

# REPORT

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## THE 27<sup>TH</sup> FIELD SEMINAR: *RESEARCH WORKSHOPS ON THE GEOGRAPHY OF TOURISM*, TUSZYN, 22-24<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER 2011

The 27th Field Seminar *Research Workshops on the Geography of Tourism* took place from September 22-24, 2011 in Tuszyn, on the rural-urban fringe of Łódź. According to tradition, it was organized by the Geography of Tourism Department, University of Łódź with the original title: 'Tourism - a fashion for success?' The organizers' intention was to look for an answer to the question of whether contemporary tourism is, or may become, one of the major solutions to economic, social and spatial development problems. The other aim of the conference was to present the latest results of tourism research conducted at different academic institutions prior to publication, as well as doctoral and post-doctoral theses completed in 2011. The conference venue was the Grzegorzewski Hotel in Tuszyn, located in the western part of Tuszyn Las. It is worth mentioning that the hotel was chosen as the venue of this year's seminar because it is an interesting example of a new investment in overnight accommodation on the rural-urban fringe of Łódź. It was also a good example of the continuance of the recreation tradition in this area.

The *Research Workshops* began with Professor Bogdan Włodarczyk, the head of the Geography of Tourism Department, University of Łódź, greeting the participants. He briefly mentioned the main aims of the conference and presented the reasons for choosing Tuszyn Las and the hotel as the venue. The second speaker was Witold Małecki, the Mayor of the Town and District of Tuszyn, who welcomed the participants and briefly presented the socio-economic situation and the development prospects for the town and *gmina* of Tuszyn. Next, Zdzisław Stasiak from the local *Wolbórka* Society spoke about the tourism assets in the *gmina*, an interesting introduction to the study tour planned for the next day. The next presentation was on the Grzegorzewski Hotel itself. Piotr

Grzegorzewski, the owner spoke mainly about the reasons for investing in a new hotel and about the construction procedure. In the next presentation *Traditional holiday areas in the rural-urban fringe of Łódź*, Prof. Włodarczyk talked about the *gmina* of Tuszyn, which is a well-known, traditional area of summer recreation used by the inhabitants of Łódź. The speaker presented the development of the rural-urban fringe holiday areas of Łódź and their typical tourism infrastructure. In the last presentation, Jolanta Śledzińska from PTTK (Polish Tourist and Sightseeing Society) in Warsaw discussed the effects of the nationwide campaign organized by PTTK, entitled 'Wędruj z nami' (Come hiking with us). The first session was led by Prof. Włodarczyk.

The second day included three workshop sessions ending with a study tour. The first session was opened by Dr Jacek Potocki (*Wrocław University of Economics*) who presented interesting results of research into the 'holiday spaces' of Poles, established on the basis of attendance data during the last presidential elections. The second presentation, by Czesław Adamiak (*Mikołaj Kopernik University in Toruń*), was on the conditions (both housing and economic) which control ownership of second homes in Poland. Next, Dr Alina Zajadacz (*Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań*) spoke about the problems of social integration in terms of the management of leisure time by the deaf in contrast to the hearing. The session was led by Prof. Andrzej Kowalczyk (*University of Warsaw*).

The next session on the second day started from a presentation by Prof. Agnieszka Niezgoda (*Poznań University of Economics*) on the role of ecological awareness in shaping the tourism product. The speaker paid particular attention to pro-ecological tourism behaviour. In the next presentation, Prof. Kowalczyk discussed the role of city waterfronts in the

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development of tourism focusing on the tourism infrastructure and attractiveness of on-the-water areas in Hong Kong. In the third workshop, Dr Witold Półtorak (University of Rzeszów) gave a presentation, which he had prepared jointly with Dr Grzegorz Bielec, about regional cooking and its role in forming the tourism product in the Carpathian region. The session was led by Dr Potocki.

The last session on the second day included three presentations. First, Dr Marta Derek, (*University of Warsaw*), spoke about leisure space connected with former industrial facilities in the Warsaw district of Praga. By describing how such spaces were used for recreational purposes, the author attempted to assess their attractiveness as areas where people can spend leisure time. Then, Maciej Adamiak (*University of Łódź*) presented the problems of the climbing equipment market in Łódź. He discussed the results of a survey conducted among the users of such equipment and the places where it is sold. At the end of this session, Dr Katarzyna Podhorecka (*University of Warsaw*) talked about the development of a new tourist attraction – ‘Tropical Island’ near Berlin. The author wondered to what extent the fashion for tropical holidays influences tourists’ interest in the new attraction. The session was led by Dr Zajadacz.

After the lunch break, the participants took part in a study tour which lasted for some hours to see the tourism assets of the town and the district of Tuszyn. The tour was guided by Zdzisław Stasiak from the *Wolbórka* Society and by a representative of the State Forests. It included the most attractive natural tourism sites (e.g. Molenda Nature Reserve, Żeromińskie Ponds, Młynek reservoir, Wolbórka valley), cultural heritage sites (e.g. the manor house in Kruszowa), and summer holiday facilities (e.g. the summer holiday villages of Zofiówka, Rydzynki and Tuszyn Las).

The second day of the conference finished with an elegant supper. It was an opportunity to publicly declare willingness to develop cooperation between the representatives of higher education, local government and private business in the field of tourism.

The last day of the conference included one workshop session featuring four presentations. The first presenter was Dr Półtorak, who this time spoke about the possibilities of using tragic historical events in tourism. The author used the example of the village of Markowa in the *Podkarpacki Województwo*, where the Ulm family tragically died during the Second World War. The co-author of the presentation was Dr Bielec, (also *University of Rzeszów*). Dr Sławoj Tanaś (*University of Łódź*) in a way continued the theme; his presentation was entitled *Relations between the death space and the tourism space*. The author focused on the perception of death as a cultural and, consequently, tourism phenomenon. Next, Sławomir Kula (*University of Wincenty Pol in Lublin*) spoke about using the tourism assets of Lubelszczyzna (Lublin region) by tourism organizers. The author presented the preliminary results of the survey conducted among those representing the tourism business. The last presentation, by Bartosz Bończak (*University of Łódź*), was entitled *The use of the modified SERVQUAL method in the evaluation of a new tourist product: the example of the Battle of Łódź*, referred to methodological issues. The author presented suggestions for changes to the popular method of evaluating the quality of tourism services (e.g. hotel services), which could then be used for assessing the attractiveness of other tourism products.

The 27<sup>th</sup> Field Seminar *Research Workshops on the Geography of Tourism* hosted 27 participants from eight research institutions in Poland, represented by six Polish Universities (University of Łódź, University of Warsaw, Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Maria Curie-Skłodowska in Lublin, Mikołaj Kopernik University in Toruń and the University of Rzeszów), two universities of economics (Poznań and Jelenia Góra), and one private university (*University of Wincenty Pol* in Lublin). The seminar was divided into five sessions comprising 17 presentations. It was supervised by Professor Bogdan Włodarczyk, and the secretary was Dr Robert Wiluś.