

Reflections over the past and present research and higher education on tourism in Czechoslovakia and Slovakia

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Abstract

In Slovakia (and former Czechoslovakia), tourism was the subject of a systematic research of more research institutions between 1960 and 1990. These were institutions managed by government departments. Tourism research in Czechoslovakia started in the academic institutions in 1964, when the Department of Tourism and Hospitality was established at Bratislava School of Economics in Slovakia. This department moved to Banská Bystrica in 1973 and became the keystone of the newly established Faculty of Economics of Services and Tourism of the Bratislava School of Economics. After 1990, tourism research in Slovakia was concentrated in the academic institutions, and the number of higher education institutions offering studies in tourism and hotel management increased to seven. Research institutions changed their character, or disappeared in the privatization process. This paper outlines the specialization of tourism research in particular decades from the 1960s in the former Czechoslovakia, and after the splitting of the country into two separate states; it characterizes tourism research and education in Slovakia. Many results have been achieved thanks to the personal commitment and enthusiasm of scientists and teachers, as well as due to the conditions created for scientific research and tourism development by the state. Current tourism research is compared with the past fragmented and uncoordinated situation, which led to the wasting of human and financial resources.

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Introduction

Czechoslovakia came into existence in 1918, and in 1993 was split into two independent

countries: the Slovak Republic and the Czech Republic. A small picturesque country, Slovakia is situated in central Europe. It has common

frontiers with Austria, the Czech Republic, Poland, Ukraine and Hungary. About 5.4 million inhabitants live on an area of 49.035 km². The capital city is Bratislava. Slovakia became a member of the EU in 2004, together with other 10 new countries, including the Czech Republic, and in 2009 joined the Euro Zone.

In spite of the fact that Slovakia has not been able to effectively utilize its potential for tourism development up to now, there has been a long tradition in the tourism research and professional (vocational) and higher education in tourism on the territory of the former Czechoslovakia and independent Slovakia. The division of the country, as well as the transition process from a centrally planned economy to a democratic society and free market economy, has also influenced the research and education in the tourism and hotel and hospitality industry.

The aim of this article is to highlight the specialization of tourism research in Czechoslovakia and Slovakia after 1960 under the conditions of a centrally planned economy, and particularly after 1990, after the transition to a free-market economy. We rely on secondary sources of data, which were published mainly in scientific monographs, scientific papers, conference proceedings, in scientific journals such as the *Economic Review of Tourism, Economy and Society* and the *Czech Hospitality and Tourism Papers*, and on publications listed in references and further reading, but also on the empirical data and experience of authors, who have been, from the last century, involved in research and higher education in tourism in Slovakia.

Institutional basis for research in tourism in Czechoslovakia

During the years following World War II, when it was necessary to restore the war-damaged economy, significant attention was paid to the development of tourism in the centrally planned economy of Czechoslovakia. The most explored facet was trade union recreation, children's recreation and spa treatments. Conditions for individual tourism developed gradually from the mid-1950s as a part of the growth in the standard of living. In 1958, the government created the Coordination Council

for Tourism, which aimed to coordinate the activities of sectors involved in tourism development. In 1959 the national scientific conference on tourism was held in Slovakia under the title 'The importance and role of tourism development in the development of national economy of Czechoslovakia', and was organized on the grounds of the Bratislava School of Economics. This conference underlined, among other issues, the need for university studies for tourism praxis, as well as the development of scientific research in tourism. The nationwide conference on tourism was held in 1960, and it dealt with the questions concerning development perspectives of accommodation facilities, hospitality services, transport and motoring, services of tour operators, spas and other services. Moreover, it accentuated the need for the deepening of the preparation of graduates for praxis in tourism and strengthening of research into tourism.

Following the conclusions of the United Nations Conference on International Travel and Tourism (Rome, 1963), a wide range of measures focusing on the development of tourism were adopted in Czechoslovakia. Between 1964 and 1965 a university study program of tourism was established. In addition, the origins of tourism research date back to 1964. In the same year the Governmental Committee for Tourism in Prague was established (in Slovakia, the Slovak National Committee for Tourism) and the Commissions for Tourism were established in the regions and districts as the coordination bodies of tourism development. In order to develop international tourism, numerous agreements on intergovernmental travel relations were concluded with the countries of the Council for Mutual Economic Assistance (COMECON). In this way, the bases for the intensification of tourism development in Czechoslovakia were created.

Until 1990, tourism was the subject of a systematic review of the research institutions, which were an organizational part of the ministries in Czechoslovakia, such as the Ministry of Trade (Tourism Research Department) as the part of the Research Institute for Trade in Prague. This was in 1970

transformed into the Tourism Research Institute with its seat in Bratislava, and conducted until 1992 the tourism research for the whole of Czechoslovakia. The state planning commission had special institutions for land use (spatial planning), such as the TERPLAN Prague, URBION Bratislava and the Centre of Urbanism and Architecture (CUA) in Bratislava. The Ministry of Healthcare had the research institution the Balneological Research Institute in Mariánske Lázně. Geographic research of tourism concentrated in the Institute of Geography of the Czech Academy of Science in Brno and the Institute of Geography of the Slovak Academy of Science in Bratislava.

The scientific research into tourism on an academic basis started to be organized in 1964 at the Department of Tourism and Hospitality, the Bratislava School of Economics, and in 1975 at the Department of Tourism and Services at the School of Economics in Prague. Some tourism subjects were already taught at both schools in the mid-1950s. The professional profile of both departments was economic, and graduate education focused on the economic discipline with respect to its application in tourism practice. Research into tourism had a character of primary research and was focused mainly on the needs of education.

Since 1990, research into tourism has been transferred to more academic institutions that prepare graduates for tourism praxis. Research institutions by ministries have changed their character, or disappeared in the privatization process. For example, in 1992, the Tourism Research Institute was transformed into a private organization: the Institute of Tourism, Ltd, and in doing so not only reduced its activities in tourism research, but also lost its scientific profile.

The topics of tourism research from 1960 to 1990 in Czechoslovakia

Tourism research in the 1960s

The beginnings of systematic research in tourism in the 1960s were influenced by the *Regionalization of tourism in Czechoslovakia*, approved by the government (1962) as the basic document for tourism development

planning for the territory of the whole country. Internationally, it was a unique document, drawn up by indexation of the natural, cultural and socioeconomic preconditions for tourism development, and particularly, tourism regions. Regionalization of tourism exceeded the borders of Czechoslovakia, and various concepts for developing countries were created on its basis, for example, in Tunisia, under the authority of the UN. Territorial (spatial) planning and the identification of tourism regions and suitable forms of tourism development in Czechoslovakia represented the starting point in the process of projects implementations, which had a mainly spatial and economic nature and the nature of practical proposals for tourism development in selected locations.

Numerous projects focusing on regional issues of tourism development were elaborated in the Research Institute for Commerce in Prague. The institute began working on conceptual territorial-economic studies for the development of tourism in certain areas and sites; for example, the *Use of the Danube River for Tourism, Complex Tourist Infrastructure in Štrbské Pleso* (1965), *Use of the Krkonoše Mountains in Tourism* (1967), *The comprehensive tourist resort infrastructure at Vihorlat – Dam* (1967), *Equipment of the tourist resort Špindlerův Mlýn* (1967), *Use of the Slovenský Raj for tourism development* (1968) and others.

In the second half of the 1960s, the citizens of Czechoslovakia began to participate more actively – not only in domestic, but also outgoing tourism, highly concentrated in the countries of the previous Soviet bloc. Research reacted to this fact, and during 1969–70 it thematically focused on the elaboration of the concept of tourism development until 1980. Research was focused on the issues of leisure as a factor of the development of suburban recreation, tourism development opportunities among Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Austria, research of visitors' motivation in selected locations of the Low Tatras Mountains, the use of mineral and hot springs in Slovakia and others (Poláček, 1975; Pápay, 1980).

URBION Bratislava (the state land use planning institution) contributed to the research

of tourism during 1960s, and developed the methodology of the construction of complex tourist resorts and recreational areas (1963), and concepts and principles of mainstream urbanization of Slovakia (1970), in which attention was paid to leisure and recreational zones. These projects had an impact on the improvement of the territorial and spatial planning of tourism development.

Bratislava School of Economics, established at the Department of Tourism and Hospitality in 1967 the research centre that participated in the elaboration of state and ministries' research projects in tourism. Since 1968, the publishing of scientific journal *Economic review of tourism* began in collaboration with the Governmental Committee on Tourism (Truska and Balhar, 1974). Research projects focused on the effectiveness of tourism investments (1965–67), tourist infrastructure in the spa resort Piešťany (1966–67) and the labour power needs in tourism in Slovakia (1969–70). The core research projects represented the problems of tourism development in terms of the socialist economy, which became part of dissertation and habilitation theses. During this period, habilitation theses in tourism were defended, such as *The effectiveness of the construction of accommodation facilities for individual tourism* (Brewer, 1963) and dissertation theses such as *The possibilities of development of the tourists infrastructure in the Low Tatras Mountains* (Kopso, 1969). In 1969 a Doctoral dissertation thesis was defended *Macro-economic issues of tourism development* (Sládek, 1969). Issues of efficiency and the development of tourism were investigated from the perspective of a centrally planned economy.

In 1966, the first scientific conference on tourism investment efficiency (Piešťany) was organized. Since 1968, the results of scientific research have been presented in the journal *Economic Review of Tourism*, which is still edited at the Department of Tourism and Hospitality in Banská Bystrica, and even nowadays, publishes articles and analytical studies of domestic and foreign authors on tourism in the European context.

Tourism research in the 1970s

In the 1970s, the demands of a socialist country regarding the purposeful management of tourism increased. After 1968 – when the political movement lead by Alexander Dubček was stopped by the Soviet Union army – the conditions for travelling abroad became very strongly regulated, and a so-called period of 'normalization' started. As a result of all these activities of the communist party, many researchers emigrated or they were no longer allowed to work in educational institutions. Also, the first head of the Department of Tourism and Hospitality, Bratislava School of Economic, Professor Gustav Sládek, was prohibited from teaching. Approximately 130,000 inhabitants of Czechoslovakia emigrated, mainly for political reasons. In September 1971, a coordination meeting of the Tourism Research Institute involving the tourism departments at the School of Economics in Prague and in Bratislava and the research institute of the Faculty of Commerce in Bratislava was held in the High Tatras. Among other things, plans for coordination of research activities and increasing the skills of researchers were discussed (Poláček, 1971).

After 1970, tourism research activities were overwhelmingly concentrated in the national Tourism Research Institute, based in Bratislava, which was included in the state scientific and research network. The Tourism Research Institute, which was a self-financing organization, had an average of 50 employees – not only economists, but also geographers, sociologists and urban planners. From the beginning, the Tourism Research Institute was not a budgetary research organization, working only on the basis of economic contracts for individual research projects with government, but it tried to get funding for particular projects (around 40%) from the *State plan of economic research* (SPEV). Some major projects were elaborated from the theoretical and practical point of view, and they could also be used to some extent, at least as a basis, for research today. A database, including recreational areas and assumptions about investment in recreational areas and tourist centres, was created for tourism planning and the creation of the information system about the territories. It also allowed data updates, evaluations of the

development of the technical infrastructure for tourism in the territories, and created a model for tourism forecasting. Information files were also selected which had links to tourism, and were divided into more sections, such as: population, household and domestic fund, civic amenities, water management, landscape ecology, transportation, agriculture, forestry and investment in the construction of selected sectors of the national economy.

Interdisciplinary research required the participation of other partners in the research projects. The teachers and researchers from both departments of tourism in Prague and Bratislava participated in these projects. Both departments collaborated with the Research Institute of Standard of Living in Bratislava, the Research Institute of Labour in Bratislava, the Economic Institute of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava and the Department of Sociology at Comenius University in Bratislava.

Overall, in the years 1970–92, the national Tourism Research Institute in Bratislava prepared a total of 280 research papers, of which 140 were theoretical and methodological. About 80 dealt with macroeconomic research, and 60 works were focused on microeconomic research. In the same period, the Tourism Research Institute dealt with another 110 tasks of an advisory nature, which were focused on specific issues with proposals for possible implementation in selected tourist areas and sites in the country.

In the 1970s, research focused more on theoretical and methodological issues of tourism development. From 1973–74 research explored the relationship between tourism and recreation, the environment, the influence of the social environment on the structure of recreational activities, the impact of population mobility on the structure of recreational activities with regard to the available leisure time, participation of the population in domestic and outbound tourism, and the evaluation of tourist demand from the viewpoint of the declining the population's purchasing power. Growth of participation of the population on tourism required a forecast of needs of the population for recreation and holidays (1971–72).

Research projects were the basis for evaluation of the institutions. The greatest value (according to the valid rules of evaluation of institutions in this period) belonged to the projects of *The state plan of economic research* (SPEV); projects funded by ministries, which were conducted based on the order of the governmental entities; and the projects ordered by companies and organizations. From 1973 to 1975, the SPEV projects focused on the functions of recreation, leisure and tourism in the development of the socialist way of life, long-term trends in tourism development until 2000 and the impact of tourism on the economic development of selected areas. This was a period when tourism development was used as propaganda of the increasing standard of living of the population of the socialist country, and as an inevitable part of the so-called 'socialist way of life'. In cooperation with the European Centre for Social Sciences Research (a UNESCO body), a research project, aimed at the economic and sociological problems of tourism in Europe, which involved 14 European countries, was conducted.

A significant portion of the projects had a regional and governmental character, such as joint tourism opportunities in the border areas of Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Austria (1972), and the Slovakia–Poland border area (1972). In the year 1972 the project focused on the possibilities of a more effective construction of recreational facilities of the industrial companies and individuals (second homes) was realized. The other projects were a concept of tourism development in Bratislava – the capital of Slovakia – and the development of its recreational facilities (1971), and the development of recreational facilities and leisure zones in towns in Slovakia (1972). As a reaction to the existing tourism policy, projects such as the model of tourism organizations in the districts and towns (nowadays 'destination management organization'), the creation of recreational villages and utilization of less valuable country areas for recreation and tourism were elaborated.

An intensive research into tourism at the Department of Tourism and Hospitality, Bratislava School of Economics, followed the profile of the study. The department moved to

Banská Bystrica in the academic year 1973–74, where the Faculty of Economics of Services and Tourism was established in 1977. The new faculty ensured the educational process in services and tourism for applicants from the whole of Czechoslovakia, and socialist and developing countries (Madagascar, Benin, Ethiopia, Iraq, Lao, Syria, Albania, Ecuador, Congo and Sudan), and was focused on the research activities in tourism.

The SPEV projects focused on the problems of complex tourist infrastructure in tourist resorts and recreational zones, as well as on the issues of efficiency of operation of tourist facilities (1972). The survey and analysis of tourism development in selected tourist resorts in the Low Tatras Mountains was elaborated at the Faculty of Economics of Services and Tourism in Banská Bystrica in close cooperation with the Tourism Research Institute (1978). The project 'Prerequisites for further development of tourism in socialist countries and in Czechoslovakia' was realized by the Tourism Research Institute in 1977. The objective of this research project was to create the theoretical model of the analysis of tourism development (1978). The concepts of tourism development for various cities and districts in Slovakia based on an analysis of their potential and creation of the quality standards for tourist infrastructure were elaborated based on this theoretical model. The implemented methodology did not take into account visitors' attitudes and the development of the demand for tourism, and ignored the attitudes of the local population. The analysis of tourism potential has been based mainly on the analysis of the physical and cultural environment.

The dissertation thesis played a crucial role in the research process. In the 1970s, approximately 13 dissertations were defended. These dissertations dealt with the tourism development trends in Slovakia, the development of transport, the quality of services, the organization structure of tourism, the development of spa and health tourism and tourist information systems. Two habilitation theses were defended during this period: *The Environmental Conditions and their Impact on the Development of Tourist Infrastructure*

(Kopšo, 1971) and *Tourism Organization Structure in Czechoslovakia* (Baxa, 1979). The influence of communist ideology on the elaboration of all dissertations and habilitation theses was in the compulsory chapter of every thesis titled 'Critique of non-Marxist theories'. If the theses did not have this chapter, it could not be defended.

The Centre of Urbanism and Architecture (CUA) in Bratislava dealt with recreational issues. Beside this area, it paid attention to the localization research and the creation of leisure zones in the cities (1970), the development of leisure zones in the urban settlement system (1970) and the evaluation of conditions and characteristics of recreational areas (1977). Following the project of urbanization of Slovakia, the CUA developed a methodology of the assessment of the leisure and recreational areas in Slovakia (1973). This centre has also elaborated the concept of the development of second-home recreation in the Central Slovakia region (1979). The purpose of these projects was to identify suitable zones and villages for the building of chalets (cottages) as second homes, and to maintain housing in the countryside for recreation and tourism. Unfortunately, more chalets have been built in environmentally sensitive areas on the territory of natural parks. On the other hand, old houses in the villages have been maintained and reconstructed due to this initiative. This was and still is a typical feature in the villages, mainly in the Czech Republic.

The Research Institute of Standard of Living in Bratislava and the Institute of Geography, the Slovak Academy of Sciences, participated in the research of tourism in 1970s, and dealt with topics such as importance of recreation and tourism in a 'socialist way of life' (1975) and climate conditions and its impact on tourism (1979).

Tourism research in the 1980s

After 20 years, it was necessary to update the *Regionalization of tourism in Czechoslovakia*. It was prepared by the Tourism Research Institute in Bratislava as a concept for land use planning and urbanization of Slovakia until 2000. This new *Regionalization of Tourism in Czechoslovakia* (1983) identified not only

tourism regions, but also carrying capacity for particular tourism resorts and recreational zones. The carrying capacity was calculated mainly as the results of the analysis of environmental values, technical (utility) infrastructure and demography, and their possible development until 2000. The new regionalization divided tourism regions according to their importance in tourism development (international, national, regional and local), and this was the basis for the investment in tourism made by the state. Of course, the regions with international importance in tourism development, and those with the most attractive destinations such as Prague, the High Tatras, the spa region – Piestany – Trenčianske Teplice and so on had investment priority. Another important project was the typology of tourist resorts and recreation (1985). It identified the characteristics of the mountain, water-based spas, recreational and hiking tourist resorts and so on.

In connection with the newly discovered resources of the geothermal springs in Slovakia, the projects concerning their use for recreation and tourism, as well as urban and architectural design of the areas of thermal swimming pools and resource efficiency, were popular research projects in this period. Regional projects focused on the amenities of tourist resorts, the intensification of tourism development in Czechoslovakia, and tourism and recreation on agricultural land.

The tourism theory dealt mainly with the macroeconomic benefits from tourism development, as well as with changes in consumer behaviour and its impact on the structure of expenditures on tourism. The Faculty of Economics of Services and Tourism in Banská Bystrica concentrated on the tasks of the state plan of economic research (SPEV). At the beginning of the 1980s, the planned training of future professionals in tourism, hotel and hospitality industry played an important role in the research. Over the years, attention was primarily paid to the place of tourism in a socialist society, the role of hospitality in the nutrition of the population, population participation in tourism and leisure activities with regard to geroprofilaxy, as well as forest

ecosystems from the perspective of tourism development. Later on, research focused on the model of tourist resorts development from the viewpoint of its location, as well as on optimizing the structure of tourist services in tourist resorts. In services, the attention was paid to methodological issues of the development of public services for the population, the management of services in territorial units and its improvement. In addition, numerous projects based on the needs of practice, particularly the concepts of development of tourism services, were elaborated.

The improvement of the educational process at the faculty also required further improvement of the qualification structure of the teachers and researchers in the form of seven Doctoral and habilitation theses. They were focused on environmental issues, development of tourism and its economic impact on national economy, quality management and foreign private equity enterprises in tourism.

In the mid-1980s, the results of scientific research started to be systematically presented at the domestic scientific workshops and conferences organized by the Department of Tourism and Hospitality in Banská Bystrica. In 1985, for example, a scientific conference was addressed to business tourism management (Bojnice); in 1986 one dealt with the use of IT in tourism (Trenčianske Teplice); in 1987 the topic focused on economic transition in Czechoslovakia and the possibilities for tourism (Dolný Kubín); in 1988 with the business policy of tourism companies in economic transition process (Nitra); in 1989 one was aimed at the entrepreneurship in tourism (Bratislava); and in 1990 at the development of tourism services (Tále).

The Faculty of the Economics of Services and Tourism of the School of Economics initiated and established a tradition of organizing international conferences on tourism in the three-year cycle (triennial) starting in 1980. The objective of these international conferences is to create preconditions for the exchange of knowledge among domestic and foreign researchers in tourism. Four international conferences on tourism were held by the end of

the 1980s; in Banská Bystrica – tourism as a factor of international cooperation, (1980); creation and protection of the environment for tourism and leisure, in Štrbské Pleso (1983), the position of tourist infrastructure in tourism development (1986) and in Prague – strategies for creation of the leisure and recreational zones for city dwellers (1989).

The Balneological Research Institute in Mariánske Lázně has concentrated its research mainly on bioclimatology, spa resort ecology and balneology technology issues. The research projects dealing with the issues of economy of balneology in this period, and mainly the system of spa management in the conditions of the central planned economy are interesting ones. Unfortunately, this research institute cancelled its activities in 1992.

URBION Bratislava carried out projects aimed at valorization of the recreational areas in the system of urban planning (1982) and the perspectives of the development of the basic forms of leisure and tourism (1987).

Scientific research and education in tourism after 1990 in Slovakia

After the socio-political changes in Czechoslovakia in 1989, significant changes in the organization of tourism research occurred. The research institutions under particular ministries cancelled their activities, as well as the Tourism Research Institute in 1992. The URBION was privatized, and the land use plans and spatial plans started to be elaborated by many private companies. These companies elaborated the land use plans based on the results of the public procurement organized by new public bodies established in the framework of the public administration reform conducted already in the independent Slovakia. Tourism research in Slovakia has shifted to the universities.

In 1992, the Faculty of the Economics of Services and Tourism of the School of Economics became a co-founder of the Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, and was renamed at the Faculty of Economics. The Department of Tourism and Hospitality at the Faculty of Economics, Matej Bel University, has the longest tradition – not only in education, but

also in the scientific research in tourism and in the scientific education for tourism on the territory of the previous Czechoslovakia. It organizes theoretical as well as applied research, which meets the 'triad' of university tasks: research, education and service for the society.

At the beginning of the 1990s, scientific and research activities were focused mainly on the needs of education. These were related to the restructuring of the study programs, the implementation of the Bologna process, and research and educational materials had to be adapted to the conditions of the market economy. The transition process and its impact on tourism development was a crucial topic of research at the Department of Tourism and Hospitality in Banská Bystrica.

The period of projects funded by domestic and foreign grants started in the 1990s. The department participated in more projects, such as TEMPUS, the British Know How Fund, US AID and PHARE. The projects were usually carried out for the period of three years. Due to the international experience obtained by teachers of the department and updated curricula, the study program Hotel and Hospitality Management obtained European accreditation (EFAH) on the level of top management for the period 1997–2003. The department also utilized the domestic grant research schemes provided by the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic.

In 1991 the national grant scheme GAV (later VEGA) was established by the Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic. Therefore, universities have, up to now, the potential to get funding for their research including tourism.

Building on research projects, the sub-projects in the form of dissertation theses and habilitation theses were also carried out. Dissertation theses and habilitations (six) were focused on destination management, environmental management and sustainable tourism development, entrepreneurship in tourism, and accounting and information systems in spa businesses.

In scientific research and tourism education, the qualification of employees is important. In 1985 the Faculty of Economic of Services and

Tourism, School of Economics, became an independent educational centre in the scientific field of sectorial and cross-sectorial economics with specialization in the economics of services, tourism, hospitality and standard of living, and had the rights to organize all forms of postgraduate studies. Since 1994, postgraduate studies have been organized based on the Act no. 172/1990 Coll. on higher education in the scientific field of business theory and management. According to the results of the accreditation procedure in 1997, the contemporary Faculty of Economics, Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, has the right to provide postgraduate studies in two fields of study: business management and economics and sectorial and cross-sectorial economics. Tourism study was involved in both fields of study.

The members of the Department of Tourism and Hospitality in Banská Bystrica have been involved in more international research projects, such as Quality Standards of the Higher Education in Tourism (2000–01) and Tendencies in Human Resources in Slovak Hotel Industry (2001), and they participated in the project Smart History (CLT 2004/A1/IT) in program Culture 2000 (National Park of Cinque Terre, 2004–05) and COST ACTIO E 33 Forest for Recreation and Nature Tourism (2005–06).

Since the academic year 2005–06 the faculty has become an educational centre based on Act no. 131/2002 Coll. on higher education, and has the rights to organize PhD study in tourism, public economy and services. From 2006–07 this also includes business economics and management. The faculty also obtained the rights to secure habilitation (title 'docent' or associate professor) and inauguration procedure (title: university professor) in these fields of study. A scientific education – postgraduate tourism studies (third degree of higher education study – PhD in tourism – OECD classification), is currently possible only at the Faculty of Economics of MBU. Postgraduate tourism studies are therefore unique not only in Slovakia, but also in central and eastern Europe.

Results of the research were published, and implemented in the education system. In applied research, numerous projects were

carried out in cooperation with Slovak-Swiss Association for the Development of Tourism in Banská Bystrica. The association was founded in June 1994 due to the support of the so-called Swiss program for tourism development in Slovakia. The Faculty of Economics, MBU, was co-founder of this association. The aim of applied research is the practical implementation of knowledge gained through research in the solving of problems generated and addressed by tourism praxis. This fulfilled the next part of the objectives of university's research triad: service to the society.

Research results are published at scientific conferences, in conference and scientific proceedings and in scientific journals. In the years 1990–2010 the Department of Tourism and Hospitality (which had during this period around 11 full-time employees per year and full-time Doctoral students) organized 15 scientific conferences and participated in the preparation of eight international conferences on the topic of tourism, published 15 proceedings, of which eight were conference proceedings – (9Acta Oeconomica and Folia Turistica). Department employees published 38 books and monographs on tourism, which are also used in the educational process.

As mentioned above, the Department of Tourism and Hospitality edits the scientific journal the *Economic Review of Tourism*, which came into existence in 1968. From 1990 to 2015 the results of the research have been published in this journal, and have been mainly focused on tourism management and marketing, tourism economy, tourism services, human resources and training, quality and customer satisfaction, geography and ecology, globalization and trends in tourism, transport and tourism infrastructure, information systems in tourism, the tourism market and other topics of tourism research.

Regular domestic conferences and international conferences were organized, and created a platform for the exchange of knowledge and results of research activities of academics and representatives of tourism praxis. The conferences' topics were always up to date and aimed at the actual problems of tourism development. Although their character was not

always strictly scientific, they have created an important platform for the exchange of knowledge and experience of experts from central and western European countries.

After 1990, seven other university workplaces that focused on education in tourism were established in Slovakia. Nowadays, tourism study is offered by the higher educational institutions listed in the Table 1.

The international Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) classifies Tourism as Economic Studies and marks it with Code 10 – Services. In the strict sense it regards it as personal services (Code 101). In this group

tourism is included in two study specializations: in 1013 – Hotel, Restaurants and Catering, and 1015 – Travel, Tourism and Leisure. Therefore, it is desirable that higher tourism education would also in Slovakia be compatible with this classification.

New universities have their own research programs funded by national grant schemes such as VEGA and KEGA, and internal resources for the funding of their research. They organize conferences and edit journals (see Table 2). They focus in their research on tourism as economic and geographical field of study, and also try to investigate tourism also from the viewpoint of sociology, culturology,

Table 1. *Tourism study at higher educational institutions in Slovakia*

Higher education institution/ faculty	Faculty/department (year of establishment)	Study program	Study degree
Matej Bel University Banská Bystrica Faculty of Economics	Department of Tourism and Hospitality (1964)	Tourism	1
		Tourism economics and management	2
		Tourism	3
University of Economics Bratislava Faculty of Commerce	Department of Services and Tourism (1991)	Entrepreneurship in commerce and tourism	1
		Tourism management	2
Prešov University Prešov Management Faculty	Department of Tourism and Hotel Management (1994)	Tourism, hotel and spa industry	1
Technical University Kosice Faculty of Mining, Ecology and Management of Geo- technologies	Institute of Control and Geotechnology (1994)	Extracting and production of earth resources	1 and 2
		Geotourism	1 and 2
University of Constantine Philosopher Nitra Faculty of Philosophy	Department of Culture and Tourism Management (1998)	Culturology	1 and 2
		Culturology – management of culture and tourism	1 and 2
Faculty of Central European Studies	Department of Tourism Management (2013)	Regional tourism	1 and 2
Slovak Agricultural University Nitra Faculty of European Studies and Regional Development	Department of Regional and Rural Development (2004)	Public administration and regional development –	1 and 2
		Management of development of rural areas and rural tourism	1 and 2
Goethe Uni Bratislava	Faculty of tourism in Piešťany (2012)	Tourism – spa and hotel	1

Source: www.portalvs.sk, 2015.

Note: Study degree 1 – Bachelors degree, 2 – Masters (Engineering) degree, 3 – PhD degree.

Table 2. Research projects funded by grants at higher education institutions with tourism studies in Slovakia

Higher education institution	Research projects
Matej Bel University, Banská Bystrica	Project GAV 1/991 401/92 Tourism market in Slovakia (1991–1993) Project VEGA 1/1580/94 Marketing information system (1994–1996) Project VEGA 1/4350/97 Quality management in tourism services (1997–1999) Project VEGA 1/7407/00 Cultural potential of Slovakia as the factor of the offer on European tourism market (2000–2002) VEGA 1/2581/05 Strategy of the tourism development in Slovakia under the conditions of single European market (2005–2007) VEGA 1/4572/07 Theoretical and methodological aspects of tourism development in the conditions of globalization and internationalization (2007–09) VEGA 1/04548/08 Utilization of the Slovak natural and cultural heritage UNESCO in tourism (2008–10) 1/0830/08 Innovation policy in various forms of catering facilities in Slovakia (2008–10) 1/0810/13 Preconditions of the implementation of the concept of social responsibility in tourism in Slovakia (2013–15) Project KEGA 3/3228/05 Creation of the foreign language text books for the study program intercultural communication in tourism (2005–07) KEGA 3/5/07/07 Management of Complaints in service organizations (2007–09) KEGA 5/4/10/10 Tourism product innovations in destinations on competitive market (2010–11)
University of Economics Bratislava	Project VEGA no. 1/5048 Tourism policy in Slovakia (2000–02) Project VEGA no. 1/7707/02 Valorization of macro – environment for tourism services in Slovakia (2002–04) Project VEGA no. 1/1229/04 Position of spas under contemporary socioeconomic conditions and perspectives of their development (2004–06) Project VEGA no.1/0527/13 Networking – Success model of regional network in tourism (2013–15) Project KEGA 013 EU-4/2011 Tourism economics (2011).
Prešov university Prešov	Project GAMA 10/11 Information systems in tourism and IT implementation in tourist facilities (2010–11). Project GAMA 10/13 Analysis of the utilization of tourism as the determinant of the development of cultural potential of the city Presov and its surrounding with the objective to increase its potential and competitiveness as tourism destination.
University of Constantine Philosopher Nitra	Project VEGA 1/3771/06 Pilot project of consumer education in tourism services (2006–08) Project GAM III/2006/FF The view of high school students on the customer satisfaction with the predicts of travel agencies (2006) Project UGA II/24/2011 The level of foreign language competencies in tourism facilities in Nitra region (2011) Project UGA I-12-203-01 Culture, nature and tourism in Slovakia (2012) Project UGA I/18/2012 The possibilities of improvement of the management of culture and the utilization of cultural heritage in cultural tourism in the development of regions (2012) Project UGA I/20/2012 Effective utilization of the management of culture in cultural tourism (2012)
Slovak agricultural university Nitra	Project VEGA 1/4416/07 The evaluation of the quality of the facilities in rural tourism (2007–09) Project KEGA no. 01/SPU-4/2012 Innovation of the structure and content of the course rural tourism (2012–14) Project SPU no. 294/2008 The certification of small accommodation tourism facilities (2008)
Technical university Košice	Project VEGA the possibilities of the utilization of IT for the development of tourism entities, its implementation in promotion of regional specific features of Slovakia and their economic and market impacts. (2005–07) Project VEGA no. 1/3801/06 Mapping of the potential of the villages of the Košice self-government for tourism, the development of the information system for data collection needed for the strategic planning a creation of local models for strategies of tourism development (2006–07) Project VEGA no. 1/0194/08 Model solution of the information and communication system focused on the increase of management effectiveness (competitiveness ability) of entrepreneurial organizations in tourism (2008–10), Project KEGA no. 052 TUKE-4/2012 Creation of the laboratory of multidimensional modeling of processes and subjects in geotourism.

Source: websites of the Ministry of Education, science, research and sport. Slovak Republic, 2013.

geology and regionalization. Despite the number of universities preparing tourism graduates, the scientific research is

unsystematic and uncoordinated at the level of grant agencies, but also among universities. This means the rise of duplication, the

reinvention of already known knowledge and wasteful spending of limited human and financial resources. Also, the unification of tourism terminology is necessary, not only with regard to education, but also scientific research. The exchange of knowledge and experience in scientific research in tourism among the universities at a national and international level is essential. This should help to bridge differences and find what unites us, and is useful for the further development of interdisciplinary science knowledge and education in tourism.

Conclusion

While thinking about the past and present of tourism research in Czechoslovakia and Slovakia, we have described particular decades of development of research institutions and education in tourism, which started in the territory of the former Czechoslovakia in the 1960s. The changes in the socioeconomic and political environment also influenced the topics of the research and the institutional basis for tourism research and education.

Tourism research in Czechoslovakia and Slovakia since 1960 has been marked by the increasing participation of population in tourism and the degree of readiness for its development. The topics of tourism research before 1990 were centrally planned, but they present a picture of actual problems, which society wanted to cope with in terms of the so-called 'increasing standard of living of the population'. Many solutions are interesting in terms of methodology and interdisciplinary approach to cross-sectional phenomenon such as tourism, and are related mainly to the economic, geographic, sociological and environmental issues of tourism (Poláček, 2006, p. 166).

From an overview of the development and content of research activities in tourism from 1960 to 1990, it is obvious that great attention has been paid to the study of the spatial aspects of tourism development, the relationship of the environment and tourism, methodological issues of tourism development, tourism development and the needs of population satisfied by tourism, and the

management and efficiency of tourism and its facilities. Particular attention has been paid to forecasting and development of concepts of tourism development in tourist destinations at a local and regional level. Little attention has been paid to theoretical research in tourism.

After 1990, tourism research in Slovakia was transferred to the academic institutions and new universities, which came into existence in many Slovak regions. Highly specialized research institutions dealing with various aspects of tourism were transformed or disappeared like their founders, or the objectives of their activities were adapted to the conditions of the market economy. The example is the Tourism Research Institute, URBION, which conducted high-quality research in tourism before 1990. Current tourism research is fragmented, uncoordinated and reliant on the support of national and international grant agencies and schemes. The focus of research in universities should be in the theoretical and methodological research, because applied research is currently devoted to the various advisory and consulting companies. At present, the prestige of research centres is characterized by scientific and research potential, competitiveness at home and in the European arena, as well as the nature and quality of educational activities.

Each generation of researchers has its share in the development of scientific research in tourism. The young generation of researchers very often does not know the history of tourism research in Czechoslovakia and Slovakia, or the development of education and the formation of the tourism theory. They often have the idea that everything began after the 'Velvet Revolution' or that everything in the past was bad.

This article tries to describe the continuity of development, while recognizing the fact that without the past the present or future would not be. All this could be achieved only thanks to great personal enthusiasm and diligence of researchers and teachers, as well as the external environment, which was created and still is created by state policy for scientific research and tourism development.

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