

Article

Political and Historical Determinants of the Differentiation of Entrepreneurial Ecosystems of Agritourism in Poland and Kazakhstan

Jan A. Wendt ^{1,*} , Sergey V. Pashkov ², Elżbieta Mydlowska ³  and Agnieszka Bógdał-Brzezińska ⁴ 

¹ Institute of Socio-Economic Geography, Faculty of Social Sciences, Gdansk University, 80-309 Gdańsk, Poland

² Department of Geography and Ecology, University of North Kazakhstan, Petropavlovsk 150000, Kazakhstan; sergp2001@mail.ru

³ Institute of Spatial Management and Socio-Economic Geography, University of Szczecin, 70-383 Szczecin, Poland; elzbieta.mydlowska@usz.edu.pl

⁴ Faculty of Political Science and International Studies, University of Warsaw, 00-927 Warsaw, Poland; bogdal@uw.edu.pl

* Correspondence: jan.wendt@ug.edu.pl; Tel.: +48-58-523-6517

Abstract: (1) Background: In the context of differences among countries developing pre-entrepreneurship ecosystems in relation to agritourism, the need to define the specific challenges and facilitators in the group of post-communist countries is recognised. Given that, we aim to examine the differences between the countries belonging to the former USSR and the satellite countries of the former USSR. (2) Methods: For the realisation of the intended objective, we analysed studies of the literature on the subject, in terms of the theoretical treatment of the entrepreneurial eco-system in the field of agritourism, and current legal acts. Our own observations from stays in the regions in question were also used, along with statistical methods concerning the density of the transport network, comparative analysis of historical and political conditions, and SWOT analysis. (3) Results: Substantial differences were found between the components of the agritourism entrepreneurship ecosystem in Poland and Kazakhstan, primarily related to the level of transport infrastructure density (satisfactory in West Pomeranian Voivodeship, insufficient in North Kazakhstan), tradition of individual farming (well established in Poland, poorly present in Kazakhstan), support for agritourism development by central and local authorities (relatively high in Poland, incidental and with a short history in Kazakhstan), and finally, differences in the target group of agritourism service recipients (stable in Poland, undefined in Kazakhstan). (4) Conclusions: The research leads to the conclusion of the heterogeneity of the determinants of the development of the agritourism entrepreneurship ecosystem in countries collectively defined as post-communist. There are clearly different challenges and facilitations resulting not so much from the past political system as from the ethnic-historical considerations, the position of agriculture in the economy, and the degree and effectiveness of the involvement of administrative authorities in the development of agritourism. The study leads to a recommendation on the need for more efficient targeting of agritourism consumers abroad.

Keywords: comparative analysis; development; entrepreneurship ecosystem (EE); North Kazakhstan region; tourism; West Pomeranian region



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1. Introduction

Compared to other post-Soviet countries, tourism in Kazakhstan is just beginning to develop [1–3]. Agritourism, despite the relatively extensive literature on the subject, is still at the initial development stage [4–8]. The situation of agritourism development in Poland is entirely different. It is the subject of numerous studies [9–14] and is an important part of tourism and a sustainable economy at the local level [15–17]. Just as the level of tourism development in the studied regions differs, so does the degree of development of the entrepreneurship ecosystem (EE) [18–20]. For the study, the latter was defined as a group of

different actors in the entrepreneurial scene, who are existing or potential entrepreneurs or organisations that support entrepreneurship, which can be companies, venture capitalists, and banks [21]. EE also includes academic institutions, universities, specialised institutes, and public sector agencies. Interactions among all actors link the whole. All actors are formally and informally related to each other, creating a performance within the local entrepreneurial environment. EE is created as a combination of social, political, economic, and cultural elements in a region. The agritourism EE (AEE), as in any EE, includes the spheres of politics, finance, culture, governmental, and non-governmental support, markets, leadership, and human capital [22]. Agritourism seems to be a suitable example of economic activity, which allows us to diagnose the EE (its strengths/weaknesses), due to the direct involvement of committed and entrepreneurial primary actors of the economic scene, on whose activity the degree of agritourism development depends.

Agritourism is a type of tourism carried out in agricultural areas, using free spaces after adaptation, farmers' farm buildings, and their owners' products and services [23] (p. 17). Furthermore, agritourism is the active participation of immigrants and domestic and foreign tourists in various manifestations of the social and cultural life of rural areas [24] (p. 5). According to Drzewiecki [25] (p. 27) agritourism is a form of recreation in rural areas with agricultural character, based on accommodation and recreational activities related to a farm and its environment (nature, production, services). This definition emphasises the most important characteristics of agritourism [26], (pp. 13–14): the place of the implementation "village" (legal regulations for agritourism farms concretise this area to rural communes), a close relationship between the accommodation base and the farm, what recreation takes place on the farm, and its surrounding environment.

Agritourism can be analysed from two points of view: the participants, for whom it is a form of rest/recreation, and the organisers (hosts, tourism entrepreneurs, associations), for whom it is a touristic venture, providing services or organising a stay [27].

In the mainstream studies devoted to the analysis of the determinants of entrepreneurship in tourism [28,29], the attention of analysts focuses on factors considered as universal measures of diagnosing the impact of the socio-business environment of the pace, intensity, and effectiveness of agritourism development. As indicated in the literature on the subject in highly developed Western and developing countries, agritourism is an important branch of the national economy and the basis of GDP [30,31].

However, in the case of countries conventionally referred to as post-communist, the transformation processes favouring the development of agritourism have been based on different premises to date than in countries with a recognised position in the tourism sector [32]. In addition to the classical determinants, we are dealing here with political and historical factors [33–35] that impair the adaptability of regions with high potential for agritourism [36,37]. For the analysis of the EE, two regions were selected from countries that were in the Soviet sphere of influence, either directly, as a union republic, or belonged to satellites of the Soviet Union. We wanted to include countries that were culturally different, with different times of dependence on Soviet Russia, but comparable, at least to a large extent, in terms of geographical conditions for the development of agritourism, and stable from the point of view of political conditions. It should be noted that the group of countries described as post-communist is not homogeneous, and this differentiation results from their membership of the so-called Eastern Bloc, i.e., satellite countries of the USSR, or their status as union republics of the USSR [38]. The currently independent states of each of the above groups felt the consequences of the socio-economic constraints of the communist system with different intensities and at different times, and research on these differences has been conducted since the early period of their emancipation [39]. While Central and Eastern Europe countries remained dependent on the USSR between 1945 and 1989/90, most of the Soviet republics had been operating under the communist system since the early 1920s [40]. The adopted criteria led to the narrowing of the research region to Central Europe and Central Asia, and their consequence was the selection of Poland and Kazakhstan. Due to the enormous difference in territorial potential, the research was

narrowed down to the selected regions [41], in Poland to the West Pomeranian region and in Kazakhstan to the North Kazakhstan region. The choice of these countries means, from a demographic point of view, that in Central Europe (Poland), two generations of adults regarded the system of communist economy and social mentality, described in the literature as “homo sovieticus” [42] as natural.

In comparison, in Central Asia (Kazakhstan), this regularity applied to at least three generations. Consequently, it is more difficult for the inhabitants of the former Soviet republics to adapt to the patterns of a market economy than for the inhabitants of the former Eastern Bloc countries. An important issue is also the course of political, social, and economic transformation [43], which was relatively faster in Central Europe than the post-Soviet republics of Central Asia.

It was assumed that agritourism entrepreneurship’s ecosystem environment (setting/environment) is significantly influenced by the historical, cultural, political, and ethnic context. These factors have been analysed either singularly or sequentially in other studies [44], but their systemic impact on the phenomenon under examination has not been analysed. The thesis of homogeneous patterns of entrepreneurial environment formation for all countries and regions was questioned. Moreover, it was assumed that the diversification of determinants affecting the AEE depends less on the attractiveness of natural and anthropogenic values of a particular area than could be assumed.

The paper aims to show the differences between the determinants of EE in the field of agritourism in two post-communist countries—Poland and Kazakhstan. Regions with a similar location within the borders of these countries and relatively similar natural values and determinants of the geographical environment were selected. The paper verifies the hypothesis that the main factors differentiating the formation and current state of the AEEs in the compared regions are (1) different traditions of agricultural culture, (2) the length and intensity of the communisation of each country, and (3) the process of democratic transformation of the country and the related different political status of the rural population (in the historical and contemporary aspect). The study’s added value consists of indicating the significant role of often neglected historical, political, and cultural factors influencing the formation of EEs in the example regions with comparable natural conditions of economic development and close economic systems until 1989/90.

The analysis of changes and the state of agritourism development after 30 years of formally independent (in a legal and political sense) economic development can contribute to the assessment of the influence of the political system on the formation of EEs in the studied regions.

The examples of endemic conditions of agritourism development discussed in this paper, in the selected regions of Poland, a satellite state of the USSR until 1989, and Kazakhstan, a former Soviet republic, will show the differences in the influence of ethnic-historical and cultural-political factors on this field of local tourism. Secondly, the legislative and administrative environment of the industry will be considered to show the influence of communism/socialism on the awareness of the political elites of both countries towards new areas of the national and local economy and the process of formation of the EE.

2. Research Area

For comparative research, Kazakhstan and Poland were selected as the most representative and comparable countries of Central Europe and Central Asia. We chose Kazakhstan because it is characterised by the most stable internal policy, the highest level of perception of Russian/European institutions, and economic culture and reforms introduced in the direction of the free market economy [45]. Poland is the largest country in Central Europe and was chosen as it is the most comparable to the post-Soviet Central Asian state in terms of territory. Furthermore, just like Kazakhstan, Poland largely remained, since the time of Catherine II (18th century), in the orbit of influence or even under the rule of Russia. Historically speaking, in both countries, we are dealing with solid influences first from Russia and then from the Soviet Union. Both lie between strong neighbours, Kazakhstan

between Russia and China, Poland between Russia and Germany. The choice of case studies in Poland and Kazakhstan was also influenced by the similarity of demographic, social, and economic conditions. Bearing these features in mind, to compare with the Oblast (oblast, in the further part of the work defined as a region) of North Kazakhstan, the Zachodniopomorskie Voivodeship of Poland (West Pomerania region) was selected. The choice of these two regions is also conditioned by the similarity of geographic conditions that influence the leading direction of economic development. The geographically compared regions are characterised by many lakes, forest cover, lower than average population density, road network density, and agriculture as the dominant direction of development of the regional economy.

In 2020, there were 113 municipalities (including 47 rural and 55 urban-rural municipalities) and 21 counties (including three cities with county rights) in the West Pomeranian Region, with an area of 22,892 km², accounting for 7.3% of the total area of Poland. It is inhabited by 1696 thousand people, of whom 31.6% are rural residents. The population density is 74 inhabitants per 1 km² and is very low compared to the Polish population density of 122 persons/km², whereas in rural areas, the population density is 25 persons/km², with the Polish average being 52 persons/km². The rural population inhabits approximately three thousand non-urban settlements (village, colony, hamlet, settlement, forest settlement). This area shows similar/common characteristics of agritourism space with the northern part of Kazakhstan, which is determined by physiographic and anthropogenic features, including terrain, attractive landforms, natural flora and fauna, type of land use, spatial development, size of farms, and specialisation of production [10]. Thanks to the EU membership, the Schengen, and the German neighbourhood, the West Pomeranian region is an interesting destination for agritourism.

The region of North Kazakhstan with area of 97,993 km², i.e., 3.5% of the country's total area, is inhabited by some 541 thousand people, i.e., 5.5 persons/km², while the country's average is 7.0 persons/km². Although the density is lower than in the Western Pomeranian region, both areas have a relatively low degree of population density. The region is divided into 13 re-junctions (districts) and characterised by a high level of agricultural development (87% of the area), with an arable land share of 61%. In the past thirty years, the agricultural sector has produced between 40% and 50% of the gross regional product [46]. Sufficiently for the needs of agritourism, there is a developed transport network connecting the region with the nearby (In Kazakhstan's reality) capital city and neighbouring regions (Nur-Sultan, Kostanay, Akmola, Pavlodar). This is even more important as domestic tourism generates 70% of the sector's income. In addition, agreements between Kazakhstan and Russia facilitate cross-border tourism, especially in Kurgan, Tyumen, and Omsk.

To sum up, the choice of the regions for the comparative analysis, the West Pomeranian region and the North Kazakhstan region, results from similar conditions of the geographical environment conditions, population density, employment in agriculture, and possibilities of agritourism development.

3. Materials and Methods

In the research and development of the material, the following methods were used: desk research, which is a result of three groups of methods, namely content analysis, statistical data analysis, and historical-comparative analysis (literature), and the observation method. In this regard, at the outset, a literature study was carried out on the theoretical approach to the EE [18–22]; literature on agritourism [6,8–15], applicable legal acts, and data presenting geographical, economic, and social conditions and the degree of development of tourism and agritourism in the selected regions of Kazakhstan [3–5] and Poland [14,47] were also used. The paper also draws on the authors' own observations during one-month study stays in the North Kazakhstan region and the West Pomeranian region (2018, 2019) and the authors' in situ research.

At the first stage of the research, an analysis of the transport accessibility of the two regions was undertaken to assess whether the degree of development of the transport

network discriminates against either of them in relation to the other. According to the classical definition of tourism, transport accessibility is crucial in its case. The regions' public road network density was assessed as a primary network for car transport, which dominates in agritourism in the analysed regions [48,49]. For assessing the degree of development of the transport network, a basic indicator of the density of the public road network was selected, allowing the assessment of the density of the road network of each region in comparison to Poland or Kazakhstan. Statistical methods were used to develop data for the analysis of transport network density.

To compare the historical and political conditions that influenced the development of Kazakhstan and Poland after 1990, comparative analysis was used, the use of which is justified by previous studies, similar in their approach [47,50–52]. To show similarities and differences, to achieve the objectives of the research and to verify the hypothesis, a SWOT analysis was carried out [53–56], indicating the strengths and weaknesses of agritourism in the studied regions, as well as the opportunities and threats to its development from the point of view of the EE.

The research's limitation is the lack of statistical data on tourism in general, particularly on agritourism in Kazakhstan. The compilation of basic information such as the number of agritourism farms, their income, the number of tourists, and their profile would allow the numerical confirmation of the research results. However, after searching tourism agencies, governmental, and non-governmental organizations (NGO's) in Kazakhstan and using the literature on the subject, it can be concluded that these data are not collected or not officially published. This, in turn, influenced the choice of methods and the theoretical approach of the research.

4. Results

4.1. Tourist Transport Accessibility of the West Pomeranian and North Kazakhstan Regions

4.1.1. Transport Accessibility of Western Pomeranian Region

The West Pomeranian region is located in the northwest of the country. The region's main centre is an important regional road and rail transport hub. The seaport in nearby Świnoujście offers ferry connections to Ystad, Trelleborg, and Copenhagen. Szczecin-Goleniów Airport, located near the village of Glewice, offers domestic (Krakow, Rzeszow, Warsaw) and international connections to airports in Croatia, Denmark, Ireland, Norway, Ukraine, and the UK.

The region has a sufficiently well-developed road network for the needs of agritourism. This is confirmed by the value of the coefficient of variation of 43.2%, indicating an average diversity in terms of the density of the public road network in the counties of the region. Pyrzycki, Kolobrzski, Myśliborski, and Stargard counties have a well-developed road network [48] (Table 1).

Among the cities with county rights, the best-developed road networks are those of the capital of the region, Szczecin (80.2 km/100 km²), and the second-largest city of the region, the former voivodship centre, Koszalin. However, counties with a lower-than-average density of county road networks for the whole region ($A = 2.10$) prevail. Apart from a well-developed network of county roads to reach the places offering accommodation in agritourism farms, the region is crossed by voivodeship roads, national roads (no. 3, 6, 10, 11, 13, 20, 22, 31, 93), and motorways facilitating access to the county centres. In addition, Szczecin has good railway connections with Berlin and the non-German regions of Brandenburg and Mecklenburg. The airport in Goleniów and the ferry connection from Świnoujście facilitate access for tourists from abroad.

Table 1. Surface and density of public county road networks in the West Pomeranian Region in 2019 [57].

Region, County, and City	Area (km ²)	Roads (km/100 km ²)
Region Western Pomerania	22,892.2	30.4
County Pyrzycki	726.0	40.1
County Kołobrzesci	724.7	37.8
County Myśliborski	1182.4	37.6
County Stargardzki	1519.9	37.3
County Goleniowski	1615.2	35.6
County Gryficki	1017.4	32.7
County Łobeski	1065.1	32.7
County Białogardzki	845.5	31.7
County Sławieński	1043.2	31.5
County Świdwiński	1093.1	31.2
County Choszczeński	1327.6	30.3
County Gryfiński	1869.1	29.5
County Kamieński	1003.4	27.8
County Szczecinecki	1765.4	27.6
County Koszaliński	1653.5	26.6
County Policki	665.3	25.9
County Drawski	1764.2	21.0
County Wałecki	1415.0	16.4
City of Świnoujście	197.2	18.6
City of Koszalin	98.3	68.8
City of Szczecin	300.6	80.2

4.1.2. Transport Accessibility of the North Kazakhstan Region

We analysed the transport network in terms of the length of roads and railways in the region. The assessment of the transport network in terms of the length of roads and railways in the region allows us to conclude that the main role is played by road transport. The available railway lines restrict traffic to a few stations, among which a large railway hub—the city of Petropavlovsk—stands out. The total length of all national and regional roads is 3905 km. National roads account for 37.5% (1468 km) and regional roads 62.5% (2437 km) (Table 2).

Table 2. Area and density of the road network in the North Kazakhstan Region in 2020 [49].

Region, County, and City	Area (Thous. km ²)	Roads (km/100 km ²)
North Kazakhstan region	98.0	4.0
County G. Musrepov	11.1	5.0
County Taiynshinsky	11.4	5.4
County Akzhar	8.0	4.7
County Shal akyna	4.8	4.6
County Zhambyl	7.5	4.4
County Ayyrtau	9.6	4.4
County Esil	5.1	4.1
County Kyzylzhar	6.2	4.0
County Mamlyutsky	4.1	3.8
County Akkayyn	4.7	3.3
County Timiryazevsky	4.5	2.9
County M. Zhumabayeva	7.8	2.1
County Ualikhanov	12.9	1.8
City of Petropavl	0.22	-

Despite the generally low density of the road network (Table 2), especially of national roads in some regions, in the case of Kazakhstan, it can be stated that the road network of the North Kazakhstan region (3.99 km/100 km²) is well developed in comparison with the national average (4.0 km/100 km²). The regions have similar network density, as indicated

by the value of the coefficient of variation (30.28%). However, regions with a higher density than the calculated average for the studied area ($A = -0.29$) prevail. This may speak in favour of the existing transport accessibility. The current network allows relative (for the conditions of Kazakhstan) access to tourist attractions, the possibility of reaching some lakes, and transit to other country regions and the Russian Federation [58].

A developed transport network characterises the studied area. Three railway lines (Trans-Siberian, Central Siberian, and Trans-Kazakhstan) and highways of international and national importance run through its territory. At the regional level, North Kazakhstan is characterised by its proximity to the main area of mass tourism—the Akmola region (Schuchinsko-Borovsk resort).

4.2. Historical, Political, and Ethnic Background

4.2.1. Poland

Historical, political, and ethnic conditions cover several spheres of the EE, including politics, legal conditions, culture, human capital, and investment. Starting with a historical overview, it should be noted that the region of West Pomerania was incorporated into Poland in 1945 after almost a thousand years of affiliation to German-speaking countries. After the forced migration following the new borders of Europe, decided at the conferences in Yalta, Teheran, and Potsdam, the region was populated by people resettled from the former Polish eastern borderlands and a small number of Ukrainians, Polish citizens, and people displaced during the “Wisła” action. The current ethnic structure of the region’s population is almost homogeneous. Representatives of the largest national and ethnic minorities, Ukrainian (4482 people), German (3165 people), or Roma (1002 people), according to data from the last population census (2011), represent less than 0.5% of the region’s population.

In the People’s Republic of Poland, the rural population mostly worked on state or cooperative farms. However, the ethos of working on one’s own farm carried over from the interwar period was substantial. As in other real socialist countries, leisure was organised by the omnipotent workers’ party, which provided work, home, entertainment, and leisure. People rested at the seaside, in the mountains, or in cities. Its development in Poland was hampered by poor infrastructure in the countryside, discouraging conditions of stay on rural farms, and a total lack of assistance from the state [59,60].

After 1989, Poland changed its political system to a parliamentary democracy and the economic system was transformed towards a free market. The party initiating the transformation became the leading state institution. Hence, the sources of economic liberalism in Poland were successive government teams and a bicameral parliament. In Poland’s political tradition, peasant groups played a strong role already before World War I (Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe “Piast”; Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe-Lewica; Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe “Wyzwolenie”), and played an important political role in the inter-war period (1918–1939). During the period of communist rule, the sense of moral and financial autonomy of the rural population was so strong that Poland did not fully collectivise agriculture and individual farms were preserved. In the political sphere, however, the distinctiveness of the peasantry was symbolised by the existence of a grouping called the United Peasant Party (Zjednoczone Stronnictwo Ludowe), a front for the ruling communist party. When communism was overthrown in 1989, the peasant groups were reactivated, but the strongest of them, the Polish Peasant Party (Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe), competed from 1993 with a new peasant party called “Samobrona” (Self-defence). From 1989 to 2021, the peasant groups were part of government coalitions in 1993–1997, 2001–2003, 2006–2007, and 2007–2015. The strong position of peasant groupings perpetuated, among other things, a meagre disability contribution for people engaged in agricultural activity or a very favourably defined status of an individual farmer [61]. These circumstances allow us to presume equally favourable legal and political regulations of agritourism.

In Poland, conducting economic activity in the light of the Law on Freedom of Economic Activity [62] does not refer to agritourism, farmers renting out rooms, selling

homemade meals, and providing other services related to tourists' stay on the farm. Thus, while carrying out agritourism activities, a farmer who limits himself to the activities described above is not obliged to enter them in the register of economic activities at the relevant municipal office. Agritourism activities may not lead to the transformation of the essential functions of an agricultural holding or any parts of its equipment in a permanent manner. In addition, the Act on Tourism Services [63] distinguishes, in favour of farmers, the category of room rental and provision of space for pitching tents on an agricultural holding as not subject to registration as a hotel activity. Instead, a requirement is made to report the farm to the municipal register of accommodation facilities.

These regulatory provisions came into conflict with the foundations of the free market economy, which was the result of the expectations of rural communities towards the state in terms of protecting existing agricultural land distribution and preventing land trafficking. The fear of subjecting agricultural land to free trade had precise historical determinants resulting, in a general sense, from the mentality of the Polish rural population and, to a special extent, from the uncertainty felt by the Polish resettlers in the lands annexed to Poland in 1945 at the expense of Germany. In the 1990s, the political debate centred around fears of massive land acquisition by former residents of western and northern Poland or their heirs. These fears were rooted in the communist period when state propaganda publicised the activities of revisionist associations in West Germany (cf., Union of Expellees). The state land trade regulations [64] came into force under the rule of a populist coalition of conservative parties, whose electorate is now predominantly rural and small-town dwellers.

The development of agritourism is supported by government and local government programmes under numerous schemes, including the Rural Development Programme 2014–2020. An essential source of financial support is European Union programmes, for the development of transport infrastructure, regional development, rural development under the European Regional Development Funds, the European Social Fund, the Cohesion Fund, or the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development. Banks provide investment support by offering specialised forms of loans for the development of agritourism activities. The Polish Tourism Organisation and Regional and Local Tourist Organisations offer marketing support and technical advice on the organisation of various forms of agritourism farms.

4.2.2. Kazakhstan

Kazakhstan in a sense received its independence as a result of the treaty on the dissolution of the Soviet Union signed by Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine in December 1991. However, the statehood of Kazakhstan, in its various forms, dates back at least to the Middle Ages, when the lands of the present state were part of the Mongol Empire, the remnants of which are still present today in the division of the Kazakh population into three zhuz (ords/tribes). In the orbit of Russian influence, the Kazakh lands came under Peter I the Great and Catherine II, the rulers of Russia conducting intensive colonisation in Siberia and Central Asia. In the middle of the 18th century, Kazakhstan accepted the sovereignty of Russia. The Russians conquered and strengthened their presence in the steppes of Kazakhstan by building military fortresses in Pavlodar (1720), Petropavle (1752), Kokchetav (1824), and Almaty (1854). Kazakhstan was incorporated into the Russian Empire in 1873. After the Russian revolution, in 1920, the Kyrgyz Autonomous Soviet Republic was established. Five years later, it changed its name to Kazakhstan to become part of the USSR in 1936 as the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic until 1991. The country's long-standing president Nursultan Nazarbayev, in power from 1991 to 2019, while maintaining excellent relations with Russia, partly modernised the country by funding reforms with revenues from the sale of raw materials. He made a significant contribution to the denuclearisation of the region. In domestic politics, he promoted the idea of cooperation between all national and ethnic groups, which made it possible to mitigate social differences and avoid ethnic conflicts.

During Soviet times, agriculture in the country was dominated by large-scale state-owned (sovkhoz; russ.: советское хозяйство) and cooperative (kolkhoz; russ.: коллективное хозяйство) farms, and private ownership was limited to small home gardens. The extensive pastoralism of horses, camels, cattle, and sheep, traditional for Kazakhs, was replaced by monocultures of cereal and industrial crops. In the 1950s, a huge programme of steppe and uncultivated land was implemented, creating more than 400 sovkhozes, which brought a significant increase in cereal production, reinforcing the myth of the superiority of socialism over the capitalist type of production. However, the droughts of 1963–1964 and the subsequent decline in cereal production wiped out the initial successes of the reform. Its consequences include the consolidation of the belief in the success of large-scale state farms, in the importance of central control, and the presence of another group of migrants, Russians and Ukrainians, who came to Kazakhstan to implement the agrarian reform.

In terms of structure, agriculture is heterogeneous due to the combination of pastoral traditions in the central part of the country, horticultural traditions in the south, and European agriculture in the north. The present-day Republic of Kazakhstan is an ethnically heterogeneous state, which is significant in the context of the subject under study and is due to the historical past of this part of Asia. The presence of Russian settlements since the 18th century in the northern part of the country favoured the emergence of urban centres specialised in trans-Asian trade and base cities for military garrisons. The Slavic population (Russian, Ukrainian, Polish) brought the tradition of European agriculture to the north of Kazakhstan, hampered by the continental climate and low rainfall. The areas to the south were until the 1930s subjected to traditional pastoralism combined with nomadism typical of the Kazakh majority population [65]. The years 1928–1929 brought political decisions of Moscow on collectivisation of agriculture in the Kazakh Soviet Republic, which resulted in the depopulation of the country due to starvation deaths on a massive scale and exodus outside the USSR to China, Iran, Afghanistan, and Mongolia [66]. The decline in the population, accustomed to a nomadic lifestyle, facilitated forced settlement on state farms called kolkhozes, where, as part of the all-Soviet division of tasks between the individual union republics, the so-called technical agriculture (cotton, sugar beet, and tobacco farming) was to be developed. As a consequence of the depopulation of the 1930s and 1940s, Kazakhstan became a transit zone for the resettlement of the Slavic population [67], especially Poles and Ukrainians, who, regardless of their previous occupations, were employed in simple physical work at kolkhozes (urban intelligentsia) or factories (so-called kulaks, i.e., deported owners of individual farms) [68]. Treated as class enemies, they did not have the opportunity to develop individual farms, which could already in independent Kazakhstan form the nucleus of agritourism, creating obvious barriers and impediments to the development of these services.

The situation with foreign capital investment is equally tricky. Back in 2003, regulations on state land trade were adopted, and the Mahilis (parliament in Kazakhstan) in 2016 passed amendments allowing foreigners to buy land. However, after massive protests by the population, opposing the creation of opportunities for mainly Chinese agricultural companies to purchase land, a special decree suspended the planned land reform for 5 years. According to the latest announcements by the new president, Kasy-Ma-Zhomart Tokayev, further regulations will prohibit the sale of land to foreigners and companies in which Kazakh capital is a minority shareholder. This may, to a large extent, limit new investment, also in the field of tourism.

At the same time, the region has sufficient natural and socio-economic potential for the development of alternative types of rural economy, in various particular forms of tourism, including ecotourism and agritourism. Among the factors favouring its development, the landscape diversity of villages inhabited by the descendants of the country's multi-ethnic population should be emphasised. The nationality policy allows for free development and promotes numerous national and ethnic minorities, and the freedom of religious worship makes it possible to admire Orthodox church architecture, Catholic churches, or mosques (e.g., Petropavlosk) nearby. The city's diverse architecture, with a predominance of Russian

styles, is due to its demographic structure. Petropavlovsk, where the dominant groups are Russians (59%) and Kazakhs (30%), is also inhabited by Tatars (3%), Ukrainians (2%), Germans (2%), Poles (0.5%), and Belarusians, Azeris, Armenians, Tajiks, Uzbeks, and many other representatives of national and ethnic minorities [69] (there are about 130 minority groups in the whole country).

Currently, Kazakhstan is implementing a development-oriented economic policy, planning to enter the group of the 30 most developed economies in the world by 2050. However, despite the country's raw material wealth, the plans due to the decline in global energy commodity prices (2019–2020) remain mainly in the realm of wishful thinking. On the other hand, several measures have been taken to create a business-friendly eco-entrepreneurial system, including a somewhat liberal tax system, concessions in special economic zones, and support for small and medium-sized companies, which may positively impact the development of agritourism. However, the country is still dependent on the sale of energy (76%) and metallurgical raw materials (12%), which in 2018 accounted for 88% of total export earnings. Kazakhstan has risen again in the Ease of Doing Business 2020 ranking [70] and is now ranked 25th (Poland is at 40). However, the ranking presents the ease of undertaking business activities by large companies. It highlighted the differential conditions of the entrepreneurial eco-system for large companies investing in the development of the economy in comparison with small, often family-run agribusinesses. Kazakhstan has undergone a real transformation in the past twenty years, but with its openness to foreign investment in new technologies, the local service sector has been somewhat forgotten.

Despite the announcements and declarative policy of the authorities [71], real institutional support for the development of tourism, especially agritourism, is small. There are no special programmes promoting this sphere of activity of the population, no developed marketing in the field of agritourism, poor infrastructure development (water supply, sewerage, gas network), and low standards of living in Russian/Kazakh villages. Although every real tourist will appreciate the charms of real life in the countryside in the forests and steppes of Siberia, nowadays, agritourism farms are more and more often required to offer conditions of stay similar to the standards known in Western European countries. Financial support for investments in agritourism, as in the entire economy, is still primarily related to the existence of private relationships rather than the evaluation of the presented business plan.

4.3. Natural and Economic Conditions of Tourism Development in West Pomerania Region and North Kazakhstan Region

4.3.1. West Pomerania Region

Taking into account its physiographic features, West Pomerania is located within two physic-geographical regions: South Baltic Coast and South Baltic Lake District. The landscape of the region was shaped during the last glaciation (Vistulian). The Young Glacial origin of the terrain relief is evident in the great diversity of the land surface. The northern part of the region is the lowest (less than 50 m above sea level). The highest elevations the greater part of the area is occupied by moraine uplands, which descend towards the Baltic coast to an elevation of 5–10 m above sea level. Hills of terminal moraines diversify the surface relief of this area. In the southern part of the region, there are sandstone areas with isolated upland “islands”. In the region, there are also areas of alluvial plains and glacial till and stagnant plains. The climate is moderate and warm. Apart from latitude, the distance from the Baltic Sea and the lie of the land are important factors shaping the climate. The north-western part of the region, due to the presence of the Baltic Sea and the Szczecin Lagoon, shows characteristics of a maritime climate.

In contrast, towards the south-east, the climate becomes continental. Average annual air temperatures vary between 7.0 °C and 8.5 °C, with average annual precipitation ranging from 490 to 770 mm. The prevailing wind direction is westerly and south-westerly [72].

In 2019, the area covered by forms of nature protection in the West Pomerania region (excluding Natura 2000 sites) was 4983.1398 km², which accounted for 21.8% of the region's area, of which 0.6% fell on two national parks (Wolin National Park and Drawa National

Park) and 5.1% on seven landscape parks. Considering the structure of land use, the highest proportion of the region's area is occupied by agricultural land (49.2%), followed by forests (6.8%). The share of water areas in the West Pomeranian region is one of the highest in the country and amounts to 5.3%. The area in question is located in the Odra River basin and the water regions of the Lower Odra and Western Pomerania, Warta and Noteć Rivers. The total length of watercourses within the borders of the discussed unit amounts to 30.2 thousand km, whereas the area occupied by watercourses constitutes nearly 2.9% (659.91 km²) of the surface (the average of the lakes in the country is ca. 1%). There are also eight lakes with an area over 1000 ha (Dąbie, Miedwie, Jamno, Drawsko, Wielimie, Bukowo, Lubie, Wicko).

The number of inhabitants of the region amounted to 1,696,193 at the end of 2019 (according to the Central Statistical Office), which is 4.4% of the population of Poland. The urbanisation rate in West Pomerania was 68.4%.

The soils of the West Pomeranian region are characterised by a high typological diversity, different soil quality values, and the resulting soil-agricultural suitability. Most of the analysed area has podzolic, brown, and rusty soils. Peat soils from the swamp group occur in a considerable area, and fertile black earths predominate in stagnant and post-swamp areas. Arable land, accounting for 75.7%, predominates in the total arable area of 1,127,911 ha, with grassland accounting for 19.5%. In terms of general usable quality, the region is dominated by medium-quality soils (class IV), which cover 51.2% of all arable land. The second largest group are poor and very poor soils (classes V and VI), which cover 27.2% of the arable land. The smallest group is the good soils (classes II and III), representing 21.7% of the arable land area [72]. The sown area was 666,491 ha, dominated by cereals (71.6%, mainly wheat, rye, triticale, barley) and rape and colza (10.5%).

In 2016, 29,649 farms operated in the West Pomeranian region, of which 29,198 were individual farms (98.5%), i.e., farms operated by a natural person. In the West Pomeranian region, there are predominantly small and very small individual farms, i.e., (76.12%) whose agricultural area does not exceed 20 ha. From the point of view of an agritourism space value assessment, it is a very attractive situation. However, it should be added that large farms (over 100 ha) account for 4.72%, and this is the highest percentage in the country compared to other provinces.

Due to specialisation in agricultural production, the area of the presented region is diversified in terms of production. At the end of 2019 in the region, there were 2054 organic farms producing on an area of 101.6 thousand ha, of which 76.4% of farms were certified organic.

4.3.2. North Kazakhstan Region

Geographically, the North Kazakhstan Region occupies the south-western part of the West Siberian Plain reaching the Tur-Gay Plateau. The climate is moderate, dry, and continental. Large temperature amplitudes and low (up to 300–350 mm) rainfall do not facilitate the development of agriculture, but thanks to fertile soils, it is the most agriculturally productive region of the country. The region is characterised by a high degree of lakes; almost all are in the Ob River basin with region's largest river, the Ish. One-third of the North Kazakhstan region is located in the forest-steppe zone, there are birch groves and pine groves on the sands, and the black soils have been taken over for cultivation. Much of the region has undergone a process of adaptation to large-scale socialist agriculture since the mid-1950s.

The North Kazakhstan region, despite having the lowest budget of all regions of the country (2019–2021), paradoxically has the highest contribution to the development of agriculture derived from the Western tradition, with farms potentially predisposed to the development of agritourism [73]. The region's economy is oriented towards the development of intensive agriculture, dominated by cereal and oilseed crops combined with cattle breeding. The structure of agricultural land in North Kazakhstan is dominated by arable land (67%), pastures account for 28%, perennial plantations 2%, and fallow and

other land 3%. In terms of the volume of agricultural production per hectare of agricultural land and arable land, the region is the undisputed leader in the country. However, soil fertility has been depleted due to the perennial cultivation of soil-depleting crops (flax and rape). In 2020, for the first time in 11 years, there was a decline in crop production. Moreover, for the first time since 1998, despite unprecedented chemical and technological intensification in agriculture, there was a 20% decrease in oilseed crop yields [74]. The economic profile of the region is due to its most “rural” demographic structure. With the average urbanisation for Kazakhstan at the level of 59%, the urbanisation rate in the North Kazakhstan region is only 44%, and this despite the continuous migration of the rural population to cities (as a rule, to the capital centres of the region, Petropavlovsk, and of the country, Nur-Sultan) and to the Russian Federation, seeking permanent residence.

In 1991, just over a quarter of the labour force was formally employed in agriculture, and agricultural production accounted for less than 15% of GDP [65]. The collapse of the supply chain of agricultural production to a reduced market of buyers, coupled with inflation lasting until the middle of the first decade of the 21st century, brought about a doubling of agricultural inputs compared to production profits. This led to further pauperisation of the population groups associated with the large post-Soviet farms, and the settlement of payments for work in the form of land or agricultural machinery allotments became a peculiar phenomenon. The process of decollectivisation was therefore taking place in the shadow of a decrease in the purchasing power of Kazakh currency, the tenge.

At present, due to technological modernisation of agriculture and degradation of many branches of industry (closure of several industrial plants), high unemployment in rural areas, which has been recorded since the beginning of the new century, is deepening. In official statistics, it is concealed by the introduction of the category “self-employed”, which includes owners of private farms and therefore with means of subsistence.

Climatic conditions in the region are favourable for excursions to the countryside both in summer and in winter. From the north, the region is in the south-western part (in the steppe part) on the Western Siberian plain, and the remaining territory occupies the northern part of the Kazakh highlands. The most attractive geosites include the Ishim River valley and the Kazakh foothills, the Kokshetau hills. The rivers and numerous lakes of the region have a high degree of water purity, are rich in fish, and are ideal for various forms of water tourism and fishing. The area is largely covered with woods (numerous forests and birches), which provides opportunities for recreation and occasional (also commercial) collection of berries, mushrooms, and medicinal plants. The region in question is characterised by an extremely high level of landscape attractiveness and unique landscapes, the recreational potential of which already has a rich literature [49,75–78]. The combination of landscape qualities, geosites, and historical and cultural values create attractive conditions for the development of ecotourism, enjoying undoubted interest of tourists, as exemplified by the Shalkar-Imantau resort.

In the North Kazakhstan region, ecotourism is best developed, as shown by the “Abakshino” and “Green Park” resorts. However, the natural and recreational potential allow for a significant increase in the number of facilities, primarily due to the Shalkar-Imantau spa zone, located in the Nur-Sultan and Kokshetau de-activation zone. Potential tourism products include horseback riding, hiking along ecological trails, and staying on farms where ecological production techniques and technologies are used.

Considering the analysis of the existing natural and agro-recreational potential, the most promising directions of agritourism development in the region are cultural-cognitive (historical), ethnotourism, and ecotourism. It seems that the most attractive areas for agritourism development include Aiyrtau, Ualikhanov, and Ak-Iriy. The development of ethnotourism seems to be promising in recreational, post-recognition, and economic terms in the “national” villages. They are represented by compact settlements of non-Caucasian ethnic groups, which makes this type of agritourism, taking into account the peculiarities of the region’s settlement (the reform of P. Stolypin, deportations of Poles from Western Ukraine, settlement of indigenous peoples of the Caucasus, development of virgin

lands and fallow land), the most representative in terms of the number of tourist facilities. Individual villages, ethnically diverse, are found throughout the region, presenting Russian, Kazakh, Polish, German, Ukrainian, and Tatar (with the share of ethnic and national groups $\geq 25\%$) settlements with the possibility of developing tourism products such as preparation and tasting of national dishes, items of clothing, and folk crafts.

4.3.3. SWOT Analysis of Agritourism Development in West Pomerania and North Kazakhstan

Keeping in mind the study's aim and research thesis, we considered that the most useful for the comparative analysis of the development of agritourism and AEE in the studied regions was the SWOT analysis, which allows us to evaluate the phenomenon and the factors affecting it. It seems important to emphasise in the development of agritourism, and more broadly of agriculture, in both regions, the definite difference in the agricultural culture prevailing in them. In the pre-socialist period in Kazakhstan, we deal with agriculture with a dominant role of breeding mainly herds of horses; in the Soviet period, there was a predominance of large state farms with cereal production and horse breeding. Nowadays, next to large state farms, private agriculture is developing on relatively small farms in terms of area. In Poland, after the enfranchisement of the peasants in the 19th century, there was a domination of private ownership in agriculture; the socialist period with the agrarian reform resulted in the creation of numerous small (3–5 ha) farms and simultaneously created cooperative and state farms, and after the collapse of the latter, there was a slow process of land consolidation, with the continuation of small, low-productivity private farms. This leads to the conclusion of different types of agricultural production for the studied regions, and consequently, different agricultural culture affecting the process of transforming farms into agritourism sites and diversification of their functions and income.

The strengths of the West Pomeranian and North Kazakhstan regions are the possession (presence) of recreational and natural values favourable for the development of agritourism, as well as the convenient geographical location for potential consumers of the tourist product (Tables 3 and 4). In relation to the Western Pomeranian region, an additional attribute (strength) is the presence of advertising for agritourism facilities in the form of the Western Pomeranian Agricultural Advisory Centre (ZODR). In the case of North Kazakhstan, this element has not yet been introduced and is a weakness of the region. In both studied areas, there are deficiencies in technical infrastructure and financial problems (West Pomerania in the context of investing in agritourism; North Kazakhstan having low consumer solvency), which hinder the development of agritourism.

From the point of view of the considered "opportunities", in general, the development of domestic tourism will translate into the development of agritourism in the presented areas and it has chances of success at present due to the prevailing epidemic caused by the COVID-19 virus (SARS-CoV-2). Restrictions related to the overall global health situation have severely limited international tourism and, to a lesser extent, domestic tourism. Therefore, individual travel within the country by visitors who are its residents [79], (p. 7), including for agritourism, may gain in importance, which will translate into limiting or even preventing the depopulation of rural areas and diversification of the rural population's sources of income. The predispositions of the West Pomerania Voivodeship (region) and the expectations of potential customers favour the development of agritourism emphasising a healthy lifestyle by, among other things, running home cooking demonstrations based on products produced on the farm and making the offer more attractive to market needs in the form of bread baking or artistic workshops.

Table 3. SWOT analysis of agritourism development of the West Pomerania region.

Strengths		Weakness	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Border geographical location • Numerous traditional farms • Organic farms • Areas with high natural and recreational values • High forest cover • Architectural and cultural values • Spa values • Clean natural environment • Developed domestic and foreign agritourism • Easy access to portals advertising tourist facilities • Good communication accessibility for domestic and foreign tourists (Germany, Sweden, Denmark) • Deficiencies in technical infrastructure of some farms • Existing EE of agritourism 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deficiencies in the technical infrastructure of some farms • Short, two-month tourist season • Large number of farms without the possibility to invest • Lack of membership to agritourism associations • Weakness of EE 	
Opportunities		Threats	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing fashion for spending free time in agritourism farms • Fashion for a healthy lifestyle (home cooking), actions promoting Poland • New offers of agritourism farms (e.g., bread baking workshops, art workshops, selling own products) • Growing interest in ecological forms of recreation • Pandemic situation (COVID-19) with preferred form of rest in small, isolated groups • Development of EE 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competitiveness of other Polish regions with high tourist attractiveness • Attractiveness and competitive prices of holidays spent abroad • Low income of the urban population • Inherited unemployment, especially in rural areas after the former State Agricultural Farms, resulting in social passivity • Increased threat of pandemic (COVID-19) resulting in prohibition of travel outside the place of residence • Slowing down of development by the EE referring to the traditional functions of agriculture 	

In the case of the northern part of Kazakhstan, agritourism of historical, ethnic, and ecological character (eco-agritourism) has a chance to develop (Table 4). Areas for the development of historical agritourism are located in Aiyrtausky and Ualikhanovsky regions and are represented by the museum complex “Botai”, the site of the world’s first horse domestication (from the Eneolithic period, 5500 years ago), and the settlement Kyzylloba, ruins of ancient mausoleums of the Middle Ages (mid-14th century) with remains of workshops and ovens (for making bricks and architectural decorations).

The possibility of developing ethnic agritourism is promising in national villages, which makes this type of agritourism the most representative in terms of the number of tourist facilities. There are mono-ethnic villages in the whole region, but the most representative (Russian, Kazakh, Polish, German, Ukrainian, Tatar) are indicated as prognostic factors: the participation of the ethnic group and a cultural centre in the village. On the other hand, eco-agritourism, which has already developed to a limited extent in the discussed region (recreation centres “Green Park” and “Abakshino”), has a chance of great development. This is largely thanks to the increasing number of facilities, mainly the spa zone of Shal-kar-Imantau, focused on Nur-Sultan and Kokshetau recreation, as well as the suburban area around the regional centre.

Table 4. SWOT analysis of agritourism development for the North Kazakhstan region.

Strengths	Weakness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Border geographical location • Traditional small farms and large farms • Development of eco-agritourism • Diverse geographical and landscape conditions • Areas with high natural and recreational values • High forest cover • Architectural and cultural values • Former state farms (kolkhozes) with secondary vegetation cover • Diversified social space • Heterogeneous demographic structure—diversity of cultural values • Good communication accessibility for domestic tourists, from Nur-Sultan and from Russia • Formation of EE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deficiencies in local technical infrastructure • Short tourist season (climate and holiday period for young people) • Little interest of tourists in off-season holidays • Little interest in agritourism • Large number of farms without investment opportunities • Low level of EE
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of international and domestic tourism • High level of migration to cities which may generate new needs in the field of agritourism • Growth of commercialisation of production of rural homesteads • Creation of new forms of services in rural areas, of local heterogeneous material and spiritual culture of the population • Development of entrepreneurship ecosystem 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low level of perception of agritourism as a form of rest • Economic problems of the country (decline in prices of raw materials on world markets) resulting in the decline of purchasing power of potential tourists • Competition of other regions (mountains, Caspian Sea) and foreign tourism • Low level of diversification of the regional agritourism market • Low level of return on investment in • Increased threat of pandemic (COVID-19) resulting in prohibition of travel outside the place of residence • Regression of the emerging entrepreneurship system

4.4. Entrepreneurship Ecosystem in Agritourism Development in the Regions of West Pomerania and North Kazakhstan

4.4.1. West Pomerania Region

In Poland, the first forms of organised recreation in the countryside were introduced by the Tourism and Leisure Cooperative “Gromada” in 1937; however, spending leisure time in a rural homestead was quite common at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries in the area of Podhale [9]. After World War II, the possibility of organising recreation in individual farmers’ buildings and in particular villages emerged in 1957; that year, the mentioned cooperative was reactivated and the organisation of holiday villages in the form of the so-called “holidaymakers under a bushel” was started (understood as resting in the countryside). The first such organised holidays took place in 1959 in Krynica (southern Poland). In the late 1960s and early 1970s, accommodation in private buildings was rented for a fee, which brought economic benefits in the form of additional income for farmers and cheap recreation for urban residents. In 1975, provincial tourist companies were established in the newly created provinces, which were obligatory intermediaries in renting private accommodation in the countryside. The introduction of martial law in the early 1980s and the period after its repeal also did not favour the development of tourism in the countryside; the so-called “black market” for private accommodation operated then. It was not until the end of the 1980s that rural accommodation in Poland started to develop again [36]. This was possible thanks to political and economic changes at the turn of the 1980s and 1990s. The first stage was from 1991 to 1993, when state institutions at the national (National Advisory Centre for Agricultural and Rural Development) and provincial (voivodeship agricultural advisory centres—so-called WODR) levels initiated reviving and developing rural areas through agritourism. Cooperation with European Union countries resulted in training a cadre of specialists and consultants in agritourism. In 1991, the first agritourism

farms began to operate (mainly on the Baltic coast, in Pojezierze Mazurskie and Podhale). The first agritourism associations were also set up in this period. The next stage was between 1994 and 1999, when the number of agritourism farms and associations increased rapidly [11].

In 1996, the Polish Federation of Rural Tourism “Gospodarstwa Gościnne” (Guest Farms) was established, currently patronising 33 local and regional organisations that associate rural tourism facilities. It conducts comprehensive activities to promote and develop Polish rural tourism. Currently, 29 associations are affiliated to the Federation, including two from the West Pomerania Region: “Bałtyckie Stowarzyszenie Agroturystyczne” and “Stowarzyszenie Agroturystyczne Wiatrak” [80].

Since 2000, the third stage of agritourism development in Poland has been ongoing. In 2000, the Polish Tourism Organisation (PTO) started its activity, which, as a governmental institution, focused several organisational and marketing tasks concerning agritourism. The current organisational model of agritourism has a four-tier structure: agritourism farms, WODR, regional agritourism associations (PFTW, PTO), and relevant ministries and international organisations [11]. The main task of the Polish Federation of Rural Tourism is the categorisation of the Rural Accommodation Facilities consisting of a voluntary assessment of rural tourism facilities. The objective of this categorisation is to improve the quality of services provided by rural tourism facilities, thus their recommendation and promotion.

PFTW “GG” has developed general requirements for the facility and basic services provided therein. These criteria constitute the only quality control instrument. Owing to the categorisation, the accommodation owner gains the right to include their offer in the PFTW “GG” promotional materials and use the federation’s registered trademark for a period of 4 years. Depending on the facilities and services provided, there are three categories, the highest having three sunflowers and the lowest having one sunflower. Facilities in the Rural Accommodation Base categorisation system are classified into one of two categories: (1) leisure at a farm and (2) leisure in the countryside (Polish Federation of Rural Tourism “GG”—Categorisation).

It is worth mentioning that there are no separate regulations on the requirements for equipment to be met by agritourism accommodation. Therefore, the minimum requirements for facilities in which hotel services may be provided are pursuant to Article 35 (points 2 and 3) of the relevant Act [63]. Since 2004, categorisation has been obligatory for farms wishing to obtain EU investment aid.

In addition to categorisation, agritourism farms and rural tourism facilities shape their offer to a specific customer through specialisation. This is a good direction for the development of agritourism. PFTW “GG” has also met the needs of agritourism accommodation owners in this regard and prepared minimum requirements for the following specialisations: in the saddle, for families with children, for mushroom lovers, for anglers, eco-farmer’s accommodation, and disabled-friendly facilities.

These are not all the specialisations existing in agritourism farms. Depending on the specificity of the area, agricultural advisory centres at the provincial level propose other directions. Moreover, agritourism farms independently choose the type of specialisation realised. This allows the farm to compete in the market and provide a unique tourist product. In the area of the West Pomeranian region, 52 agritourism farms are currently operating within the framework of the PFTW “GG” [81]. However, only three of them were categorised as Wypoczynek na wsi: Siedlisko Orlik (three suns), Dworek Kurowski (two suns) and Zachód Słońca Agroturystyka (two suns). The others are not categorised.

The website of the West Pomeranian Agricultural Advisory Centre in Barzkowice [82] also contains data on the operation of agritourism facilities by counties in the West Pomerania Region. According to the posted information reported by owners of agritourism farms/rural tourism facilities, a total of 55 owners declare their business (10 March 2021).

Another source of information on tourism is the Central Statistical Office, which collects data on accommodation facilities and tourist traffic carried out by agritourism

farms with the use of specially prepared forms (KT-1 and KT-2) under the Programme of Statistical Research of Public Statistics [83]. A fixed monthly survey using the KT-1 form covers establishments that have 10 or more accommodation places, while establishments that do not meet this criterion are surveyed once a year using the KT-2 form.

According to the terminology used by the Central Statistical Office, an agritourist accommodation is considered to be a tourist accommodation facility that consists of rooms and dwellings and adapted farm buildings (after adaptation) in rural households (agricultural, livestock, horticultural, or fishing) which are the property of farmers and are rented to tourists for accommodation against payment (terms used in official statistics, CSO). Unfortunately, those involved in accommodation activities, including agritourism, often evade their reporting obligations, which affects the quality and reliability of the data. Therefore, the figures on the size of the accommodation base from the sources discussed do not match.

Based on the Central Statistical Office data, in 2019, there were 37 agritourism establishments in the West Pomerania region, of which 54.05% were year-round facilities. They had 703 beds (55.48% of which were year-round). This form of accommodation was used by 9293 fellow countrymen (96.39% of the total number of persons using agritourism facilities in the studied region), who had 27,131 overnight stays (93.7% of total overnight stays). Regarding foreign tourism, 348 foreigners visited the region (3.61% of total tourism), and 2021 overnight stays were provided (6.93% of total overnight stays).

4.4.2. North Kazakhstan Region

As in Poland, the period of real socialism in Kazakhstan was not favourable to the development of the private tourist sector. Under the socialist system, just like most activities, the organisation of tourist trips was subject to rationing and functioned in accordance with the goals set by the party. However, unlike in Poland, due to the size of the country, agricultural traditions, low population density, and universal access to natural values (forests, lakes), the most attractive forms and directions of recreation, apart from the famous mountains and the sea, included trips and organised stays in cities. Most of the rural population, working on state farms, did not see any attraction in staying in the countryside and enjoying its values, which they dealt with every day. Moreover, rural areas were not perceived as a recreational asset. This largely explains the weak development of agritourism in the country, especially in the agricultural region of North Kazakhstan. The situation has not changed after independence, and a large part of the population still sees nothing attractive in resting in rural areas, often resulting from experiences staying with family [4]. Instead of agritourism, in this Russian-dominated region, until 1990, resting at a “dača”, a rural second home, located in an attractive location (forests, lakes), became widespread. This model of recreation, in turn, is not close to the indigenous Kazakh population, with sentiment and strong family relations (the importance of belonging to the family of “zhus”) associated with permanent visits to the family remaining in the countryside, treating the stay with relatives possibly as family tourism, not agritourism.

In 2019, the share of the tourism sector in GDP, largely due to the implementation of the Tourism Industry Development Concept [84], was 5.6%. According to the Concept, this indicator is expected to increase to 8% by 2025 [85]. With the achievement of the targets, but considering the changes in tourism caused by the COVID-19 pandemic [85], Kazakhstan will overtake Russia with a 5% share, but still significantly lags behind the leaders of the tourism market of the post-Soviet space—the Transcaucasian republics of Georgia (27.1%), Azerbaijan (14.6%), and Armenia (14.0%) [86].

While the tourism industry of the post-Soviet countries, especially Belarus, already has significant experience in creating agritourism products, agritourism is a very underdeveloped sector of tourism services in Kazakhstan, if not completely new and unknown, especially in the north of the country [87]. This despite the rich agricultural, natural, and ethnographic potential. Agritourism in Kazakhstan is only at the stage of formation as an independent branch of tourism business. No well-known agritourism products have

been created so far, there are no recognisable regional agritourism brands [88], the official website promoting agritourism dating back to 2013 counts only 30 items in the whole country [89], and the contribution of agritourism to the creation of a tourism product is negligible. To date, apart from single works at the level of the region or selected aspects of tourism [90–94], there has been no full-scale research in this field. There are only initiative projects in some regions [4,5,8,15,28,33], which are not able to set directions for the development of this promising type of tourism.

Unfortunately, in Kazakhstan, unlike Russia, for a long time agritourism was not taken seriously by authorities and researchers as a potential factor of local growth [95] but is presented only as an alternative way to reduce social tensions and poverty in the countryside [96]. It was not until 2019 that agritourism was prioritised in the Tourism Development Act [97]. Attention is drawn to the correlation between the growth of interest in tourism in Kazakhstan from foreigners. The higher attractiveness of rural tourism for foreigners is rightly emphasised and the long-term contribution of agritourism to building a positive image of the country abroad within the framework of nation-branding is marked [71,98]. Attention is paid to elements of promotion and advertising addressed to foreign tourists, i.e., promotion of cultural events bringing closer the native culture and tradition of ancient nomads and the promotion of native culinary products. It should be emphasised that the Kazakh society has highly valued the traditional values of old Kazakh culture, such as the family, the traditional role of women, or the respect due to the elderly. The benefits of activating rural areas affected by unemployment are also underlined, where agritourism can generate jobs, broaden the sources of income of rural families, and foster the development of other types of non-agricultural activity. Attention is drawn to the necessity of including in the agritourism sector a young generation who understands the specificity of liberal economy, knows foreign languages, and is open to foreign countries.

4.4.3. SWOT Analysis of the Entrepreneurship Ecosystem in West Pomerania and North Kazakhstan

Analysing the data on agritourism development in the studied regions, the natural and anthropogenic values, transport accessibility for domestic and foreign tourism, and opportunities for development can be considered similarly interesting and sufficient for the development of agritourism (Tables 3 and 4). However, from the point of view of the pre-entrepreneurship ecosystem, the differences in each category of SWOT analysis are clearly visible (Tables 5 and 6).

Traditional entrepreneurship of Polish farmers and developed legal, financial, and marketing systems should be considered as strengths of the EE in the West Pomeranian region, the latter especially in the field of activities of agricultural centres and tourist organisations (Table 5). Opportunities are mainly related to the financial support of EU funds and the activity of local governments supporting small local business. Among the weaknesses, the biggest problem is the lack of technical infrastructure. The main threats include the increasing uncertainty of economic activity of small businesses.

Kazakhstan can be said to be lacking in terms of the degree of development and operation of EE in agritourism, as shown by the study tours and literature analysis. At best, the EE can be described as post-beginning or developing (Table 4). Many factors account for this state: weakness of individual entrepreneurship tradition, a large group of forcibly resettled population to the steppes of Kazakhstan, and weakness of state and non-government institutions in supporting individual entrepreneurial activity (Table 6).

Table 5. SWOT analysis of the AEE of the West Pomerania region.

Strengths		Weakness	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Traditionally strong entrepreneurship of the rural population Developed agritourism activities Existing efficient system of financing new business ventures Legal and organisational support for start-ups Training staff in organisation, maintenance, and advertising of agritourism facilities (organisations ZODR; POT, ROT; LOT) Strong financial support (government, local government, EU funds) Income tax exemption up to 5 rooms 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deficiencies in local technical infrastructure Large number of low-income farms without financing and investment opportunities Lack of transparent regulations for agritourism farms (e.g., regarding food hygiene rules, unambiguous categorisation of accommodation) 	
Opportunities		Threats	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National and regional campaigns promoting tourism in Poland Ample possibilities of marketing in e-media Interest in agritourism of local authorities Next perspective of EU funds Increasing interest in ecological forms of recreation Government declaration (July 2021) to allow agricultural production and sales up to PLN 100,000 (approx. EUR 22,000) without registration and taxes 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stabilisation of income from EU funds at a low level, but satisfactory for part of the population, without the need for economic activation Lack of obligation to standardise the Rural Accommodation Base (WBN) Possible increase in borrowing costs for new investments Passivity of local administration Low level of business activity innovation in a part of farms Increasing uncertainty of business activity (financial, tax, legal, organisational aspects) 	

Table 6. SWOT analysis of the AEE of the North Kazakhstan region.

Strengths		Weakness	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> High agricultural potential and diversified agriculture High level of hidden unemployment—potential for economic activity (agritourism) Functioning financial system (banking system) Diversified social space Heterogeneous demographic structure Growing awareness of the need for economic activation of the population 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low level of entrepreneurship of the rural population (formerly working in state farms) Underdeveloped agritourism Deficiencies in technical infrastructure at local level Lack of clear regulations for agritourism farms (e.g., categorisation of accommodation, minimum requirements for agritourism activities) Lack of legal framework for development of agritourism Lack of strong associations promoting agritourism and uniting agritourism farms Lack of institutional and financial support for the existing and for the newly created agritourism farms Lack of support through special rural entrepreneurship development programmes Lack of developed marketing of leisure activities in agritourism 	
Opportunities		Threats	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognition of tourism by the government as a preferred business activity Recognition of agritourism development as a priority activity in terms of tourism Increased interest of local authorities in activating rural population Declarative government support for development of tourism and agritourism reducing unemployment in rural areas 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of changes in the perception of agritourism as a form of recreation Weakness of human capital—migration of the most entrepreneurial part of the population to cities Legal restrictions on land trade facilitate enlargement of farms even by a small area Lack of implementation of legal acts supporting entrepreneurship in rural areas Government support and recognition of tourism and agritourism as priority directions of economy development in rural areas will remain at a declarative level 	

The strengths of the EE in the region are the hetero-genic structure of the population and the growing awareness of undertaking and developing economic activity not only for individual needs, but also with a market orientation. The analysis of the opportunities for the development of the EE is more than reasonable if the national government and local governments take seriously, rather than declaratively, their announcements regarding the development of tourism, economic activation of the population in rural areas, and prioritising agritourism (Table 6). However, numerous weaknesses in existing entrepreneurship together with potential threats may result in the indicated opportunities not being exploited, as has been the case so far with other government announcements.

The changes in the EE in the West Pomeranian region related to the development of agritourism, especially in terms of multifaceted use of aid funds from the EU, can only be assessed after the introduction of the new government programme, Polish Deal (May 2021), as well as after the resolution of the issue of spending EU funds, which may be threatened by different interpretations of the state of democracy in Poland by the Polish government and the EU Court of Justice. Similarly, the implementation of the rules announced by the government of Kazakhstan to support the development of economic activity of the rural population (with agritourism as a priority direction) requires additional research. However, this will be possible only after the cessation of restrictions on tourist activity related to the pandemic situation associated with COVID-19 (similarly in Poland).

5. Discussion

The study allows us to state that with similarities in natural conditions between the studied regions and comparable transport accessibility for potential tourism (Tables 1 and 2), the differences in the degree of development of agritourism (Tables 3 and 4) and its EE are significant (Tables 5 and 6). Although in the research of Kuralbayev et al. [99] points to the substantial role in the weakness of the transport network at the country level in Kazakhstan, the analysis carried out in terms of the density of the transport network in the studied region allows us to assess the road network, compared to the whole country, as sufficient for the development of agritourism. If we consider all the literature on the subject, it can be concluded that the scientific study of the phenomenon of tourism in Kazakhstan [3] is far ahead of its actual development, both at the national and regional levels. Different is the case of Poland. Wojciechowska and Uaisova (2014) in their work [4] even indicate the initiating role of scientific research in the development of agritourism in Kazakhstan. Numerous works in Poland [9–14] are of a different nature, being the result of research on already developed tourism activities.

The research conducted based on study stays in both regions and the analysis of available data and literature on the subject allow us to state apparent differences in the development of agritourism and its EE in the West Pomeranian and North Kazakhstan regions. The results obtained confirm the results of previous studies [4–6,34,87]. The conducted analysis confirms the general weak development of tourism in Kazakhstan and its low importance for the state and population income [1,2,15], despite the high tourism potential of the country and the region [75,76,78]. It seems that relatively early research on the development of agritourism in Kazakhstan [4,15,90], as in Poland [9–11,23–26], should promote the development of this economic activity in rural areas, but the number of agritourism farms on the Internet, the state of information, and the whole ecosystem of agritourism entrepreneurship does not confirm this.

According to the analysis, the weak development of agritourism is influenced by the different preferences of the urban population and the rural population, who are poorly interested in agritourism [90]. In turn, Shaken et al. (2020) in their research results emphasise the high expectations of potential customers in terms of the quality of accommodation, sanitary conditions, as well as different expectations of agritourists in terms of the offer of farms [8]. It seems that some potential guests of agritourism farms confuse agritourism with ecotourism, which is confirmed by the results of the study, but also expect a product typical for spa tourism. With reference to ecotourism, it should be noted that the study

indicates its high potential in the North Kazakhstan region, which, disregarding the terminological and substantive issues and considering ecotourism as one of the forms of agritourism, supports the claim of its importance in the studied region.

The research undertaken indicated the historical and political factors affecting the formation of entrepreneurial attitudes in the development of agritourism, hitherto underestimated in the literature (In Kazakhstan and in Poland). As the research results indicate, in recent years, there has been an increased recognition of the role of “soft” factors, such as social capital and entrepreneurial culture [100], dependent on historical and political factors that shape them. This dependence has been confirmed in the results of the research. Inhabitants of North Kazakhstan, for historical and political reasons, functioned in the socialist system for at least one generation longer than residents of the West Pomeranian region, which influenced the formation of entrepreneurial patterns and learned/acquired lack of individual activity, influencing the lower propensity to make independent economic decisions. Moreover, in the case of the West Pomeranian region, we are dealing with an almost homogeneous society, while North Kazakhstan is strongly differentiated in terms of ethnicity, nationality, language, and religion. This is a definite value in terms of cultural values, but it may make it difficult to build a common entrepreneurial culture, if only because of the different lifestyles and axiological differences in aesthetic, cultural, and cognitive terms.

The results obtained in this study are also confirmed by studies from other regions. Del Monte and Pennacchio (2020), investigating factors influencing creativity and innovation, analysing historical factors, indicate a positive relationship between past creativity and current intensity in creating new firms [101]. Importantly, their research indicates that the existing regional entrepreneurial culture and social environment conducive to the creation of new firms may explain the relationship in the creation of new business ventures, and in the regions we studied, the creation of agritourism farms.

The differences in the influence of historical and political factors in the process of formation of the EE in the studied regions is even more pronounced when we compare their natural and economic conditions. With the environmental similarities shown in the study (lakes, forest cover), the differentiated ownership structure of farms, their specialisation, openness to modernisation processes, and legislative support provided by the state [61–63], local governments, and agricultural and tourism institutions [79–82] speak clearly in favour of the West Pomeranian region. This support for the development of agritourism in the case of North Kazakhstan is lacking (Tables 3 and 4). The weakness of economic assistance, legal systems, or financing in the case of Kazakhstan, at the national and regional level, is confirmed by previous studies of agritourism development [2,6]. The works devoted to the development of tourism and agritourism in Kazakhstan and selected regions [5,77] of the country do not indicate the existence of these barriers. However, as a rule, their authors dealt with the indication of European models of tourism and agritourism development, pointing to selected positive examples and proposing their implementation [4,6,98]. Most often, a critical analysis of the current state was omitted, analysing the indicators of the geographical environment [34,76].

Another aspect examined was the comparative analysis of the pre-entrepreneurial ecosystems in the two regions. The results of the SWOT analysis show clear differences between the regions. The West Pomeranian region is characterised by a relatively well-developed EE, which in the case of North Kazakhstan, can at best be considered a start-up. However, when we compare subsequent categories from the SWOT analysis for the Western Pomeranian region and North Kazakhstan, it seems reasonable to conclude that it is lacking. In Poland and the West Pomeranian region, the EE includes the main components of this concept. The functioning system, as confirmed by the results of our research, includes the spheres of politics, finance, culture, governmental and non-governmental support, markets, leadership, and human capital, as shown by the conducted research and Polish [12,24,26,41] and English [14,47,54,59] literature on the subject.

The obtained results partly contradict Kudyshev and Tomaszuk's (2020) study on entrepreneurship among young Poles and Kazakhstan residents, who are characterised by similar motivations and level of entrepreneurship [52]. However, while the entrepreneurship of young people who use online media daily is comparable, the mundane problems of setting up a business and transforming an existing farm into an agritourism farm face many more barriers in Kazakhstan than in Poland. Although in Poland or other similarly economically and socially developed countries [102,103], agritourism also faces many obstacles to development, they are not as fundamental as in Kazakhstan.

The postulate of agritourism development is a constant theme in Kazakh literature [5,6,8,91,104]. However, as the research results show, any real changes do not follow numerous publications and postulates. Changes resulting in the development of the EE can be brought by the implementation by the government of the Law on Tourism Development for 2019–2025 and its importance for the economy of Kazakhstan [97]. Zholmanova and Alimbekov in their work (2021) attribute its great significance for the development of agritourism, entrepreneurship, and reduction in unemployment in rural areas [71]; however, in their work, they do not go beyond the well-known opinions on tourism development in Western European countries or basic definitions of agritourism, even including agritourism in the fight against the bad image of Kazakhstan (e.g., the film "Borat"). It seems largely an over-interpretation to attribute causal power to the decisions of the cited law. Furthermore, the authors themselves confirm the real weaknesses of the EE identified in the conducted research, such as the lack of a legal framework for the development of agritourism, the lack of a concept for its development at the national and regional level, the lack of organisational and marketing support, simple information about the resources of agritourism farms, and finally, the lack of a model for agritourism development. In addition, the specificity of entrepreneurship development and differences in agricultural culture characteristic of each country, including Kazakhstan and Poland, were not considered. This was shown in the undertaken research by pointing to the role and importance of political and historical factors in shaping the EE.

6. Conclusions

In conclusion, the research undertaken has helped us to realise the study's main objective by showing significant differences in the determinants of the EE in the regions under study. The analysis of the collected material confirmed the thesis on the influence of historical, political, and cultural factors on the formation of the EE. The results of the study indicate that different traditions of agricultural culture combined with the border geographical location increase the potential of the citizens of neighbouring countries using agritourism services—in the case of Poland, the inhabitants of Germany and Scandinavian countries; in the case of Kazakhstan, the inhabitants of Russia.

We hypothesised easier and more natural activation towards agritourism entrepreneurship of the rural population in Poland, where even resettlements did not suppress the historically established ability to self-organise individual farms' economic potential. Moreover, we hypothesised that the forced ethnic mestizaje in the region of northern Kazakhstan, in conjunction with the multi-level impact of the central planning system in the economy, perpetuated the attitude of waiting for initiatives from the authorities (central, regional), and blocked and delayed the willingness to take action to stimulate entrepreneurship in the agritourism sector at the lowest level (individual farms). Our hypotheses indicate the importance of the length and intensity of the period of communisation of the population of each country on the formation of individual entrepreneurial attitudes.

In turn, the process of democratic transformation in both countries influenced the different political status of the rural population (in the historical and contemporary aspect), and consequently, the possibilities of undertaking economic activity. Openness to innovative changes in farms and entrepreneurship formation of the inhabitants of the West Pomeranian region was confirmed, where the rural population, similarly to urban inhabitants, perceive long-term economic benefits of Poland's membership in the EU. This

reinforces constructive patterns of the long-term combining of income sources with agri-tourism entrepreneurship, unlike in the case of the North Kazakhstan region. Noteworthy is the connection of practical use of the principles of subsidiarity with the development of NGOs in the agritourism industry, the promotion of the region with the participation of new technologies [105–107], and the effective use of the niche in the availability of mass tourism services caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In conclusion, it can be noted that the phenomenon of asymmetry in the potential for development of agritourism and EE in post-communist countries, studied using the examples of Poland and Kazakhstan, is due to cultural, ethnic, political, and historical factors to a much greater extent than discussed in the literature. Further research could be conducted on the issues of mentality and the sense of ethno-cultural identity of the inhabitants of the regions mentioned above, and it seems very interesting, due to the conservatism of the Kazakh and Polish societies, to look at the process of formation of the EE in tourism from the perspective of gender.

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