Wydaw. WSTH, 2007.

4 Available at: www.unic.un.org.pl/niepelnosprawnosc/definicja.php [access 2011-02-18].

5 Poveda Puente R., Barbera Guillem R., Jose-Ramon Ruiz R., Jose-Maria Baydal B., Gimen Molla C.J., Vidal Garsia A., Rodriguez Porrere C., Prat Pastor J., in: *A comprehensive Accessibility Guide: “!preguntame!” (“Ask me”) Project*, Universal Design of Buildings: Tools and Policy, POLIS Conference, Bruges, Belgium, 2006, pp. 195–200.

6 Skorupka S., Auderska H., Łempicka Z. (ed.), *Mały słownik języka polskiego* (The Small Dictionary of Polish Language), Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1974, p. 131.

7 Available at: www.niepelnosprawni.gov.pl/dostepnosc-projektowanie-uniwer/ [access 2011-07-04].

citizens. The content of above mentioned documents refers to the concept of universal design, technology promotion, and finding solutions for people with disabilities to participate fully in the society⁸.

Architects face many obstacles in order to open building unsuitable for disabled people. Particularly difficult situation occurs during the adaptation of historic buildings because of the immense historical value and sensitivity of the original urban tissue. The most common problems are:

- the object is difficult to reach/handle,
- lack of direct contact with the public/private transportation,
- functional system is complicated and often illegible,
- levels at the entrance and on each floor are different,
- communication is horizontal and vertical (narrow corridors, passages, narrow doorways,
- staircases, uneven surfaces, slippery floors – often marble),
- doors are heavy, difficult to open,
- lack of handrails,
- lack of adequate information,
- lack of suitable sanitation facilities and phones⁹.

In recent years we can observe, abroad as well as in the country, the slow process of adaptation of public spaces (including historic buildings) for the disabled. So far, several research projects and information related to spaces' accessibility for the disabled have been completed.

The project *Tourism for all*, implemented by the Polish Tourist Country-Lovers (Polskie Towarzystwo Turystyczno-Krajoznawcze, PTTK), can be an example of such activities. The project, which was held in the Lodz, Mazovia and Podlachia Provinces (later expanded into the entire country), examined the accessibility of accommodation, gastronomic, cultural and sports facilities, hiking trails, national and scenic parks, and transportation¹⁰. Unfortunately, the real value of the undertaken actions is minimal, mainly due to the selective and cursory examination of the public space. In addition, the database is not updated.

8 Available at: www.niepelnosprawni.gov.pl [access 2011-07-04].

9 Grabowska-Pańska H., *Niepelnosprawni w obszarach i obiektach zabytkowych. Problemy dostępności (Disabled in historic buildings and their area. The problems of accessibility)*, Kraków: Politechnika Krakowska im. Tadeusza Kościuszki, 2004, p. 162.

10 On January 30th, 2011 in *Tourism for all* (www.turystykadlawnyszyskich.pl), in the "Culture" site, there were 51 items for the Łódź Region – including 16 facilities in Lodz. According to the PhD student, information for people with varying degrees and kinds of disability who are looking for full and comprehensive data, about the individual sites and facilities, are sketchy and inadequate. Photographic documentation of mentioned objects is extremely poor or does not exist.

Mobidat base, called *Niepełnosprawnik po Warszawie* ("The Warsaw disabledhelper", www.mobidat.pl)¹¹ contains a list of public utility facilities in the capital and is considered to be much more extensive database when it comes to the evaluation of individual objects. Its main advantage is the detailed description of the various facilities for the disabled. Studies on the accessibility of public facilities and attractions in other cities began to appear recently. Gdynia, Poznan and Krakow offer promotional publications and information for disabled people. Unfortunately, neither Lodz nor Lodz Province can boast of such publications.

In the disabled people's point of view architectural and urban barriers, which make difficult and sometime even impossible the access to particular buildings, are the relevant ones. Extremely complicated situation occurs when it comes to the adjustment of historic buildings and its areas, they constitute the element of our surroundings, which was created at the time when the concept of "design for all" did not exist. It should be emphasized that the purpose of defensive buildings' construction was to impede the access for people from outside.

At this point one must define such concepts as historic building, castle and palace which are discussed in the article.

Act on the Protection of Monuments and the Guardianship of Monuments of 23 Jul. 2003, Chapter 1, Article 3, defines the historic building as *a immovable or movable, its parts or groups of buildings, which are man-made or are outcome of his activities and are the evidence of a bygone era or event whose preservation lies in the public interest because they hold historic, artistic or scientific value.*

There are three types of historic buildings:

- historic immovable – real estate, or part of it or complex of immovable (...),
- historic movable – movable, or part of it or complex of movable (...),
- archeological monument – historic immovable, being a relic of human surface, underground or underwater activity, composed of cultural layers with works of art or their traces; or historic movable being a work of art.

The study examines the historic immovable only.

Palace is a representational, residential building devoid of defensive features. Due to its features and location there can be distinguished rural, urban,

11 The objective of The Physically Disabled Mathematicians and IT Specialists' Foundation and the TUS Foundation is (...) Data Base creation on Warsaw's public facilities. This action is implemented through a partnership with the German Albatros Foundation funded by "The Man" Campaign (www.mobidat.pl).

hunting and summer palaces. They are often build on a small hill, integrated into the landscape or within the park, surrounded with water¹².

Castles are defined as *the group of fortified elements and residential buildings, linked in a closed defensive circuit. They were created in the feudal system as a centre of princely rule, the seat of magnate, knights or military post. The essential feature of such a group of buildings is a closed defensive circuit, initially in the form of ramparts or wooden-earth construction and in subsequent periods from bricks*¹³. The definition of the castle, understood in this sense, is an element of cultural heritage and at the same time is of interest to tourist (value, tourist attraction).

Research problem, the purpose of research

Castles and palaces of Lodz Province, which survived to our time serve multiple functions today, they are residential or public buildings. However, due to their historical, architectural and cultural value they constitute one of the most important elements of national heritage. This specific and unique characteristic makes them ideal to serve cultural, museum and tourist (gastronomy, accommodation industry) functions.

Some of the castles and palaces have been popular tourist's attractions in the nineteenth century. Nowadays, historical defensive and residential buildings are often an important part of local and regional tourist products.

The main task of institutions managing medieval castles and palaces should be promotion of these monuments as well as making them available for the widest circles of society – mainly through tourism development. Unfortunately, due to the long time of construction, the specificity of their design and historic, architectural character of the tissue they are very often a huge barrier to accessibility for disabled visitors. Moreover, possibilities of rebuilding and technical equipment installation, which could improve accessibility (especially outside) are limited¹⁴. Nevertheless, one should look for opportunities to improve access and increase quality of services provided by the castles and palaces' management entities. The starting point for the construction of modern, attractive tourist products is defining barriers to

¹² Łuczyński R.M., *Zamki, dwory i pałace w Sudetach, Stowarzyszenie na Rzecz Rozwoju Państwowej Wyższej Szkoły Zawodowej im. Witelona w Legnicy (Castles, manors and palaces in the Sudetes), Wspólnota Akademicka, Legnica 2008, p. 6; Koch W., *Style w architekturze. Arcydzieła budownictwa europejskiego od antyku po czasy współczesne (Styles in architecture. Masterpieces of European architecture form antiquity to modern Times)*, Warszawa 1996, p. 298; Łuczyński R.M., op. cit., p. 496*

¹³ Guerquin B., *Zamki w Polsce (Castles in Poland)*, Warszawa: Arkady, 1984.

¹⁴ Grabowska-Pałęcka H., op. cit., p. 6.

development of historic buildings' touristic functions and assessment their current state of adaptation for tourists, including disabled ones.

Concluding, the main objective of the research is to determine castles and palaces' stage of development and the degree of adaptation to the needs and requirements of disabled of the Łódź Province's touristic development.

The main objective of the study is to determine the current state (2011) of castles and palaces' adaptation to the needs of disabled tourists. The results are going to indicate problem areas and issues related to the inadequacy of historical buildings' accessibility for tourists with disabilities. The results of the project are to show the new solutions for historic buildings' users.

According to Mazanek¹⁵, the monument should be a carrier of cognitive content, a source of emotional and aesthetic. It is possible to achieve [it] if you combine with one another at least four factors, such as:

- values which present the object (the architectural style, history),
- location in the landscape (object's surroundings),
- usage,
- information and accessibility.

Comparison of above mentioned factors make possible to place the thesis that *the tourist's reception capacity of disabled people in the studied castles and palaces of the Łódź Region is small and requires improvement.*

Subject, object and the scope of research

The author acknowledges that all amenities which are to facilitate the legal, informational, organizational, technical, architectural and other, for the improvement of the accessibility and convenience of these buildings, while visiting them, are the subject of the research. Indirectly, tourists (visitors) with disabilities who visit above mentioned places are also the subject of the research area. Owing to tourists' opinions, needs, expectations and abilities the accessibility of these buildings is likely to be improved.

Medieval castles and palaces located in today's Lodz Region are the subject of the research.

The spatial scope of the research covers the area of the Lodz Region in its administrative boundaries (2011). Through the analysis of the examples of proper adaptation of historical and public buildings for the disabled *the spatial extent of studies is going to be broaden and will cover the examples of buildings from the whole country.* Author's research field has been nar-

¹⁵ Mazanek L., Zabytki architektury walorem krajoznawczym. Analiza wybranych obiektów ziemi sądeckiej (Monuments of architecture as a touring value. The Analysis of Selected Buildings of the Sacz Region), *Folia Turistica*, 1990, no. 1, p. 100.

rowed down to selected buildings and their immediate surroundings, which constitute a whole with analyzed ones (ex. car parks, roads, parks around the monuments, etc.).

The direct (field) research was conducted in July and August 2011.

Research methods and tools

The research objects were fragmentary and are part of the "Tourism for the region Project", which participant is the author of the article. In order to verify the assumptions of the research there were applied chamber and field methods. Chamber methods are limited to library and Internet queries. Whereas, field methods are:

- panel studies – which consist of gathered information from the community or institutions which are the subject of research. Selection of research sample (panel) may be random or deliberate¹⁶,
- observations,
 - external observation – it aims at community's observation "from outside" and behavioral characteristics of the analyzed communities;
 - controlled observation (methodical) – conducted after formulation of research hypotheses; it aims at gathering answers to specific research questions;
- interview – involves gathering information from people who are the subject of research,
 - hidden interview,
 - explicit interview – documentary interview;
- iconographic material (photos).

During the field research there were used:

- a questionnaire survey (respondents are owners, managers or employees of surveyed buildings/institutions),
- inventory card facility, used by the TUS Foundation in Mobidat and the "Warsaw disabledhelper" creation.

Building's selections, course of research

Six castles and eighteen residential buildings (mainly palaces), a total of twenty four buildings in the region, were selected to the project. The basis of separation of the research group was the register of historic immovable

¹⁶ Altkorn J., *Marketing w turystyce (Marketing of Tourism)*, Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 1993, p. 184.

of the Lodz Region, prepared by National Centre for Research and Documentation of Monuments (Krajowy Ośrodek Badań i Dokumentacji Zabytków – KOBiDZ). All examined monuments, to a lesser or greater extent, served as a tourist places. As a result of field research, the original list of twenty four buildings has been reduced to seven palaces. The reason was the ongoing repair works preventing from inventorying the building (Brzeziny, Poddębice), poor technical condition (Goślub), absence of the owner (Kiernozia), marginal touristic functions of historic buildings adapted as schools (Wojśławice, Lututów) and a shop and gastronomic place (Biała Rawska). Finally, seventeen buildings (six castles and eleven palaces) were inventoried. Table 1 presents the list of selected historic buildings.

Tab. 1. Selected buildings for the research project

No.	city	commune	district	building	usage
CASTLES					
1	Łęczyca	Łęczyca	Łęczycki	XIV th –XVIII th c castle complex	museum, restaurant
2	Opoczno	Opoczno	Opoczyński	1 st half of the XI–V th c castle	museum
3	Oporów	Oporów	Kutnowski	XV th c castle	museum
4	Piotrków Trybunalski	Piotrków Trybunalski	Piotrkowski	Half of the XVI th c castle	museum
5	Rawa Mazowiecka	Rawa Mazowiecka	Rawski	Ruin, XIV th , XVIII–XX th c Mazovian Dukes Castle	museum
6	Uniejów	Uniejów	Poddębicki	XIV th , XVII th , XI–X th c castle	hotel, restaurant
PALACES					
1	Działoszyn	Działoszyn	Pajęczański	XVIII, XX th c palace	cultural centre, district library
2	Kaleń	Sadkowice	Rawski	half of XIX th , XX th c palaces complex w	residential building, hotel
3	Łowicz	Łowicz	Łowicki	Gen. Klicki's Palace 1822–24	residential building, art gallery
4	Małków	Warta	Sieradzki	1 st half of the XIX th c palace complex	hotel, restaurant
5	Nieborów	Nieborów	Łowicki	XVIII th , XIX–XX th c palace complex	museum
6	Pabianice	Pabianice	Pabianicki	manor house, Cracovia Chapter Palace, 1571	museum
7	Sokolniki	Sokolniki	Wieruszowski	1775, XIX th c palace complex	hotel, restaurant
8	Tomaszów Mazowiecki	Tomaszów Mazowiecki	Tomaszowski	1812 Ostrowski palace complex	museum

9	Walewice	Bielawy	Łowicki	palace, 1783 r.	hotel, gastro-nomic place
10	Wola Chojnata	Biała Rawska	Rawski	XIX th c palace complex	hotel, restaurant
11	Wolbórz	Wolbórz	Piotr-kowski	XVIII th c palace complex	school complex, dormitory (hotel)

Source: KOBIDZ.

Nine of the inventoried buildings are museums (contemporary art gallery located in Gen. Klicki's Palace, which is a private building, is available for tourists). Other buildings serve as accommodation and gastronomic places (Kaleń palace is in this group; its owner plans to set up a hotel there). When it comes to the purpose and usage of Męciński Palace in Działoszyn, currently managed by the Regional Centre for the Development of Culture and Tourism, is adapted to a county library.

Openness and focus on gaining as many customers (visitors, guests) as possible, characterize the examined buildings, which are museums and adjusted as a hotel places. In spite of such a nature of their adjustments, as indicated by the research results (further part of the article), the accessibility of historic buildings for people with disabilities is largely hindered.

Tab. 2. Researched buildings' forms of ownership

Ownership		
Private	Local	State
Palace in Kaleń	Castle in Uniejów	Palace in Galewice
Chojnata Palace	Castle in Rawa Mazowiecka	Palace in Nieborów
Palace in Sokolniki	Castle in Opoczno	
Palace in Małków	Castle in Łęczycza	
Palace in Łowicz	Palace in Działoszyn	
	Palace in Tomaszów Mazowiecki	
	Manor house in Pabianice	
	Castle in Piotrków Trybunalski	

Source: Self-elaboration.

The largest group of historic buildings belongs to local governments. Subsequently, private buildings were listed, whereas, the least recorded were buildings under the state administration (Tab. 2).

The study of selected castles and palaces proceeded along two lines. A survey with an employee of the examined building was conducted, then, in order to fill in the inventory card, measurements and visual inspection of

the building/buildings was made. The total number of collected questionnaires is 10 and an inventory card is 24.

There were analyzed all questionnaires and 20 inventory cards, appropriate for the selected castles and palaces, but for other historic building which belong to examined buildings (ex. the managing institution of Uniejów Castle is city's municipal partnership "Uniejów Baths" Termy Uniejowskie. Castle, Knights Castle, thermal facilities, thermal restaurant subordinate to "Uniejów Baths" and they were also inventoried).

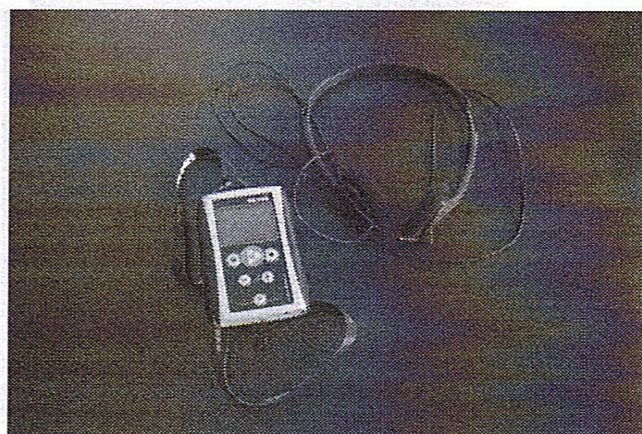
The next step of the research was the analysis of research results by the recognition (or not) of the historic building as one which fulfills the specific requirements associated with different types of disabilities. The results of 16 inventory cards were compiled by employees of the TUS Foundation in Warsaw. The author of the research project analyzed the rest of the results himself. Both when filling in the inventory cards and compiling facts and figures of the research, TUS Foundation guidelines were used (developed during "The Warsaw disabled helper's" creation).

Research results

In view of their condition, selected research buildings, can be divided into two groups: the buildings, which have undergone renovation over the past few years and those which general renovation, development or reconstruction was a few decades ago (other buildings).

In addition, buildings where the complex repairs were carried out decades ago do not meet basic standards of their accessibility for people with different disabilities. The Castle in Piotrków Trybunalski can be such an example. The part of its presented exhibition is from the '70s of the twentieth century. Another building is located in Łęczyca which restoration and adaptation of its interiors took place in the 60s of the twentieth century, and reconstruction plans did not even included designing a toilet for disabled visitors. Thus, the building is inaccessible for disabled tourists.

The buildings, which have undergone reconstruction or revitalization in recent years are: Działoszyn, Sokolniki, Miłków, Chojnat Palace. Despite certain improvements, such as the lack of thresholds, ramps for wheelchairs in front of the main entrance, well lit, wide, spacious halls and corridors, etc., there were not done architectural alliterations in these buildings to enable disabled people its free usage. Interesting seems to be the situation in Działoszyn, where after building's renovation the climber enabling free movement on stairs for people on wheelchairs was bought. Unfortunately, the power supply of this device discharged and it is currently unused.

Photo 1. Selected technical facilities for the disabled in the examined buildings

1. The climber enabling free movement on stairs in the Palace in Działoszyn

2. Headset – audioguide at the Palace in Walewice

Source: author.

Uniejów was an interesting research area. The Uniejów Castle (which belongs to the city's municipal partnership "Uniejów Baths" – Termy Uniejowskie) has independent access to rooms located on the first floor, however, it is inaccessible for disabled. A newly created Knight's Castle, where guest rooms are located on the ground floor, could be the solution to this situation. Unfortunately, the bathroom for the disabled and the height of beds in rooms do not meet technical standards.

However, it should be pointed out that the Thermal Restaurant and thermal pools have some facilities for the disabled, such as wheelchair ramps, wide passages between rooms or lift that allows physically disabled free usage of the swimming pool. Newly erecting thermal complex in Uniejów (located directly next to the existing one), funded by the State Fund for Rehabilitation of People with Disabilities, is to be fully adapted to the disabled requirements.

Among the places in which the research was held it was the only investment of such a kind which from the very beginning took into account the needs of disabled people.

In conclusion, despite the clear difference of aesthetic or even functional quality of the newly refurbished buildings and the old ones a clear difference in the accessibility and number of facilities for disabled is indiscernible. One might expect that buildings that have undergone major renovations in recent times will be adapted better for the disabled, unfortunately – they are not.

Photo 2. Selected architectural facilities for disabled persons in the examined buildings



1. Lack of stairs in front of the main entrance to the Palace in Nieborów
2. Wheelchair ramp at the side entrance to the Palace in Działoszyń

Source: author.

Photo 3. Some obstacles which disables may meet in the examined buildings



1. Stairs leading to the main entrance of the palace in Małków
2. Stairs in the main hall leading to the first floor, where hotel rooms are located in the Palace in Sokolniki

Source: author.

Buildings, which were not subjected to major refurbishment or revitalization, have been adjusted and protected from external environment only in part, without any overall plan to rebuild them, which, in fact, would take into account the rights of the disabled population.

Photo 4. Selected architectural obstacles in Łęczyca Castle

1. Staircase leading to a lookout point of the castle tower

2. Narrow corridor that prevents communication in opposite directions

Source: author.

Attempts to adapt the buildings, such as construction of the elevator, to the needs of disabled people were taken only in some of the examined buildings. However, given the historic nature of the examined buildings structure the county restorer did not give approvals for the reconstruction. During the research study none of the examined group of buildings has an elevator.

Despite buildings' general inaccessibility to disabled tourists, most museums as well as hotel facilities, served guests with different types of disabilities. Managers of the examined buildings cooperate with organizations uniting or acting for the disabled (including Nieborów, Pabianice, Opoczno). Weaknesses and technical barriers are tried to be minimized through the human factor, ex. help of the museum and hotel's staff (carrying disabled upstairs, etc.). However, the situation seems to be uncomfortable for both staff and guests.

A survey conducted amongst employees/owners of the surveyed buildings consists of 11 questions. The article describes eight of them, which are directly related to the discussed issue of the buildings' accessibility. The remaining three questions which were omitted in this analysis are general in their characteristics, are complementary and irrelevant for the main objective of the article.

There are following responses:

To the question: *Is the object accessible for disabled visitors?* On a scale from 1 (very bad) to 5 (very good), six respondents gave the lowest mark, 3 respondents issued a note 2 (Oporów, Nieborów, Tomaszów Mazowiecki), and 1 person assessed the adaptation of the building on 3 (Sokolniki).

According to respondents, technical barriers (mostly stairs), the historic character of the building (no license restorer) and lack of financial resources are the main reasons for inadequacy of buildings' accessibility.

To the question: *Are you interested in adjusting the historic building to the disabled?* 8 people responded in the affirmative and 2 people could not give the answer to this question. The main reason why respondents indicated their willingness to adapt historic buildings for the disabled was the ability to popularize museum collections (in the case of museums) and comply with existing norms and standards (in case of hotel services).

To the question: *What do you think is a major barrier in making available (adaptation) of the building for the disabled?* (There was a possibility to give several reasons). Respondents often mentioned technical barriers (7 respondents) and legal requirements (5 respondents), 2 respondents listed lack of necessary knowledge and funds' shortage.

Another question in the survey was: *Where there undertaken actions to adapt the building to the disabled?* 5 respondents responded positively, 3 negatively and 2 could not give the answer.

To the question referring to adaptation of *castles and palaces of the Łódź Region* for the disabled 6 people responded negatively, 1 person – stated that they are „probably not” and “slightly” adapted, and 2 people could not answer the question.

Most respondents (9) stated that the historic building serviced disabled tourists. The small volume of business in Kaleń's hotel palace may be the reason why only 1 respondent stated that he did not have contact with disabled visitors.

When asked about the historic buildings of Polish territory or abroad, adjusted to the disabled needs, 2 respondents mentioned Wawel Castle, 1 person Mazovia Museum in Płock, 1 respondent noted Museum of Wieluń Region in Wieluń and 1 respondent reported Kliczków castle in Lower Silesia. Other people (4) were not able to name such places. It should be emphasized that all respondents had serious troubles with answering the question, which on the one hand, may result from the fact that able-bodied do not pay attention to the issue of overcoming architectural barriers, but on the other, may indicate that the scale of historic buildings' architectural improvements, in the country and abroad, is small.

Analysis of the above mentioned responses suggests several conclusions:

- adaptation of examined buildings for disabled is poor or does not exist at all; the respondents similarly evaluated the degree of adaptation of the castles and palaces in the Łódź Province,

- adaptation barriers of historic buildings are technical and legal requirements, related to restorer's refusals which do not allow changes in historic structure¹⁷,
- adaptation attempts of the historic buildings were undertaken by their holders, however, all ended in failure,
- adaptation of the examined buildings was highly supported by the respondents who work in them, however, they do not see real chances to change the current state in the future.

The second part of the research was to measure and fill in the inventory card of examined buildings. Table 3 summarizes the characteristics of the described buildings, which were taken into consideration when filling out the inventory card, and which define building's adaptation for specific disabilities. It is a simplified table that does not take into account adjustments for parents with children and sports facilities.

Tab. 2. Register

Building	numer piktogramu																	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Łęczyca (castle-museum)									N/A	N/A								
Łęczyca (castle-restaurant)									N/A	N/A								
Wolbórz																		
Pabianice									N/A	N/A								
Łowicz									N/A	N/A								
Walewice																		
Uniejów																		
Oporów									N/A	N/A								
Nieborów																		
Piotrków Trybunalski									N/A	N/A								
Rawa Mazowiecka – tower									N/A	N/A								

¹⁷ All examined buildings are in the register of immovable monuments of the Łódź Region, which are supervised by the county restorer of monuments. Under the Act on Protection of Monuments and the Guardianship of Monuments of 23 Jul. 2003, the county restorer of monuments permits require:

1. "to carry out maintenance, restoration or construction works on the registered monuments;
2. to change registered monument's purpose or its usage;
3. to put on the registered monument technical equipment, tables, advertisements and inscriptions (...)."

- 13 – facilities for people with reading difficulties and intellectual disabilities (reception, information and aid service, which were near the entrance, were the main criterion to recognize the building as adapted for disabled people),
- 15 – facilities for blind people (as in the case of section 13, the main criterion is reception, information and aid service near entrance),
- 17 – possibility to enter the place with a guide dog (buildings were not marked with a special sticker informing about this adjustment, however, surveyed employees of examined buildings declared such possibility).

Most modern and historic buildings meet the above mentioned criteria, therefore, in the examined group of historic buildings, they were mentioned so often. Recognition of these categories does not prove the overall building's adjustment for the disabled.

Except for above listed categories there also occasionally appeared other:

- 1 – accessible for people moving on wheelchairs (lack of steps/stairs on the ground floor, the width of the front door minimum 90 cm were the main criterion in recognizing the building as accessible for the disabled; only two buildings in Wolbórz and Sokolniki complied with those requirements),
- 2 – accessible for people moving on wheelchairs with the help of others (requirements: the width of the door – minimum 70 cm, maximum one step, portable ramp or platform lift; buildings in Nieborów, Łowicz, Działoszyn, Tomaszów Mazowiecki and Opoczno fulfilled the above mentioned requirements),
- 10 – accommodation accessible for people moving on wheelchairs with assistance (only the Palace in Wolbórz meets certain criteria, which include:
 - access to the building available for people moving on wheelchairs with assistance;
 - door width of at least 70 cm,
 - access to the hotel with more than one step,
 - if there is a ramp: the maximum slope of 8%,
 - movement surface in the room at least 120 cm x 120 cm,
 - movement surface near bed from the left or right side at least 120 cm x 120 cm.
- 14 – facilities for deaf and hearing impaired (information boards, signs, other devices for hearing impaired were the main criterion in recognizing the building as accessible for the disabled; only Palace in Nieborów meet described criteria),

- 16 – facilities for the visually impaired (presence of characteristics of sections 1 and 2 as well as one of the features marked in sections from 3 to 5 were the main criterion in recognizing the building as accessible:
 - 1st and at least last step distinguishingly marked (if there are stairs),
 - distinguishingly marked glass doors (if there are glass doors),
 - designation of rooms/tactile guidance signs,
 - acoustic signals/announces,
 - help desk, information near the entrance.
- 18 – the building does have rooms inaccessible for the disabled people (this category receive buildings marked with number 1 or 2, which means that they are adjusted to the disabled needs, and adapted to the needs of disabled moving with assistance, and buildings which are not adapted as a whole but only in part (ex. the ground floor is adapted and the 1st floor is not) – in the examined group were Wolbórz and Sokolniki; were the main criterion in recognizing the building as accessible for the disabled.

The most criteria meet palaces in Wolbórz, Sokolniki and Nieborów. However, this does not mean that these buildings are adjusted to the disabled needs. The existing improvements do not allow free movement of people with disabilities. In case of people moving on wheelchairs, even with the help of a guardian, architectural structure of these buildings is huge obstacle, often insurmountable.

Unadjusted toilets, stairs in front of the building, lack of elevator, too narrow halls and corridors, lack of facilities for the visually impaired and blind in the form of acoustic signals, etc., lack of graphic and letter signs inside the building, lacks of distinguished markings on stair and many others are the largest technical obstacles in examined historic buildings.

The overall conclusion from the conducted research of examined group of castles and palaces from the Łódź Region is that, none of the buildings is accessible for the physically and sensory (vision, hearing) disabled. Thus, the research thesis that tourist reception capacity of disabled people in examined castles and palaces of the Łódź Region is small and needs improvement was proven.

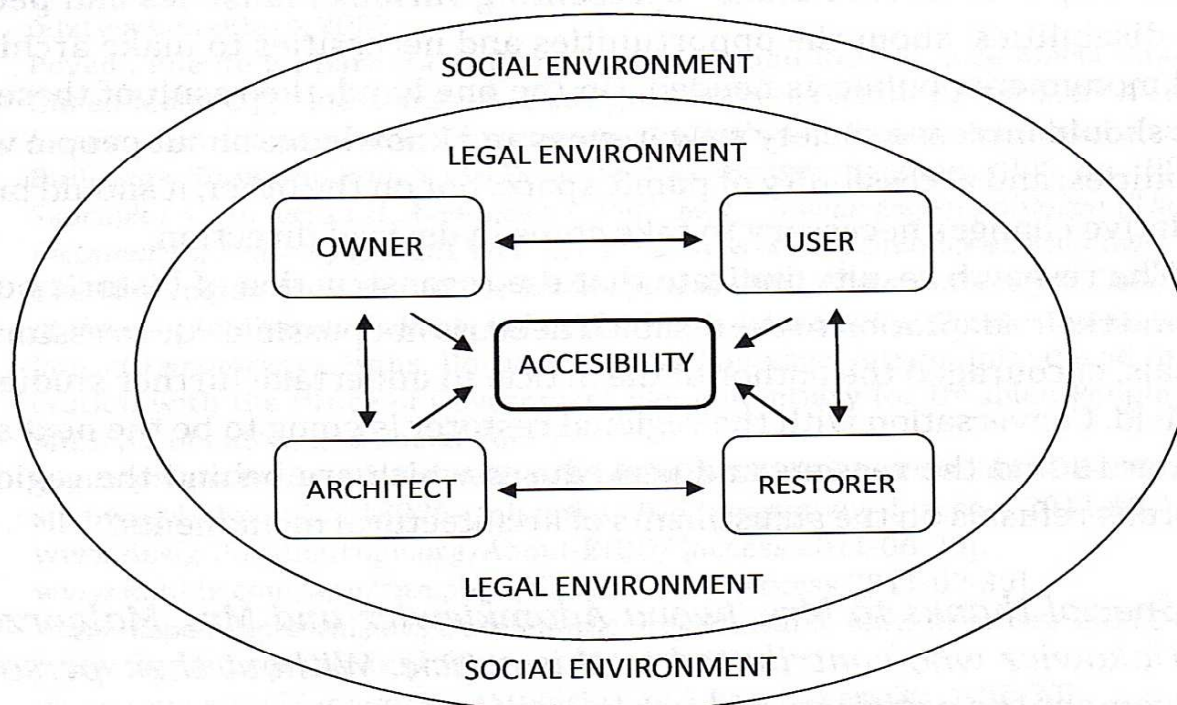
The main obstacles which impede or prevent access to inventoried buildings include: legal requirements (lack of restorer's permissions to make modifications and architectonic adjustments) and the financial one, ex. lack of money for new investments.

According to Article 6 of the Polish Constitution: "The Republic of Poland shall provide conditions for equal access to cultural goods, which are the source of Polish nations' identity, his continuity and development". The research results show that citizens' equal access to the cultural heritage of the Lodz Region may be called into question.

Conclusions

Due to its historical, architectural and social value historic buildings are a special category of objects. Any interference in the historic tissue is potential risks of irreversible lose of historic building's value. However, the physical and social barriers can not exclude disabled from the access to these objects. Hanna Grabowska-Pańska quotes prof. Andrzej Gałkowski who stated that, "(...) it is desirable that, in principle, all historic buildings were accessible to people with disabilities¹⁸". However, in order to preserve the historical value of the façade, interior and architectural details the process of objects adaptation should be undertaken with sensitivity and finesse by people who possess appropriate knowledge and experience.

Fig. 1. Accessibility of the historic building/area as the outcome of the key entities' activities in particular social and legal environments



Source: Own study based on Grabowska-Pańska H., *Niepełnosprawni w obszarach i obiektach zabytkowych. Problemy dostępności* (Disabled in historic buildings and their area. The problems of accessibility), Kraków: Politechnika Krakowska im. Tadeusza Kościuszki, 2004.

¹⁸ Grabowska-Pańska H., op. cit., p. 163.

Improving access to the historic buildings should be the result of the discussion of key entities, namely: the owner (investor), architect, restorer and users (including, in particular, people with disabilities). It is to realize that the decision-making process occurs in a particular social and legal space which has a huge impact on the approach to the discussed issue and the final effect of these groups' work (Fig. 1).

Skilful and planned adaptation of the urbanized area, including historical buildings, is to improve people's quality of functioning in public space. Improvement of the accessibility of such areas is the cause of residents' improvement of life's quality and may be a stimulating factor for tourism development.

Therefore, it is important to take all possible measures to improve accessibility of public space. The possibility of obtaining external funds from the European Union's various programmes give the opportunity to make necessary repairs and adaptations of museums and other buildings for the disabled.

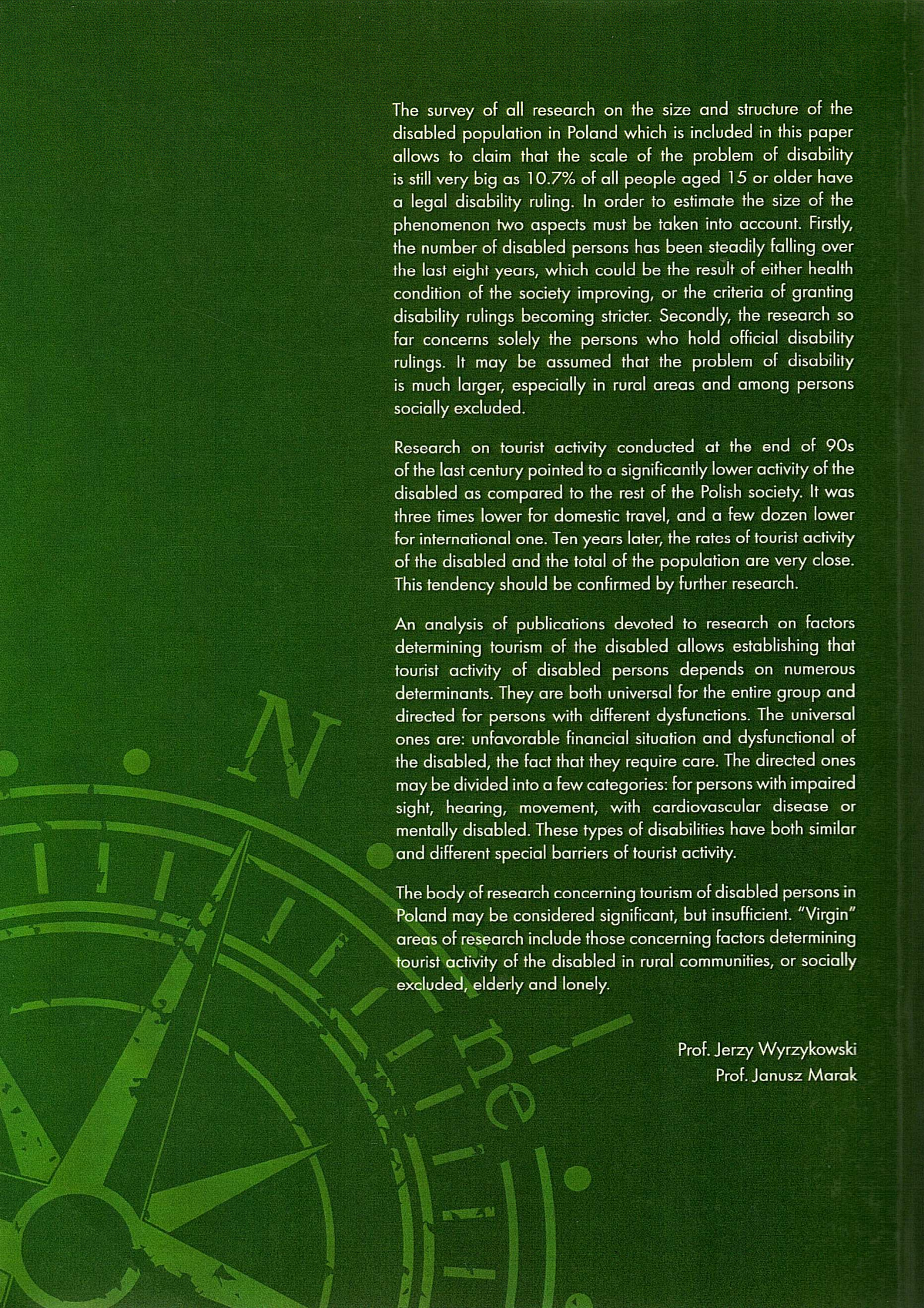
Unfortunately, the EU's funds end up slowly and in a few years will be divided amongst "new" member states. Therefore, in order to change the current situation one should take action as soon as possible. It seems that the issue of accessibility of historic buildings has visibly improved. Nevertheless, a long-term, promotional campaign and social debate in media, with the participation of specialists representing various industries and people with disabilities, about the opportunities and necessities to make architectural monuments public, is needed. On the one hand, the result of these actions should increase society's awareness and knowledge about people with disabilities, and accessibility of public space, but on the other, it should bring legislative changes necessary to take steps in desired direction.

The research results, indicate that the reconstruction of historic buildings and their adaptation to the disabled needs is not possible due to restorer's refusals, encouraged the author of the article to undertake further studies in this field. Conversation with the regional restorer is going to be the next step in order to find the reasons and procedures which are behind the regional restorer's refusals on the adjustments of architectural monuments.

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The survey of all research on the size and structure of the disabled population in Poland which is included in this paper allows to claim that the scale of the problem of disability is still very big as 10.7% of all people aged 15 or older have a legal disability ruling. In order to estimate the size of the phenomenon two aspects must be taken into account. Firstly, the number of disabled persons has been steadily falling over the last eight years, which could be the result of either health condition of the society improving, or the criteria of granting disability rulings becoming stricter. Secondly, the research so far concerns solely the persons who hold official disability rulings. It may be assumed that the problem of disability is much larger, especially in rural areas and among persons socially excluded.

Research on tourist activity conducted at the end of 90s of the last century pointed to a significantly lower activity of the disabled as compared to the rest of the Polish society. It was three times lower for domestic travel, and a few dozen lower for international one. Ten years later, the rates of tourist activity of the disabled and the total of the population are very close. This tendency should be confirmed by further research.

An analysis of publications devoted to research on factors determining tourism of the disabled allows establishing that tourist activity of disabled persons depends on numerous determinants. They are both universal for the entire group and directed for persons with different dysfunctions. The universal ones are: unfavorable financial situation and dysfunctional of the disabled, the fact that they require care. The directed ones may be divided into a few categories: for persons with impaired sight, hearing, movement, with cardiovascular disease or mentally disabled. These types of disabilities have both similar and different special barriers of tourist activity.

The body of research concerning tourism of disabled persons in Poland may be considered significant, but insufficient. "Virgin" areas of research include those concerning factors determining tourist activity of the disabled in rural communities, or socially excluded, elderly and lonely.

Prof. Jerzy Wyrzykowski
Prof. Janusz Marak