

TOURISM



TOURISM AND THE STRUCTURE OF ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE BALTIC REGION METROPOLISES

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International tourism is playing an increasingly important part in the life of all the nine countries of the Baltic region. In this contribution, I analyse the statistical data for 2010—2017 regarding the numbers of arrivals of international tourists and international tourism revenues in the Baltic region. Regional metropolises, which include nine capitals and Saint Petersburg, have a pivotal role in the tourism space of the region. I propose a methodology for empirical research into the attractiveness of ten Baltic cities as perceived by international tourists. This methodology distinguishes three major components in the tourism industry of the Baltic metropolises: hotels, restaurants, and sights. I estimate the attractiveness of these tourism infrastructure components in each of the ten cities using special indicators. Based on the data obtained, I calculate the integrated indicator of city attractiveness. The empirical study shows that, in the Baltic region, international tourists appreciate the most the hotels of Berlin, Warsaw, and Copenhagen, the restaurants of Tallinn, Riga, and Copenhagen, and the sights of Berlin, Stockholm, and Saint Petersburg. The most attractive Baltic cities for international tourists are Berlin, Copenhagen, and Stockholm. Although the sights of Moscow and Saint Petersburg are competitive in the tourist space of the Baltic region, Moscow and Saint Petersburg hotels and restaurants are noticeably inferior to those in other countries of the region.

Keywords: tourism, structure of attractiveness, metropolis, TripAdvisor, hotel, restaurant, sights, sociology of city, Baltic region

Introduction.

Tourism as a Social Phenomenon and Its Study

Tourism has become one of the most important attributes of modern life. Travels of individuals for the purpose of

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Submitted on December 30, 2018

doi: 10.5922/2079-8555-2019-2-5

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gaining knowledge, recreation, entertainment, as well as for business purposes are known from Antiquity. I. Kant [1, p. 352] and G. W. F. Hegel [2, p. 56; 3, p. 458] reflected on various aspects of tourism.

What is tourism? In 1995, the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) defined the concept of ‘tourism’ quite broadly as ‘the activities of people traveling and staying outside their normal environment for a period of not more than one year to spend free time, do business and for other purposes’¹. American scientist C. Goeldner and Canadian researcher J. Brent-Ritchie wrote, “When we think of tourism, we think primarily of people who are visiting a particular place for sightseeing, visiting friends and relatives, taking a vacation, and having a good time. They might spend their leisure time engaging in various sports, sunbathing, talking, singing, taking rides, touring, reading, or simply enjoying the environment. If we consider the subject further, we may include in our definition of tourism people who are participating in a convention, a business conference, or some other kind of business or professional activity, as well as those who are taking a study tour under an expert guide or doing some kind of scientific research or study” [4, p. 3]. So, international tourism is a short visit to other countries for the purpose of recreation, getting acquainted with the natural and cultural and historical sights of these countries, customs and mores of different nations, their national cuisine, various kinds of entertainment, shopping, and also for the purpose of receiving education, scientific research, attending professional and business meetings, commercial activities, treatment, religious pilgrimages, etc. Tourism does not include travel for the purpose of temporary employment.

In the modern era tourism performs three functions: first, it contributes to the balanced and harmonious development of a person as an individual, supplying them not only with recreation opportunities, but also opening new horizons of nature and society, history and today’s world, as well as contributing to the development of world cultural heritage; secondly, by offering specific goods and services, it forms a special branch of the national and global economy, a profit-oriented business, and finally, thirdly, it is a means of perception by the individual of themselves, as an integral part of the emerging united humanity and thus contributes to the formation of a global society, serving as one of the most important types of migrations of people within and outside of their countries. Tourism has acquired the latter function only recently: at the beginning of the XXI century, tourist routes have contributed to the creation of the actual unity of the world.

¹ *Collection of Tourism Expenditure Statistics*. World Tourism Organization. P. 1. URL: <http://pub.unwto.org/WebRoot/Store/Shops/Infoshop/Products/1034/1034—1.pdf> (access date: 12.12.2018).



Various aspects of the transformation of tourism into a mass phenomenon of the current world are discussed in the scientific literature worldwide. One can speak of the emergence of a special interdisciplinary field of knowledge, which English-speaking researchers brand under the name of *tourism studies*. In particular, I would point out two authors who considered tourism as a social phenomenon.

Back in 1984, the Israeli scholar E. Cohen proposed eight sociological approaches to understanding tourism as: 1) commercialized hospitality (commercialization and industrialization of traditional relationships that have long since connected the guest / wanderer and their host); 2) democratized journey (travels that were previously available only to the members of aristocracy and the rich were made possible for many); 3) modern leisure activity; 4) modern version of pilgrimage; 5) implementation of basic cultural orientations characteristic of people from different countries; 6) process of acculturation (tourists have a diverse impact on the host countries); 7) a sort of inter-ethnic relations (tourists and the host countries are representatives of different ethnic groups); 8) a form of neo-colonialism (metropolitan countries produce tourist flows, while peripheral countries accept them) [5, p. 373—376].

The works of the prominent British social theorist J. Urry are classic for the study of tourism. When analyzing tourism, he considered the concept of *tourist gaze* — a socially organized and systematic view of the one who seeks to extract pleasure from travelling — as key. Tourism acts as the embodiment and phenomenology of such a gaze [6, p. 2—3]. Urry and Larsen believed that mass tourism first appeared in the north of Great Britain in the second half of the 19th century, and was associated with the leisure of the industrial working class [7, p. 31—36]. For Urry, who viewed society as a system of mobilities, tourism was one of the most important forms of mobility [8, p. 67—70].

Baltic region scholars have made substantial contributions to the study of tourism in this part of the world.

The attractiveness of Russian regions for international tourists is being studied [9]. Special attention is paid to the specifics of tourism in the border regions on the example of Kaliningrad, Smolensk, Pskov and Amur regions, the Republic of Karelia [10—12], prospects for the development of cross-border tourism over the southern coast of the Baltic Sea [13], and prospects for tourism in different parts of the German coast of the Baltic Sea [14].

The paper of L. Matoga (on the example of Nowa Huta, one of the districts of Krakow) [15] is devoted to studying the preferences of tourists. K. Jakosuo studied the attractiveness of the hospitality industry and attractions of Finnish Karelia for tourists from Russia [16].

Estonian researchers A. Kuusik, K. Nilbe, T. Mehine and R. Ahas conducted a study of the Estonian tourism market on the basis of empirical data on the positioning of mobile phones, considering the ways in which

the nature of events (music festivals, sports events, fairs, exhibitions, scientific conferences, etc.) within the country, together with their regularity, are capable of causing repeated visits by international tourists [17].

The author of this paper, based on the statistics of restaurants in the capitals of the Baltic region, analysed the hierarchy of national cuisines in these countries in the context of the global culinary space [18]. The purpose of the present study is to analyse the attractiveness of the Baltic region to international tourists. This is needed to clarify the range of opportunities for the revitalization of the tourism industry in these countries. In particular, we, of course, are interested in assessing the tourist attractiveness of Russia. To reach this goal, we first consider the relative numbers of international tourists globally and in the Baltic region.

International tourism in the world and in the Baltic Region

We can estimate the growth of international tourism in the world from statistics. According to the UNWTO, in 1950 there were 25 million international tourists in the world, 674 million in 2000, and 1.323 billion in 2017². By 2030, their number will reach 1.8 billion people³. The tourism industry is among the leading sectors of the global economy. In the tourism industry, 10% of world gross domestic product is produced, 7% of world exports are formed, and one in ten jobs is created in the global economy⁴. A global tourist space arises as a result of the tourist flow growth, within which hundreds of millions of people cross the borders of their own and foreign countries every year, and separate nations, countries and continents are sewn together with the threads of tourist routes.

The most important indicator of the international tourism development in a particular country is the number of international tourist arrivals. Thus, in 2017, the top ten countries of the world included France, Spain, the USA, China, Italy, Mexico, the United Kingdom, Turkey, Germany and Thailand. One may characterize the first five countries as the great tourist powers (by international tourist arrivals). Another important indicator of international tourism is the revenues it generates. In terms of international tourism revenues in 2017, the top ten countries in the world included the USA, Spain, France, Thailand, the United Kingdom, Italy, Australia, Germany, Macau, and Japan. Let us name the first five the great tourist powers (by income from international tourism). Due to the

² UNWTO. Tourism Highlights. 2017 Edition. P. 2. URL: <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284419029> (access date: 13.12.2018); UNWTO. Tourism Highlights. 2018 Edition. P. 5. URL: <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284419876> (access date: 15.12.2018).

³ UNWTO. Tourism Highlights. 2017 Edition. P. 3. URL: <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284419029> (access date: 13.12.2018).

⁴ UNWTO. Tourism Highlights. 2018 Edition. P. 3. URL: <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284419876> (access date: 15.12.2018).

fact that France, Spain and the United States are among the five great tourist powers both in terms of the number of tourists received and in terms of tourism revenues, we qualify them as three tourist superpowers.

What is the degree of international tourism development in the Baltic countries? In order to assess its scale in the region, let us turn to the analysis of UNWTO statistics related to the recent period of time (the most recent data as of 2017). We consider the number of international tourists received and total revenues from international tourism in the Baltic Sea countries. In addition, we introduce another indicator of the international tourism development, namely, the indicator of international tourism density, equal to the ratio of the number of international tourist arrivals to the country's population in a certain year. This indicator will show the place the international tourism takes in the public life of a country. In order to carry out a comparative analysis, we present the data relating not only to the countries of the Baltic region, but also to the world as a whole, as well as to the great tourist powers by international tourist arrivals (Table 1). The countries are ranked by number of international tourist arrivals in 2017.

Table 1

**International tourist arrivals and international tourism density
by country of destination, 2010—2017**

Country	International tourists arrivals			Population in 2017 (mil- lion)	International tourism density indicator
	2010 (million)	2017 (million)	Change (%)		
World	952	1323	38.97	7,750,262	0.17
France	77,648	86,918	11.94	64,980	1.34
Spain	52,677	81,786	55.26	46,354	1.76
USA	60,010	75,868	26.43	324,459	0.23
China	55,665	60,740	9.12	1,409,517	0.04
Italy	43,626	58,253	33.53	59,360	0.98
<i>Countries of the Baltic region</i>					
Germany	26,875	37,452	39.36	82,114	0.46
Russia	22,281	24,390	9.47	143,990	0.17
Poland	12,470	18,400	47.55	38,171	0.48
Denmark	8,744	10,781*	23.30	5,734	1.88
Sweden	4,951	6,865	38.66	9,911	0.69
Estonia	2,511	3,245	29.23	1,310	2.45
Finland	2,319	3,181	37.17	5,523	0.58
Lithuania	1,507	2,523	67.42	2,890	0.87
Latvia	1,373	1,950	42.02	1,950	1.00

* Data for 2016.

Compiled and calculated by the author from: *UNWTO. Tourism Highlights. 2018 Edition. P. 5, 15—17. URL: <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284419876> (accessed: 15.12.2018).*

All countries of the Baltic region, except Germany being among the top ten tourist countries of the world, are significantly inferior in terms of international tourist reception to the indicators of great tourist powers. Germany is the undisputed leader of the Baltic region in this respect, and Russia and Poland, which occupy the second and third places, respectively, are far behind. We can also see that in 1999—2001, 2006, and 2012—2015, Russia was among the ten leading tourist powers in the world in terms of tourist arrivals, but in recent years it dropped out of this top ten. Russia's lag could be caused by the political complications surrounding the country's international relations. Table 1 shows that a relatively large number of international tourists visited Estonia, which outperformed Finland.

Almost all countries of the Baltic region showed a significant increase in the reception of international tourists in the period from 2010 to 2017. Germany, Poland, Lithuania and Latvia, as well as Spain, exceeded the average growth rate in the number of international tourists. The modest growth rate of reception of international tourists in Russia is close to that of France or China.

The values of the international tourism density indicator are quite important, too, since they show the degree of the influx of large masses of tourists as a systemic factor in the development of a given society. They also demonstrate the extent to which the presence of a large number of multilingual and multicultural tourists in the territory of a given country affects all spheres of its public life — from economy to everyday life. Let us assume that if the indicator value is equal to or greater than 1, that is, the number of received international tourists is equal to or exceeds the number of local residents, then we speak of a tourism society, that is, of a society for which the reception of international tourists is very important. A tourism society is a society formed by the autochthonous population and the permanent presence of a significant number of international tourists at the same time. Tourism societies that emerge in our era are obviously a product of globalization.

We see that the tourism society exists in Estonia (2.45), Denmark (1.88) and Latvia (1.00). By the indicator of the international tourism density, the first two countries surpass Spain (1.76) and France (1.34), which we described above as tourist superpowers. Italy is approaching the status of a tourism society (0.98). So, we have reasons to believe that in the social and cultural (but, of course, not legal) respect, Estonia is no longer a country of Estonians, but a country of Estonians and international tourists, and Denmark is not a country of Danes, but a country of Danes and international tourists. A similar characterization may be given to Spain and France, and to Latvia and Italy to a lesser extent. At the same time, Germany, Russia, Poland, Finland, Sweden and Lithuania, as well as the USA and China are still the countries of their citizens. Ac-

According to the indicator of the international tourism density, Russia, while occupying the last place in the Baltic region, is at the same level as the world average.

Let us consider the data on international tourism revenues in the world, the great tourist powers by international tourism revenues and the countries of the Baltic region in 2010—2017 (Table 2). The countries are ranked by international tourism revenues in 2017.

Table 2

International tourism revenues by country of destination, 2010—2017

Country	2010 (US\$ billion)	2017 (US\$ billion)	Change (%)
World	927	1340	44.55
<i>The great tourist powers</i>			
USA	137,010	210,747	53.82
Spain	54,641	67,964	24.38
France	57,059	60,681	6.35
Thailand	20,104	57,477	18,590
United Kingdom	33,978	51,211	50.72
<i>Countries of the Baltic region</i>			
Germany	34,679	39,823	14.83
Sweden	8,366	14,142	69.04
Poland	9,576	12,772	33.38
Russia	8,830	8,945	1.30
Denmark	5,853	7,394	26.33
Finland	3,051	2,982	-2.3
Estonia	1,073	1,628	51.72
Lithuania	0,967	1,299	34.33
Latvia	0,642	0,885	37.85

Compiled and calculated by the author from: *UNWTO. Tourism Highlights. 2018 Edition. P. 7, 15—17. URL: <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284419876> (accessed: 15.12.2018).*

Germany is the absolute leader in revenues from international tourism among the countries of the Baltic region. Its indicators are comparable to those of great tourist powers. With a huge margin, Germany is followed by Sweden and Poland. Russia and Denmark occupy middle positions, ahead of small tourist markets: Finland, Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia.

Sweden and Estonia lead in terms of growth in revenues from international tourism in the Baltic region, and their figures are higher than the world average, while being comparable to those of the United States and United Kingdom. The titleholder among the great tourist powers, and perhaps in the world as a whole, is Thailand. Russia showed a barely noticeable increase in revenues from international tourism (within the statistical error), while the figures actually fell to a degree in Finland.

Based on the data on the number of international tourist arrivals and international tourism revenues, we are able to calculate the amount that an average international tourist would bring globally, to the five great tourist powers (by the number of international tourist arrivals) and to the countries of the Baltic region in 2010–2017 (Table 3).

Table 3

**The average international tourism revenues by country of destination,
2010–2017**

Country	2010 (US\$)	2017 (US\$)	Change (%)
World	973.74	1012.85	4.02
<i>The great tourist powers</i>			
France	734.84	698.14	– 4.99
USA	2283.11	2727.13*	19.45
Spain	1037.28	831.00	– 19.89
China	823.03	536.99	– 34.75
Italy	889.06	759.33	– 4.59
<i>Countries of the Baltic region</i>			
Germany	1290.38	1063.31	– 17.60
Sweden	1689.76	2060.01	21.91
Finland	1315.65	937.44	– 28.75
Denmark	669.37	653.65*	– 2.35
Poland	767.92	694.13	– 9.61
Lithuania	641.67	514.86	– 19.76
Estonia	427.32	501.69	17.40
Latvia	467.59	453.85	– 2.94
Russia	396.30	366.75	– 7.46

* Data for 2016.

Calculated by the author from: *UNWTO. Tourism Highlights. 2018 Edition. P. 5–7. 15–17. URL: <https://www.e-unwto.org/doi/book/10.18111/9789284419876> (accessed: 15.12.2018).*

We see that an average international tourist in the Baltic region generates the most money for Sweden. Germany ranked second (close to the world average), and Finland came third. But the three Baltic countries are very far behind the United States. The average international tourist gave the least money to Russia, and the figures for Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania are also low. In all likelihood, this is due to the low cost services of the tourism industry in these countries.

It is noteworthy that from 2010 to 2017, the most countries of the Baltic region (except for Sweden and Estonia) suffered a drop in the



amount of revenues generated by the average tourist. The same thing happened among the great tourist powers, and the USA became an exception. At the same time, revenues from international tourism in the world as a whole, grew, albeit slowly.

Thus, in the course of the statistical analysis of the international tourism development in the Baltic region in 2010—2017, we identified four key indicators: 1) the number of international tourist arrivals, 2) the revenues generated by international tourism, 3) the density of international tourism and 4) the revenues generated by an average international tourist. The leader of the Baltic region is Germany by the first two indicators, Denmark by the third one, Sweden by the fourth one. Therefore, these three countries can be considered centers of tourism in the region.

The attractiveness of the Baltic Region's metropolises and its structure: Methodology of empirical research

International tourism considerably, and sometimes primarily involves international tourists visiting major cities in the host countries. These cities are either the purpose of tourism, or tourist hubs, that is, hub stations in the network of tourist routes. In the latter case, even if a tourist visits the country, for example, intending to enjoy the views of its wildlife or the pleasures of recreation in small resort towns, to contemplate the historical and cultural sights far from major cities, they are bound to travel through megacities, which is accompanied by staying in hotels, going to restaurants, consuming tourist services, visiting sights, etc. Thus, large cities become the centers of the tourism industry and carriers of the respective infrastructure, and act as centers of production and consumption of tourism services, centers of tourism as a social phenomenon. In this regard, the above task of studying the attractiveness of the Baltic region countries in the perception of international tourists is detailed as the task of studying the tourist attractiveness of the megacities in the region.

In all 9 countries of the Baltic region, the largest cities are their capitals: Moscow, Berlin, Stockholm, Copenhagen, Warsaw, Helsinki, Tallinn, Riga and Vilnius, which attract a significant or, in most cases, the largest proportion of international tourists visiting these countries. The metropolis, which has the informal status of the second capital of Russia, St. Petersburg, is also of great importance. Thus, the focus of our attention will be 10 capitals of the Baltic region.

The tourism potential of the capital cities of the Baltic region may be viewed from an objective point of view, with analyzing such characteristics as population, urban GDP, average income per capita, standards of living, average life expectancy, number and star rating of hotels, number of restaurants, prices for goods and services, environmental situation,



crime rate, traffic jams, etc. All these objective characteristics contribute to the formation of the attractiveness of these megacities for international tourists.

However, studying the subjective side of the tourist potential of the capital cities of the Baltic region is also of great interest, that is, how attractive they look in the eyes of international tourists. Let us characterize this subjective side as the attractiveness of a city and attempt to quantify it on the basis of objective data, that is, transform it into a subjective-objective category. How can we do this, that is, how do we objectively calculate the attractiveness of the megacities of the Baltic region in the perception of international tourists?

To study the attractiveness of the capital cities of the Baltic region, we apply the original author's methodology. It assumes the use of information provided by the world's largest travel portal TripAdvisor. com as an empirical database⁵. It was created in the early 2000s and gained the widest fame worldwide in a short time, becoming a companion and consultant to tourists from all countries of the world. This website contains data on the tourist infrastructure of almost all cities in the world, namely, on the three main types of tourist sites — hotels, restaurants and attractions, as well as reviews of tourists about them. In addition to the more or less detailed text message, each review implies an assessment of the said tourist infrastructure objects on a 5-point scale, including the options “excellent”, “very good”, “average”, “poor” and “terrible”.

It is beyond argument that the attractiveness is a subjective category, but when it comes to analyzing the feedback from large masses of people who evaluate the various components of the tourist infrastructure of cities (oftentimes constituting hundreds and even thousands of reviews on the same site), then we bring quite objective grounds for this subjective category. This creates the possibility of an impartial, sober and objective assessment of the attractiveness of the main components of the tourist infrastructure of the megalopolises in the Baltic region.

We can throw off the possible concerns that many positive reviews on TripAdvisor. com are inspired by the PR and marketing departments of the respective institutions, pointing out that, firstly, the reviews are written in many different languages, secondly, there is a fair amount of “bad” and “terrible” reviews in a number of cases; thirdly, the TripAdvisor. com administration has an effective policy for removing unfair reviews.

Among the countless reviews left on TripAdvisor. com, we select only those that were left by international tourists from all over the world, who visited the capital cities of the Baltic region, and not the citizens of these countries, who evaluate their capitals, that is, we exclude the subjects of domestic tourism. TripAdvisor. com allows you to classify re-

⁵ *TripAdvisor*. Latest reviews. Lowest prices. URL: <https://www.tripadvisor.com/> (access date: 16.12.2018).



views by linguistic criteria. We will take only those reviews that were posted in English, which is not a state or official in any country in the Baltic region, into account. Of course, the reviews in English, which has long acquired the status of a global language, a language of world communication, are posted by tourists from all over the world, and not just by the guests from English-speaking countries. This will allow us to select reviews that were made specifically by international tourists with a high level of confidence, including, of course, tourists from the Baltic region who came from a country other than the one in which the metropolitan city is located. Say that, for example, Swedes, Poles, Brazilians or Chinese who write reviews of the city's hotels on TripAdvisor.com in English serve as international tourists in St. Petersburg. At the same time, we digress from the analysis of the fact that, probably, some of the reviews in English were written by citizens of the Baltic region countries who evaluate the objects of the national tourism industry of their own countries. Most likely, there are very few of them, and therefore, we will still assume that all the reviews in English were left by international tourists to simplify our analysis.

The data from the TripAdvisor.com portal has come into use in world tourism research fairly recently — since the beginning of the 2010s. The scientists who are working in this direction are mainly foreign. The issue of the credibility of the reviews of tourist sites that are posted on this site is addressed in the works of British scholars I. Jickle and K. Carter [19], R. Filieri [20]. Hong Kong researchers H. Lee, R. Lo and J. Murphy [21] analyze the community of TripAdvisor.com users (sociodemographic features, behavioral patterns, etc.). Hong Kong authors J. Ei, N. Ou and R. Lo consider the impact of TripAdvisor.com data on planning trips by tourists from different countries [22]. A researcher from the USA, L. Vazquez, focuses on the study of negative reviews posted on this portal [23]. Indian scholars P. Bhardwai, S. Gautam and P. Pahwa analyzed the emotions that Delhi, Bangalore, Mumbai and other metropolitan areas of India caused in tourists relying on the reviews of TripAdvisor.com visitors [24]. Chinese authors H. Zhang, J. Pu, C. Wang and H. Chen offer a model for analyzing restaurant reviews posted on TripAdvisor.com to independent tourists [25]. A Croatian researcher, H. Jakopovic studied the perception of the work of restaurants in the city of Dubrovnik by tourists based on TripAdvisor.com data [26]. A joint study by Australian and Malaysian researchers A. Akhani, M. Nilashi, O. Ibrahim, L. Sanzoni and S. Weaven is dedicated to the principles of segmentation of the market of consumers of medical and hotel services (spa hotels) based on reviews posted on TripAdvisor.com [27].

The originality of the empirical study of the attractiveness of the capital cities in the Baltic region, proposed in this article, lies in the specificity of the analysis of reviews posted by international tourists on TripAdvisor.com, and this study applies to all countries in the region. First of all,



we produce a quantitative description of the attractiveness of hotels, restaurants and attractions separately. The quantitative expression of the attractiveness of every component of the tourist infrastructure of cities is the average number of reviews with “excellent” rating received by each site of the corresponding type in the city, selected in the sample of the top 30 — according to reviews on TripAdvisor.com⁶ — that is, the arithmetic average of 30 best hotels, 30 best restaurants and 30 best attractions. Then we take the values obtained as indicators of the attractiveness of hotels, restaurants and sights of the Baltic metropolitan areas (in points). Further, based on the results of the above statistical analysis, we calculate the values of the indicator of integral attractiveness of 10 capital cities of the Baltic region using the formula of $A = \sqrt[3]{A_1 \cdot A_2 \cdot A_3}$, where A_1 — indicator of attractiveness of hotels, A_2 — indicator of attractiveness of restaurants and A_3 — indicator of attractiveness of sights, that is, taking the indicator of integral attractiveness equal to the cubic root of the product of the values of three private indicators of attractiveness.

Two important reservations should be made. First, when analyzing the attractiveness of large cities in the Baltic region, we proceed from an important epistemological premise — the assumption that this region (and the world) has an isomorphic tourist space, within which tourist flows circulate with an equal intensity and degree of successful overcoming of various obstacles (legal, financial, political, etc.). In fact, this is an idealization, and without doubt, the actual situation looks somewhat more complicated. For example, the deterioration of international relations in recent years has led to a reduction in the influx of international tourists to Russia. Still, it seems that this assumption is quite legitimate as it does not contain excessive error, and it is necessary to accept this premise to carry out our research. Secondly, in such a study, we deflect our attention from taking into account relatively minor factors that form or destroy the charm of the major cities in the Baltic region: the environmental situation, the state of the transport system, traffic jams, crime rates, etc. We are not aware of the sources that allow assessing the perception of these issues of major cities in the Baltic region by international tourists. In the opinion of the author, the content of these two reservations does not affect the effectiveness of the study significantly.

The attractiveness of the Baltic Region hotels

The attractiveness of a hotel in the eyes of its customers is determined by a number of factors: location, room and other facilities’ characteristics, price, service, quality of food offered by hotel restaurants, hospitali-

⁶ TripAdvisor.com allows to rank hotels, restaurants and sights of cities depending on the ratings given to them by consumers of their services and spectators.

ty, atmosphere, etc. Let us calculate the values of the attractiveness indicator of hotels in 10 megacities of the Baltic region. They are ranked by the indicator of the attractiveness of hotels in the perception of international tourists (Table 4).

Table 4

The indicator of the attractiveness of Baltic region hotels

City	The indicator of the attractiveness of hotels, points
Berlin	827
Warsaw	462
Copenhagen	442
Stockholm	392
Tallinn	368
Helsinki	357
Moscow	302
Saint Petersburg	229
Riga	220
Vilnius	191

Calculated by the author from the data for December 15th 2018.

The study showed that Berlin is the most attractive city of all countries of the Baltic region in the eyes of international tourists. Berlin hotels are the best in the Baltic region. Berlin leads with a colossal margin, way ahead of Warsaw and Copenhagen, which have risen to second and third positions. The second place in the hotel service is occupied by the Polish capital, which surpassed almost all the capitals of the Baltic region, which is came as a surprise. Tallinn rounds out the top five, ahead of half the megacities of the Baltic region. Moscow and St. Petersburg entered only the second half of the rating — the benefits of the hospitality industry provided by the hotels of the two Russian capitals are rated by international tourists lower than those offered by hotels in many other Baltic capitals.

The attractiveness of the Baltic Region restaurants

The attractiveness of a restaurant is determined by the quality of the food offered, price, quality of service, training and amiable disposition of staff, location, atmosphere, etc. We calculate the values of the indicator of the attractiveness of restaurants in 10 capitals of the Baltic region. Megacities are ranked by the indicator of the attractiveness of restaurants in the perception of international tourists (Table 5).

Table 5

The indicator of attractiveness of the Baltic Region restaurants

City	The indicator of attractiveness of restaurants, Points
Tallinn	360
Riga	247
Copenhagen	209
Berlin	187
Vilnius	184
Warsaw	153
Stockholm	147
Helsinki	131
Saint Petersburg	49
Moscow	28

Calculated by the author from the data for December 16th 2018.

The take-off of Tallinn's restaurants to the first place in the Baltic region is sensational. The superiority of Estonian capital over other Baltic metropolitan areas in the perception of international tourists, according to our research, is indisputable. Other major cities in the Baltic region lag far behind the capital of Estonia by the attractiveness of restaurants. We might put forward the assumption that the success of Tallinn is due to the combination of high quality food, service culture and relatively low prices of restaurants in the Estonian capital as a working hypothesis. The restaurants of St. Petersburg and Moscow gave way to their counterparts from all the Baltic cities, and their lag even from the restaurants of Helsinki, located on the 7th place, is very significant.

The hierarchy of the attractiveness of restaurants in megacities in the Baltic region, established in Table 5, is most likely due to the ratio of local (Estonian, Latvian, Danish, Russian, etc.) and the world's great (Italian, Japanese, American, etc.) cuisines, and other characteristics: food quality, service, prices, etc. In other words, in the restaurants of megacities of the Baltic region, international tourists are mostly attracted not by the national and culinary genesis of food, but by the level of operation of these institutions. The culinary tradition of the country to which the food belongs is not as important as how skillfully it was cooked, how tasty, cheap, cordially and hospitably it was served, in what atmosphere the act of its consumption was carried out. In a global society, of which the Baltic region is an integral part, both gastronomic tastes and service canons are being globalized.

The attractiveness of the Baltic Region sights

An exceptional role in attracting tourists is played by the sights of megacities. The distinguished German philosopher A. Schopenhauer noted the peculiarities of the sightseeing of cities by international tourists, namely the freshness of their gaze, quite accurately. Describing the peculiarities of contemplation of the pure subject of knowledge in his work “The World as Will and Representation”, he writes: “Further, since the novelty and the complete lack of knowledge of objects favors their unselfish, purely objective perception, this also explains that a foreigner or an ordinary tourist is impressed with the objects considered by them as picturesque or poetic, that are not capable of exerting a similar action on original residents; for example, an entirely unfamiliar city often produces a surprisingly pleasant impression on other people, and it fails to do so with its permanent residents, for this impression has its source in that the traveler, not having any relation to this city and its inhabitants, contemplates it quite objectively. That is part of the pleasure that travel is connected with” [28, p. 310]. The significance of the sights of a city is two-fold: on the one hand, acquaintance with them, their contemplation enriches the personality of a tourist, and they give impetus to the development of the tourism industry on the other. Contemplation of the sights is often not worth even a euro cent or a penny for tourists, but cause attendant expenses while attracting tourists — purchase of the services of travel companies, guides, hotels, restaurants, etc. The exceptions are museums and other similar objects, the visit to which is usually paid.

TripAdvisor. com identifies objects of all types that may be of interest to tourists: architectural structures (unique historical and modern buildings, temples, fortresses, monasteries, etc.), monuments, sculptures, museums, art galleries, exhibitions, theaters, urban complexes (historical centers of cities, squares, public gardens, streets, fountains, etc.), urban and natural complexes (parks, zoos, water parks, embankments, etc.), observation platforms, economic objects of cultural interest (ports, markets, etc.), transport systems (stations, subways, canals, etc.), stadiums, cemeteries, etc. In the TripAdvisor. com classification, all of them are covered by two subject headings: 1) architectural, sculptural and town-planning sights in the broadest sense of these words⁷ and 2) museums. Let us cal-

⁷ In the original version, the expression “Sights&Landmarks” is used, and in the Russian version — “Landmarks and cultural objects”. This refers to all of the above urban attractions, with the exception of museums, which are displayed in a separate section (“Museums”). In some cases, the same object appears twice in these two rubrics on TripAdvisor. com, but with the same set of tourist reviews. We are referring to the cases where a museum is located in a unique building, in which case this object is taken into account both as an architectural structure and

calculate the arithmetic average of the indicators of attractiveness of the 30 most highly rated tourist sites falling under each of these two headings and determine the resulting value as an indicator of the attractiveness of the city's sights. In addition, we identify the number of sights of the Baltic region megacities under consideration, which have received over 1000 reviews from international tourists with an "excellent" rating. We summarize the data obtained (Table 6). The cities are ranked according to the indicator of attractiveness. It is calculated by the author according to the data as of December 16, 2018.

Table 6

The indicator of attractiveness of Baltic region sights

City	The indicator of attractiveness of sights, points	The number of sights that received more than 1000 reviews "excellent"
Berlin	1173	13
Stockholm	560	7
Saint Petersburg	534	6
Copenhagen	437	9
Moscow	360	5
Warsaw	292	5
Tallinn	222	2
Helsinki	183	2
Riga	137	1
Vilnius	118	1

Calculated by the author from the data for December 16th 2018.

Among all the megacities of the Baltic region, international tourists are most interested in the sights, memorials and museums in Berlin. In this respect, the capital of Germany is far ahead of Stockholm. St. Petersburg and Moscow took the third and fifth positions respectively, and the backlog of St. Petersburg from Stockholm is insignificant. The Danish capital unexpectedly surpassed the capital of Russia in the eyes of international tourists. Riga and Vilnius round out the top ten megacities of the Baltic region in this rating, as in the case with the hotel attractiveness rating.

It is quite logical that Berlin it turned out to have the largest number of attractions and memorial places, which received over 1000 "excellent" reviews. Copenhagen is second, and Stockholm third. Thus, Copenhagen

as a set of exhibits. For example, St. Isaac's Cathedral, which is an architectural masterpiece that is admired from the outside, the streets of St. Petersburg, and a museum at the same time, that is, a collection of exhibits that are contemplated while inside the building of the cathedral. In such cases, each object was included in the analysis just once.



is inferior to Stockholm and St. Petersburg by the general attractiveness of the sights, and the Danish capital is ahead of the Swedish and northern capital of Russia in the number of sight-seeing masterpieces (in the perception of international tourists). Here, Moscow is in fifth place.

Let us list the sights of the megalopolises of the Baltic region, which attracted the greatest interest among international tourists. We mean attractions that have received over 3000 reviews rated “excellent”. This list includes (we list the cities according to the number of sights mentioned and the number of excellent reviews): Berlin — Holocaust Memorial (10 174 reviews), Brandenburg Gate (10 093), Reichstag (10 067), Topography of Terror Museum (6367), Berlin Wall Memorial (4918), Museum of Pergamon (4438), East Side Gallery (3188); St. Petersburg — the State Hermitage Museum (8395), the Church of the Savior on Blood (6597), the Grand Palace in Peterhof (3410); Moscow — Red Square (4348), Moscow Metro (4133), St. Basil's Cathedral (3366); Stockholm — the Vasa Museum (12,541), Old Town (5874); Copenhagen — the Nyhavn port and channel (7550); Tallinn — the Old Town (5058); Warsaw — the Old Town (3446).

Therefore, the top ten of the most interesting sights and memorial places in the perception of international tourists of the megacities in the Baltic region considered (the number of “excellent” reviews from highest to lowest) looks like this: Vasa Museum (Stockholm), Holocaust Memorial, Brandenburg Gate, Reichstag (all three in Berlin), the State Hermitage Museum (St. Petersburg), Nyhavn (Copenhagen), the Church of the Savior on Blood (St. Petersburg), the Topography of Terror Museum (Berlin), the Old Town (Stockholm), the Old Town (Tallinn).

Thus, a large number of the most popular tourist attractions among international tourists turned out to be located in Berlin, but the major attraction of the Baltic region is still Stockholm — it is the Vasa Museum, in which the Swedish Vasa sailing ship is exhibited, built at the beginning of the 17th century and sunken immediately after launching, which determined its unique preservation. The sights of Moscow and, especially, St. Petersburg occupy quite decent positions in the tourist area of the Baltic region. The most outstanding attraction of Russia for international tourists is the State Hermitage Museum. If we proceed from the pragmatic spirit and language of the tourism industry, it should be emphasized that the beauty of both Russian capitals have excellent competitiveness in the Baltic and global tourist markets.

Integral attractiveness of the megacities in the Baltic Region

Based on the indicators of the attractiveness of hotels, restaurants and sights of the capital cities of the Baltic region, we are able to calculate the integral attractiveness from the point of view of international tourists using the above formula (Table 7).

Table 7

The indicator of integral attractiveness of megacities in the Baltic region

City	The indicator of integral attractiveness, Points
Berlin	566
Copenhagen	343
Stockholm	318
Tallinn	309
Warsaw	274
Helsinki	205
Riga	195
Saint Petersburg	182
Vilnius	161
Moscow	145

As a result of the study, we found that the most attractive metropolis of the Baltic countries in the perception of international tourists is Berlin. It overcomes other capitals by a colossal margin. The capital of Germany is made absolute leader by its excellent hotels and outstanding attractions. The second and third places are occupied by Copenhagen and Stockholm, respectively. In this regard, these three metropolises should be qualified as the three tourism capitals in the Baltic region. It was noted above that Germany, Denmark and Sweden are leaders in international tourism in the Baltic region. Our study of the attractiveness of the capital cities in the region suggests that the contribution they make to the potential attractiveness of these cities is enormous. Tallinn is only slightly behind Copenhagen and Stockholm, and we can confidently characterize the capital city of Estonia as a tourist subcapital of the Baltic region. Tallinn is ahead of both Russian capitals, Warsaw and Helsinki in attractiveness for international tourists. The capital of Estonia owes this primarily to its highly ranked restaurants.

St. Petersburg is of more interest to international tourists than Moscow. Yet, unfortunately, both Moscow and St. Petersburg took modest positions in the rating of the integral attractiveness of the Baltic metropolitan areas, which is due to the low attractiveness of their restaurants and hotels in the eyes of international tourists. Sights of two Russian capitals have a high level of attractiveness in the tourist area of the Baltic region (and the world).

Conclusion

In this article, the author made an attempt to study the attractiveness of 10 megacities of 9 countries in the Baltic region in the eyes of international tourists using their original method. The results of the study are by no means definitive and indisputable.



It was found that, in the perception of international tourists, the best hotels in the Baltic region are located in Berlin, Warsaw and Copenhagen, the best restaurants in Tallinn, Riga and Copenhagen, the best sights in Berlin, Stockholm and St. Petersburg. The most prominent cities of the region in terms of their integral tourism appeal are Berlin, Copenhagen and Stockholm, and this triangle forms the heart of international tourism in the Baltic region. A very remarkable result of our research was that Tallinn turned out to be the tourist sub-center of the Baltic region, ahead of many other regional capitals. Based on the results obtained, we have reason to believe that the three tenets of a practical tourist's mind in the Baltic region should be the following: spend the night in Berlin, Warsaw or Copenhagen, walk around Berlin, Stockholm or St. Petersburg, eat and drink in Tallinn, Riga or Copenhagen.

The research has shown that, as of today, Moscow and St. Petersburg occupy relatively modest positions in the tourist area of the Baltic region in general. International tourists admire the sights of both Russian capitals, yet Moscow and St. Petersburg hotels and restaurants are not as highly valued. Therefore, in order to strengthen Russia's position on the Baltic and world tourist maps, to develop the Russian tourism industry, it is necessary to improve the standards of Moscow and St. Petersburg hotels and restaurants, in addition to further cultivation of the tourist practices related to landmarks. For this, it would be entirely appropriate to study the achievements and experience of Russia's neighbours in the Baltic region, who have achieved remarkable success in the development of the tourism industry.

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To cite this article:

Rakhmanov, A.B. 2019, Tourism and the structure of attractiveness of the Baltic region metropolises, *Balt. reg.*, Vol. 11, no. 2, p. 73—93. doi: 10.5922/2079-8555-2019-2-5.