

The use of the Butler Cycle and the Chaos Theory in the interpretation of the development of the Żegiestów-Zdrój health resort

Zastosowanie cyklu Butlera i teorii chaosu w interpretacji rozwoju
uzdrowiska Żegiestów-Zdrój

Zygmunt Kruczek

AWF, University of Physical Education, Kraków, Faculty of Tourism and Recreation,
Department of Natural Environment Sciences
al. Jana Pawła II 78, 31-057 Kraków;
e-mail: zygmunt.kruczek@awf.krakow.pl

*He who has been to Żegiestów at least once, continues to long
after its fresh air, its charming landscape, its breath-taking views, its murmuring springs.*

*Józef Dietl, Uwagi nad zdrojowiskami krajowymi ze względu
na ich skuteczność, zastosowanie i urządzenie, 1858.*

“Józef Dietl, “Some Remarks on Polish Health Resorts: their effectiveness, benefits and facilities”, 1858”

Abstract: In the article, the natural conditions and natural therapy facilities of Żegiestów-Zdrój – a small health resort in the Carpathian mountain range, have been described. In the course of the analysis of the development of this resort, R.W. Butler's model of tourism area life cycle (TALC), was applied. The analysis has revealed that the life cycle of Żegiestów-Zdrój has no predictable, linear form, and its course is extremely difficult to foresee, as is proved by the intermittent and unstable development line. The development of the health resort is better illustrated by the chaos theory which adopts the shape of a non-linear course of events. Supplementing the analysis of the life cycle with chaos theory has allowed the author to describe the course of development of Żegiestów-Zdrój in a much more precise way. In the summing up, the chances for a renaissance of the health resort and an initiation of a new cycle of its development have been presented. The above theories may be applied to the process of interpreting and forecasting changes in other health resorts.

Key words: health resort, TALC, chaos theory, Żegiestów-Zdrój

Treść: W artykule opisano warunki naturalne i zasoby przyrodolecnicze Żegiestowa – niewielkiego uzdrowiska karpackiego. W analizie rozwoju tego kurortu zastosowano model cyklu życia obszaru turystycznego R.W. Butlera (ang. tourism area life cycle – TALC). Analiza wykazała, że cykl życia Żegiestowa-Zdroju nie ma przewidywalnej, liniowej postaci, a jego przebieg jest niezwykle trudny do odgadnięcia, czego wyrazem jest nieciągły i niestabilny przebieg zmian. Uzupełnienie analizy cyklu życia kurortu teorią chaosu pozwoliło na lepsze opisanie przebiegu rozwoju Żegiestowa-Zdroju. W podsumowaniu przedstawiono szanse na odrodzenia kurortu i rozpoczęcie nowego cyklu jego rozwoju. Opisanie teorie mogą być wykorzystane w interpretacji i prognozowaniu zmian w innych uzdrowiskach.

Słowa kluczowe: uzdrowisko, TALC, teoria chaosu, Żegiestów-Zdrój

Introduction

The nearly 170 year-old health resort of Żegiestów, which is localized in the gorge valley of the Poprad river (Fig. 1), at the border of Poland and Slovakia, is one of the most attractive Polish resorts, with regard to its scenic values and natural therapy facilities in the Polish Carpathian mountains. Its development has had a rather stormy character and was marked by a series of ups and downs. The goal of the present paper is to evaluate the possibility of applying R.W. Butler's theory of tourism area life cycle (Butler, 1980) to the interpretation of the individual phases of a resort's development. The obtained results have been verified by referring them to the principles of the chaos theory.

In the article, the above-mentioned health resort has been described from the point of view of its physiographic and climatic features as well as from the point of view of the mineral springs that occur within its bounds. An analysis of the individual phases in the development of the health resort, its various ups and downs, property and organizational transformations, has also been carried out and referred to the classical Butler cycle. The development of Żegiestów points out to a decisive impact of the surroundings and external factors on the phases of the resort's life cycles. It is chiefly due to the latter that the tourism area life cycle here has no linear and completely predictable shape, but its course is extremely difficult to anticipate. Due to combining the principles of the chaos theory with the theory of the tourism area life cycle, the reality is much better described, largely thanks to the application of the model of non-linear mapping, that is, of an unpredictable course of events.



Fig. 1. The Poprad Gorge in Żegiestów-Zdrój, photo Z. Kruczek • Przełom Popradu w Żegiestowie-Zdroju, fot. Z. Kruczek

The geographical situation of Żegiestów-Zdrój and its natural therapy resources

Żegiestów-Zdrój is a small, extremely picturesque, health resort situated on the Poprad river; it is particularly renowned for its outstanding scenic and climatic values and very strong iron, calcium and magnesium mineral waters. The resort has developed partly along the high terrace of the Poprad river (410–560 m a.s.l.), and partly along the valley of the side tributary of the Poprad – the Szczawnik stream. The slopes of the mountains slide down very steeply towards the river here – creating a series of the most spectacular meanders on the Poprad – a river which cuts through the Beskid Sądecki mountain range. The peninsula situated opposite Żegiestów is a wooded prominence, known as Słowacka Łopata (The Slovak Spade), as opposed to the Polska Łopata (The Polish Spade), which is lower and densely built-up by the holiday homes and recreation centers.

Żegiestów-Zdrój lies on the moderately warm climatic tier of the Polish Western Carpathians (Hess, 1965). The forest complexes covering the slopes of the nearby mountains are characterized by a predominance of coniferous trees (spruce, fir), with a considerable admixture of deciduous trees. The wooded slopes protect the valley against strong winds; the configuration of the terrain is conducive to an increase of daily temperature amplitudes. The health resort is characterized

by a favorable exposure towards the sun (southern and south-western), although the period of insolation is effectively shortened due to a partial concealment of the horizon by the nearby mountains. The climate is favorable towards the treatment of diseases which are mentioned within the range of health resort recommendations; moreover, in the period from May to September, there are favorable conditions for heliotherapy (Nurek, 1979).

The exceptional insolation and seclusion of Żegiestów, as well as the high value of its mineral waters and highly medicinal peloid clay deposits, create very good conditions for resting as well as for therapy. Among others, one finds here the following water springs: *Anna* (intake completed already in 1830), *Andrzej* (right behind the spa house) and *Zofia* on Łopata Polska – the landscaped bank of the Poprad. These are chiefly highly carbonated hydrogen-calcium-magnesium and hydrocarbon-magnesium-sodium, ferrous waters, whose percentage of mineralization is around 1.4%. As regards the amount of the carbonic acid (up to 2.7 g per liter), they are more or less on a par with the carbonated mineral waters of the Krynica health resort. The above waters are good for drinking and for inhalations, particularly in the treatment of the diseases of the digestive, urinary, and respiratory tracts as well as in circulatory diseases, metabolic disorders, neuroses and asthenia. All of the Żegiestów mineral waters are recommended as preventive measures in the elimination of atherosclerosis risk factors, as well as in heavy metal poisonings, cases of neuroses, osteoporosis and in stimulating an increase of the organism's resilience (Osóbka, 2003).

At one time, it was thought that the water in the Poprad river, had medicinal properties, due to the presence of the mineral springs which gushed forth from its bottom and the body massage caused by the flowing water – hence bathing in the river was recommended. There are a few places in Żegiestów-Zdrój, where the river bank is relatively low and easy to climb down and where the water is calm – so sunbathing and swimming are possible. The development of industry in Slovakia following World War II, as well as pollution caused by municipal waste, have led to a considerable deterioration of the quality of water in the Poprad. Yet in the course of the last few years, water in the Poprad has become much cleaner. Due to the rapid current, the water becomes quickly oxygenated and it purifies itself naturally – small-scale biological contamination does not constitute a major problem. By taking advantage of the EU funds reserved for sewage treatment plants, both the Slovaks and the Poles have considerably decreased the contamination of the Poprad river.

Żegiestów-Zdrój was built on a territory which had previously been uninhabited; this endows the place with its specific character of a spa town which is deprived of farm dwellings and outbuildings. The village of Żegiestów itself stretches along a long valley, reaching up to the very Pusta Wielka culmination (Kruczek, Weseli, 1987).

One of the major attractions of Żegiestów is a natural educational trail which surrounds the Łopata Polska peninsula; the trail is equipped with ten signboards which enable one to get acquainted with the birds that inhabit the Beskid Sądecki mountain range, on the territory on which the Poprad Landscape Park and the Poprad Ostoja nature protection area (PLH120019) had been set up; the latter constitutes a part of the European network of Nature 2000 protected areas.

The theory of R.W. Butler's tourism area evolution cycle

There are many conceptions of development of tourist areas (including spa towns), yet the one which continues to be most popular is R.W. Butler's theory of tourism area development cycle dating back to the 1980's. The above theory is based, on the one hand, on the economic theories concerning the life of a tourist product, and on the other, it makes reference to the conception of regional development which is taken advantage of in geographical sciences.

R.W. Butler has based his theory on the assumption that the products, tourist places and areas, are subject to dynamic transformations; the latter are caused by changes in tourists' tastes and needs, the emergence of new tourist attractions and new trends in tourism. Consequently, we are dealing with evolutionary changes taking place in the areas and places visited by tourists. With time, these changes form what is referred to as a tourism area life cycle.

The intensity of the above-mentioned life cycle is measured by the number of tourists, as well as the volume of investments in tourism infrastructure, the condition of the environment, the local inhabitants' attitude towards tourists and tourism. A tourism area (place or town) goes through six consecutive phases (Fig. 2), namely that of: exploration,

involvement, development, consolidation and stagnation. The last of the above-mentioned phases may turn into the phase of decline or rejuvenation (Butler, 1980).

R.W. Butler's conception was tested in the studies carried out by S. Lundtorp and S. Wanhill, who in the year 2001 defined the logistical function as a mathematical mapping of the development phenomenon of the island of Bornholm (Lundtorp, Wanhill, 2001). If the logistical function turns out to be a very good model which explains the development of many economic phenomena, then its interpretation is by no means an easy task. Yet Lundtorp and Wanhill undertook to define the logistical function and describe its properties in the context of the concept of R.W. Butler's phases. The goal of the experiment was to verify the correctness of the definition of the function of the described phenomenon on the basis of a limited number of observations. Despite that fact that Lundtorp and Wanhill emphasize a high degree of usefulness of modeling development by means of the logistical function, at the same time, they prove that it is quite useless before the first phases of the cycle are fully formed. They confirm the above hypothesis in their subsequent article published in 2006 (Lundtorp, Wanhill, 2006). Thus they have confirmed empirically that the logistical model possesses the feature of prediction of the phenomenon but only once the majority of the phases have been formed, and what is more, the above model does not offer one a possibility of predicting the last phase of the cycle (decline). Therefore it merely fulfills the role of a function, which describes a given phenomenon, as it were, *ex post*. Other contemporary researchers who have been testing R.W. Butler's theory, mention many other indicators which characterize the individual phases of tourism area development cycle (Buhalis, 2000; Oppermann, 1998; Zajadacz, Śniadek, 2011; Szromek, 2010), but they all come to the conclusion that the latter allow one to define the phase only from the perspective of the whole cycle. Similar results were obtained in studies on the development cycles of such a tourist attraction as the Salt Mine in Wieliczka (Kruczek, Szromek 2012).

The main principles of the chaos theory

Although chaos is usually being associated with the process of growing disorder and disorganization, leading to the disintegration of the existing structure and ultimately to extinction, in theoretical terms, chaos is a specific phase or state of preservation of the entire system. A system is a collection of elements and relations between them; every change of status of a single element or else elements leads to a consequent change of the remaining elements of the system (Bertalanffy, 1984). A system enters the phase of chaos either as a consequence of a change in the surroundings, or else under the influence of an external change. In this sense, chaos is not destructive, and the disturbances which do arise, constitute a reaction to the changes that are taking place. The analyzed system adjusts itself to the new conditions, or else attains a new state of organization. In this sense, chaos or a momentary state of disorganization has not got a destructive character – it rather leads to another, more complex order (Mazurkiewicz, 2011).

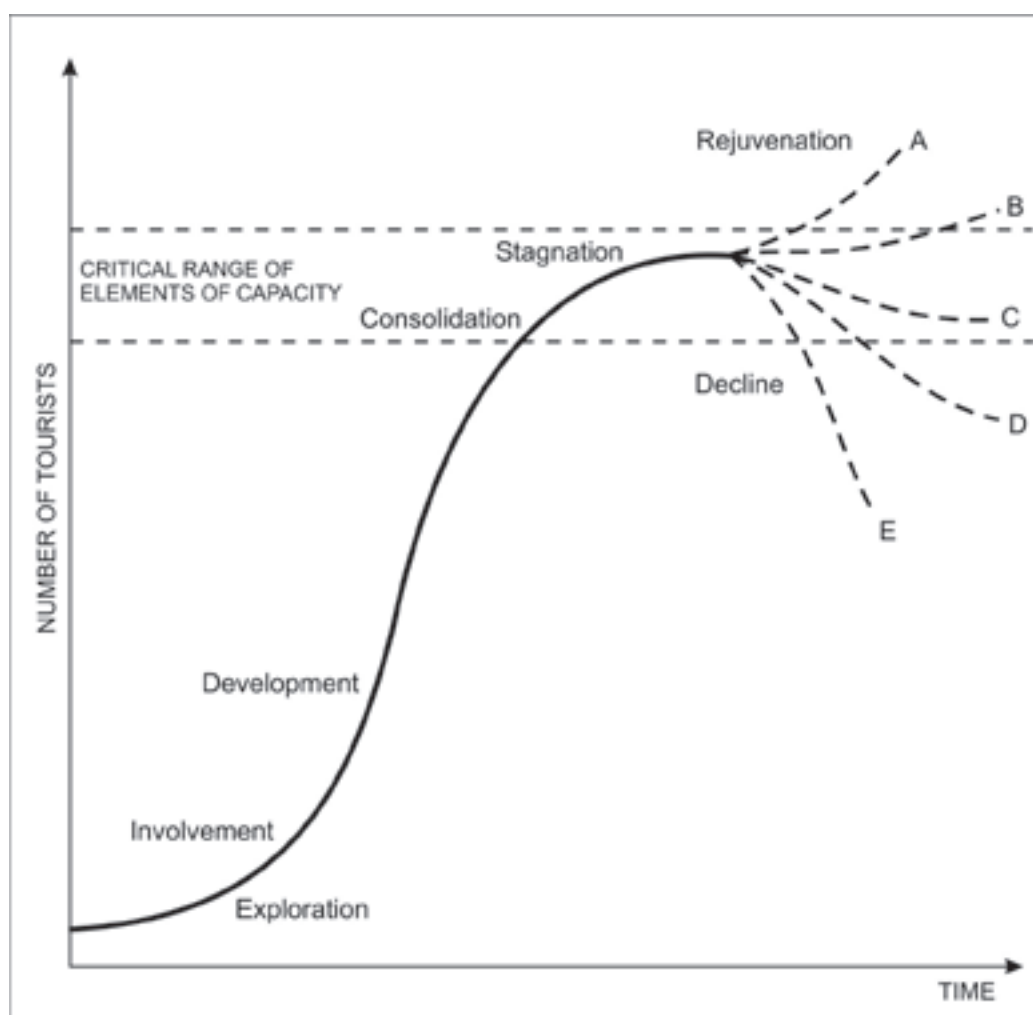


Fig. 2. Spa-Life Cycle from Butler (source: Butler 1980) • Cykl życia uzdrowiska według Butlera (wg Butler 1980)

Contrary to the widespread opinion of external observers, in complex systems, chaos does not appear completely unexpectedly; one may assume that in reality there exists a certain sequence of events which is characteristic of the unstable nature of the system. The functioning of a complex system is characterized by a succession of periods of stability and disturbances (chaos) which tend to follow one another. Having reached the phase of stability, the system may remain in it for as long as there appears an element that disturbs its functioning. It may be an element which comes from the surroundings, or else one that operates within the system. Depending on the strength of its impact, the system may lose its stability either slowly, or else, rapidly. This is referred to in the chaos theory as a departure from the state of equilibrium; the longer this process lasts, the closer the system approaches the so called edge of chaos; the moment this edge is reached, the system begins to behave in a chaotic manner.

Having passed through the phase of chaos, the system returns to the state of equilibrium, yet the order which it represents in its new state, differs from the one it had represented previously. Due to a tendency to pass alternately from the state of equilibrium to the state of chaos and the accompanying tendency to changes in the organization of the system, the behavior of a complex system, is rarely subject to the accepted rules of description and explication (Mazurkiewicz, 2011).

Contrary to Butler's TALC theory, the chaos theory is applied in tourism but sporadically (McKercher, 1999; Russell, Faulkner, 1999; Mazurkiewicz, 2011), the main reason for it being a very long period for which one has to gather empirical data (Prigogine, Stengers, 1985).

Phases in the development of Żegiestów-Zdrój

The first spa patients appeared in Żegiestów in the middle of the 19th c., giving rise to the phase of exploration. The visitors were attracted here not only by the picturesque surroundings and the favorable climate, but also by the discovery of the first water spring in 1846 by Jakub Medwecki, who as its proprietor (together with his brother), became the first investor-businessman in the spa town of Żegiestów. From the initiative of J. Dietl, an examination of the content and properties of the mineral waters was conducted; the first water intakes were installed; baths and the first houses for visitors were built; the process of bottling and dispatching mineral waters was initiated (Kruczek, 2010).

The phase of exploration gave way to the phase of involvement (introduction), the moment the Tarnów-Leluchów railway line was opened and a way station was localized in

Żegiestów-Zdrój in 1876. The opening of the railway line had led to a greater influx of tourists. A new, bigger spa-house, and a pump room with mineral waters were built; villas providing accommodation for visitors began to emerge. Besides the beautiful views, the patients as well as holiday makers were also attracted here by the bathing beach by the Poprad. In the middle of the 80's of the 19th c., the number of rooms in the spa, amounted to 300 and their total accommodation capacity was 700 visitors. Baths in therapeutic peats were also begun.

The proprietor, Karol Medwecki dies in the year 1888; the lack of a good manager, arguments among the heirs, as well as natural disasters, fires of guest houses and building disasters, all lead up to the decline of the spa. Due to the death of the proprietor and a lack of good management, there emerges a tendency towards moving in the direction of chaos within the system (Mazurkiewicz, 2011). A number of other, unfavorable events only speed up the emergence of chaos; the culminating moment arrives when the legal heirs decide to sell the spa.

A successive, though brief, period of development began in the year 1906, after the spa had been purchased by the new owners – W. Więckowska and M. Żyguliński. The destroyed buildings were restored; a new residential area and a new town center were built. The new investments also included the building of a waterworks network, the introduction of electric lighting; there also appeared a post-office, a chemist's and a library. After the period of chaos, the system passed to the phase of development, returning to a state of equilibrium and introducing, though but for a brief period, a new order. The factor which yet again unbalanced the system, turned out to be the World War I. War activities and the devastation associated with it, had yet again led to the decline of the spa. The system had found itself once again in the phase of chaos.

After the termination of the war, the spa was purchased by new owners who created a 'Private Limited Company Żegiestów-Zdrój' with the head office in Krakow. The Company began to manage the existing spa institutions. In the year 1923, Żegiestów was recognized as a public utility spa and the Ministry of Public Health issued a special resolution concerning protective measures in the mining of the mineral resources in Żegiestów. A Spa Board had been elected and the spa's statute had been formulated. Thanks to it, the spa obtained a subsidy and state credits, in spite of the fact that it continued to be a privately owned company. Thanks to the above-mentioned credits and subsidies, a wide-scale extension of the spa was initiated. The ending of the war activities, as well as the legal changes in the spa's status, constituting a classic example of instituting the mechanism of self-organization, had ended the period of chaos and made the system enter the phase of development. Consequently, the number of patients and visitors to the spa began to grow from year to year. In 1919, their number reached the figure of nearly 2000, and in 1936, after a new, in those days modern sanatorium 'Wiktor' had been opened, the number of visitors can be estimated at around 5000. In 1929, a new spa house, designed by a famous Krakow architect Szysko-Bohusz, was completed (Fig. 3). Soon afterwards, the entire cultural and social life of the spa began to focus here. Among others, it was here that Jan Kiepusa used to come with his concerts. In the interwar period, Żegiestów-Zdrój, similarly as the neighboring Krynica, became transformed from

a romantic *la belle époque* spa into a modern and elegant resort representing a truly European standard.

The outbreak of World War II had yet again propelled the system into the state of chaos. After the end of the war, the spa was restored and subsequently nationalized. In 1948 a Regional Board of Carpathian Spa Towns, including Żegiestów-Zdrój, was founded in Krynica and in 1963 a State Spa Enterprise Krynica-Żegiestów-Zdrój was created (Jackowski, Warszńska 1979). Spa treatment became free and accessible to all citizens, causing a mass influx of tourists to the spa. Yet again, the system entered the phase of development.

The 70's of the 20th c. marked a dynamic development of socialized (public) accommodation base; fifteen state companies had built their holiday homes here, or else adapted the existing, though severely damaged buildings for this end. The above base made up as much as 75% of the spa's accommodation capacity. The number of patients and holiday-makers to the spa was estimated to be at the level of 15 thousand visitors annually. The number of visitors had exceeded by far the number of inhabitants and tourist services became the main source of income for the local residents. The system entered the phase of consolidation, with the characteristic drop in the growth rate of arrivals, associated with approaching the ceiling of the tourism area capacity.

The economic slump of the 80's had forced the system to enter once again the phase of stagnation. In turn, the 90's of the 20th c. had been characterized, the national level, with an increased interest and growing popularity of foreign travel. Consequently, the number of tourists who visited Żegiestów-Zdrój, began to drop. The situation was made worse by the problem of re-privatization of the spa and the unsettled property claims (Szromek, 2010). The consolidation phase had given way to the phase of decline. The system began to head in the direction of the edge of chaos. Similarly as in the majority of Polish spas, among its most visible signs, there were: a drop in the number of patients and tourists coming to the spa, abandoned or else partially filled sanatoria, decapitalised accommodation and services base, low quality of services, low accommodation prices and a growing rate of unemployment among the inhabitants. Coming out the state of chaos is possible through the introduction of the mechanism of self-organization. The latter may take on the shape of decisions taken outside (in the system's immediate surroundings), e.g. by local authorities interested in developing spa services, or else decisions taken from the initiative of private entrepreneurs.

Examples of the latter type of initiatives can already be observed. Thus, for example, The Society of Żegiestów's Friends, which is interested in the promotion of the resort and which supports its investment activities, has recently resumed its activity. Numerous investments in the sphere of revitalization of the spa have been implemented. No doubt such activities may be conducive to a re-activation of the spa function and a return of the spa patients, that is to the entering of the system into the phase of rejuvenation; on the other hand, a lack of self-organizational activities may lead to a further deepening of the state of chaos. Yet this is rather unlikely, as complex systems have a certain adaptive quality, thanks to which as well as to their self-organizing quality, they are able to adjust to the changes and prolong their life, provided they have suitable resources – in this case, values that are capable of attracting tourists (Mazurkiewicz, 2011).



Fig. 3. Spa-House in Żegiestów Zdrój, design project: A. Szyszko-Bohusz, state as of 2010, photo Z. Kruczek • Dom Zdrojowy w Żegiestowie-Zdroju, zaprojektowany przez A. Szyszko-Bohusza, stan na rok 2010, fot. Z. Kruczek

Conclusion

R.W. Butler's classical spa development cycle assumes that following a period of slow and subsequently dynamic development, there comes a period of stagnation. After the latter period, any further development of a spa will depend on factors which are able to provide new impulses for its activity and consequently, the spa's rejuvenation; and the case of a lack of such impulses, the spa will fall into decline and become transformed into a tourist resort.

An evaluation of R.W. Butler's model for the interpretation of the development of spas in Poland was carried out by Kapczyński and Szromek (2008). While analyzing the demand for the spa product in Poland in the course of the last half a century, they observed an almost model pattern of spa and spa product cycle in Poland. What deserves special attention are the years at the turn of the millennia when in all probability, a new cycle, namely that of rejuvenation, had begun.

Kapczyński and Szromek analyzed Butler's cycle in relation to all Polish spas. An attempt to refer this model to the more than 150-year old Żegiestów-Zdrój spa pointed out to its limited usefulness in the interpretation of the development of this spa town. Above all, already in the phase of exploration, there occurred periods of stagnation and recurrent development caused by such factors as: changes of ownership, natural disasters or outbreak of World War I.

As the cause of the spa's decline, one should mention, above all, the protracted process of re-privatization which effectively blocked all revitalization attempts. This view is confirmed by the opinions of Kowalczyk and Derek (2010), who came to the conclusion that although generally, one cannot find fault with Butler's model, yet in many cases, including that of Żegiestów-Zdrój, the above model does not remind one of a classical logistic curve.

The factor which is probably most important in promoting the development of a spa is one that deals with human resources – proprietors and managers of the spa. As was pointed out earlier on in the present paper, it is on their passion, financial resources and sometimes fascination with the beauty of, that the development, stagnation or the decline of the spa really depended on. On the basis of the conducted analyses, one may finally conclude that Butler's classical tourist resort development cycle is confirmed but to a limited degree in the case of a single resort. In the case of Żegiestów-Zdrój, among the factors which exert the greatest impact on the modification of Butler's model, one finds property relations and human capital. The view, that in his development model, R.W. Butler attached too small a role to the local population, can be encountered in the studies carried out by G. Shaw and A. M. Williams (1998).

R.W. Butler's conception of development cycle which is based on the principle of the linear course of changes, says

that the transition from one phase to another is taking place in a continuous and predictable way. Yet in reality, we do not find any confirmation of the fact that the course of the cycle is indeed so predictable. One should emphasize that the behavior of the system of a tourist area is anything but predictable and that the transition from one phase to another is not predetermined. Consequently, a tourist area does not necessarily have to pass through all the phases of development that are foreseen in its development cycle. Its development may be terminated in any phase and consequently transition to the next phase will be interrupted and the tourist area will terminate its market existence. If there occurs a drop in activity in any of the phases, the system may also return to the path of growth and the process of development will continue (Mazurkiewicz, 2011).

The behavior of a tourist system associated with a resort, cannot be described and explained in the categories of a classical theory of tourism area life cycle, based on the principle of the linearity of the ensuing changes. Such a principle only makes sense if one assumes that the processes taking place in the surroundings or in the micro-scale of a system do not exert an influence on its market life. In any way, these processes are not taken into account, for as has already been mentioned, the theory of the tourism area life cycle concerns the phenomena which occur only in the macro scale. Whereas, as can be inferred from the above-presented example, the influence of the surroundings as well as of the changes within the systems themselves, also on the level of individual activities, can alter the course of events. It is precisely due to such changes that the tourism area life cycle does not have a linear and predictable shape, and its course is extremely difficult to

anticipate; an expression of this trend is an intermittent and unstable course of changes (Mazurkiewicz, 2011).

It should be noted, however, that it is possible to make different interpretation of the development cycle of analyzed resort. The collapse of the development of spa-function of was associated with wars, systemic transformation, natural disasters and even the death of the first owner. In the aftermath the continuity of development was disrupted, caused by changes unpredictable employing traditional extrapolating models, the turmoil of the first and second world wars could not be predicted. It can therefore be interpreted as the development of the resort with several subsequent full or intermittent cycles, which would confirm the validity of the theory of Butler (Fig. 4).

Butler's theory can be accused of not taking account of factors not directly related to tourism, and that it is based solely on the number of tourists. Despite the many critical assessment the TALC model has, however, it is still very popular and used in tourism planning and management (Berry, 2011; Hovinen, 2002; Russell, 2011).

Combining the principles of the chaos theory with the theory of tourism area life cycle, make the latter one much better adjusted to the description of reality. The fundamental advantage of the chaos theory is that it has the ability to map out the non-linear course of events and explain the causes responsible for the emergence of unexpected events. Thanks to it, one of the most important and certainly one of the most popular tourism theories, has been broadened with new, interesting assumptions and ultimately has contributed to a more precise description and explanation of the development of tourist areas.

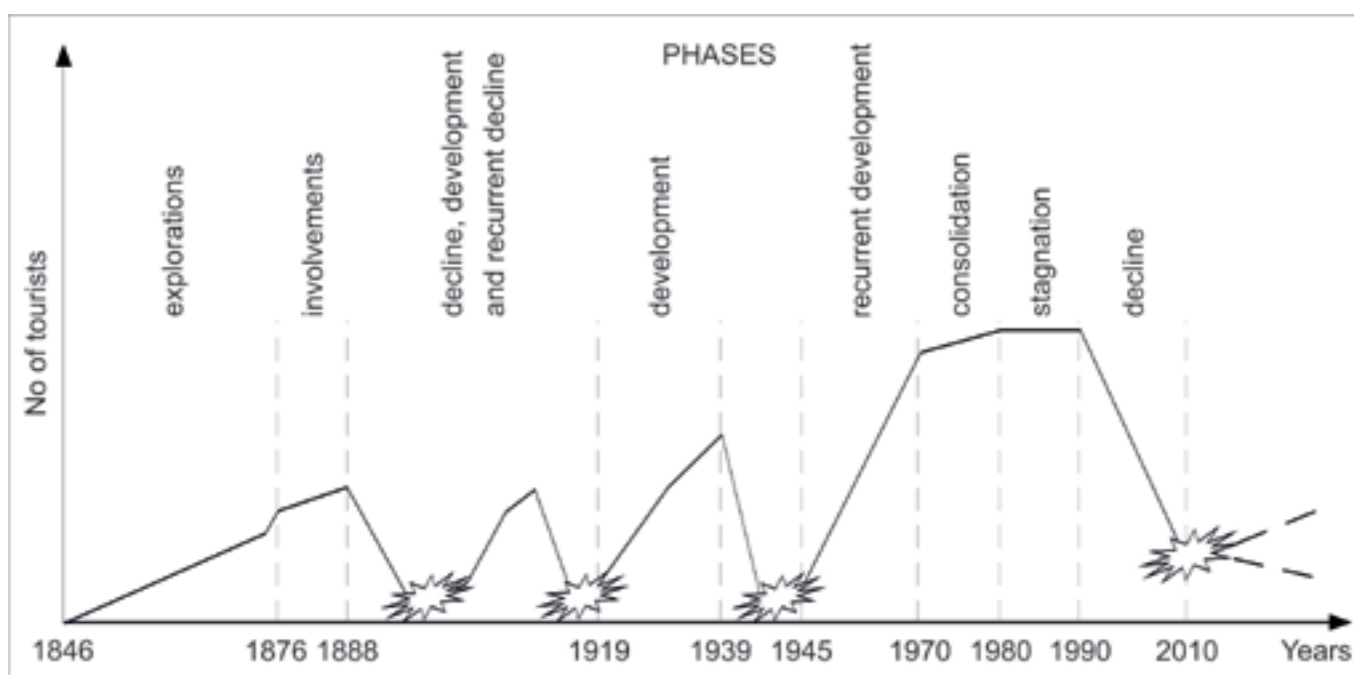


Fig. 4. The Żegiestów Spa Life Cycle (source: Kruczek, Zmyślony 2014, p. 33) • Cykl życia uzdrowiska Żegiestów (wg Kruczek, Zmyślony 2014, p. 33)

Afterword

Chances for a renaissance of the Żegiestów-Zdrój SPA

The contemporary spa tourism is focused mainly on providing commercial services of the spa, wellness and entertainment type; it assures a high standard of hotel and medical treatment services. This calls for considerable and costly investments, and consequently a number of wealthy investors. What gives hope for such investments in the case of Żegiestów, is an interest taken in the spa by the 'Cechini' company which has already built a number of luxury hotels in Krynica and Zakopane and additionally administers them. Thus after revitalization, the former 'Wiktor' sanatorium in Żegiestów is already an up-to-date, modern spa center. It currently plays the role of the main treatment and wellness center in Żegiestów. The center is equipped with a modern and extended SPA node, indoor and outdoor swimming pools with hot mineral water and a system of diverse water slides; there are also conference rooms, a restaurant as well as a cafe. The 'Zamek' guest-house is currently undergoing the process of extension with the view of converting it into a sanatorium (Żegiestów-Zdrój..., 2010).

A series of hotels (Biały Orzeł, Prometeusz, Światowid) are currently undergoing the process of modernization; the project is aimed at converting the existing buildings to the

standard of 3-star hotels. The designers are planning to build among others: a shopping mall with services and restaurants, a strolling promenade and a multi-level car park with a cable car station localized on top of its roof; the cable car is to join the spa center with Łopata Polska. In 2015, work on the construction of a footbridge for pedestrians and cyclists, joining Żegiestów with Sulin, on the Slovak side of the Poprad, is to be initiated (Żegiestów-Zdrój..., 2010).

A big chance for development is the creation of new attractions and the emergence of new functions – thus, a ski lift has been built and a skiing slope has recently been opened in the village. The bold plans of joining the slope in Żegiestów with the modern ski station in Wierchomla and the newly built ski station in Muszyna, may be conducive to the creation of a whole complex of three Beskidy valleys possessing a large tourist potential.

The development of Żegiestów depends on the human factor, i.e. on the local people who are interested in earning money by providing tourist services, just as it happened in the 70's of the previous century. Finally, it is worth drawing attention to the activity of the Society of Friends of Żegiestów (<http://www.zegiestow.pl/>, accessed on 01.03.2015), particularly as regards the promotion of the resort and its support for various investment opportunities.

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