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**A ‘city’ as a space of tourism, through the example of
Szeged**

Phd Dissertation

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I. Reasons for the choice of topic and the background literature

A 'city' is one of the earliest tourist target areas. This is the type of settlement which offers tourists attraction sights in the most concentrated way. Thus, the urban space results in a complex tourist function utilization which is highly worthy of geographical research.

Studying urban tourism from various aspects is flourishing these days. Tourists choose sightseeing as the most important motivating factor of travelling, which programmes belong within the larger category of cultural tourism. It is not accidental that "city break" has become a term of travel organizing used for the two- or three-day-long sightseeing trips. The popularity of such trips is rocketing world-wide, especially in certain European cities.

This tendency has been further strengthened by the fact that cultural roundtrips are one of the most popular forms of travelling among the aging societies of the developing countries; moreover, such trips are often more dominant than the other main category, i.e. leisure tourism, which, of course, can be supplemented by sightseeing tours in all age-groups.

Urban tourism, as opposed to other tourist products, is less season-dependent, which also explains the monitoring of its processes. In fact, it rather has a balancing effect on guest nights in time, which is an important factor in the conscious tourism development plans of settlements and regions.

Another important reason for researching urban tourism is that its economic and social development is greatly determined by tourism in general, and as such, is a highly significant factor of settlement development.

Thus, modern tourism cannot exist without urban tourism which represents a traditional form of tourism; however, at present, its terminology system and research approaches are still rather vague.

Scientific research of urban tourism does not have a long history. Although guest turnover studies were carried out as early as the 1930s; nevertheless, these were merely passive analyses assessing statistical databases which disregarded the complicated time and spatial processes arising from the complexity of urban tourism. A marked appearance and emergence of urban tourism from tourism geographical studies began in the 1990s (PEARCE, D.G. 2001).

The relevant research studies in general cluster around some major areas and research topics. The first group contains those marketing research studies which focus on exploring the characteristic features of guest turnover in a given settlement; however, we must list here urban tourism and tourism marketing researches as well. These are mostly classical supply and demand based descriptive works supplemented by occasional competition analyses. The second group, which often utilizes the guest type analyses carried out by different marketing researches, assembles developmental researches regarding tourism policy, whereas, geographical studies represent a separate direction.

These latter ones concentrate on the special spatial aspects of urban tourism by exploring tourists' spatial routes and functional spatial use of local actors (service providers) employed in tourism in a given settlement through the analysis of spatial distribution of tourist sights and facilities, i.e. through the spatial distribution of the

tourist supra-structure in a given settlement. Therefore, these studies discuss the topic partly from the aspect of social geography. However, we must also consider as geographical studies those which examine the complicated – economic, social and environmental – settlement development effects.

The *international literature* of urban tourism thoroughly discusses all of the above-mentioned research fields. There are some outstanding conclusive studies which discuss the theoretical background of urban tourism (ASHWORTH, G.J. 1992; VAN DEN BURG, L. 1995; PAGE, S. 1996; PEARCE, D. 2001). The study which, exceeding the traditional social demographic analysis of travel customs, attempts to form an urban tourist typology (THOMPSON, K. 2003) is a highly remarkable work of market analysis; similarly, another research on urban marketing trying to answer the questions of “selling a city” (SHAW, G.-COLES, T. 2005) through British case studies proves a very important examination.

Compared to the above, the share of the *Hungarian publications* in the field is highly striking, especially from the aspect of geography, and social geography in particular. The work of these research studies extend over generations of experts (E. LETTRICH 1970; I. BERÉNYI 1979, 1981, 1986; E.K. MARTONNÉ 1988, 2002; G. MICHALKÓ 1996, 1997, 1999). These studies evolve around the urban space’s utilization possibilities mostly through the analysis of the tourist supra-structure and tourists’ spatial routes. Works of tourism policy are usually developmental researches made by the order of settlement municipalities, which often combine classical marketing research methods; however, although sporadically, some independent new scientific works of the latter category also appear (M. BAKUCZ 2000).

Researches, aiming mainly at tourism policy, have also been carried out on the object of our study, the city of Szeged; however, they approached the field from the aspects of economics and marketing, and disregarded the issues of spatial use, and with that, geographical aspects. We therefore believed it was reasonable to study urban tourism from a new aspect that would not only tinge the picture about tourism in Szeged to some extent, but would also realize a conclusive work of the field.

II. The objectives and applied methods

The structure of the research required the grouping of the objectives into two main clusters. *The chapters discussing the theoretical questions of urban tourism aimed mainly at the following objectives:*

- To review the relevant background of and provide a definition for ‘urban tourism’ upon the international and Hungarian professional literature.
- To rectify the meaning of ‘urban tourism’ upon the findings of the above task, and attempt to provide a new definition.
- To improve the typifying methodology of settlement space used by tourism.

In the later chapters of the doctoral dissertation, which study the city of Szeged as a tourist space, some new objectives emerge. In these chapters we aimed at forming a comprehensive picture on tourism in Szeged while keeping in mind the characteristic features and space-forming function of the industry in an urban space. A further aim was to correct the shortcomings of tourism geography research in Szeged; to use and, at the same time, summarize the results of recent years’ empirical studies.

The final aim of our study was to analyse the tourist spatial use and explore the characteristic features of a city as large as Szeged from a geographical viewpoint. In other words, we intended to achieve results that would be adaptable to the representatives of local tourism, could be integrated into tourism development and which would later make a conscious expansion of space exploited by tourism possible in Szeged.

The chapters on the researches of Szeged’s complex tourism geography sought the following objectives:

- To overview the functional spatial use of Szeged’s tourism based partly on secondary resources and on several years’ primary empirical research findings.
- To introduce a newly established research methodology for realizing a tourist mental mapping of the population employed in tourism.
- To explore and prove the residential population’s determining role in tourist spatial use through the example of the city of Szeged.
- To prove our hypothesis that Szeged’s tourist turnover is concentrated mainly on the city-centre, i.e. the area bounded by the small boulevard named ‘Tisza Lajos körút’ because the residential population prefers the tourist attractions of this area when communicating to tourists both formally and informally.

- To explore the diversity of Szeged's tourist functional space – apart from the secondary resources – through the mental mapping of the locals working in the industry and the civilian population, with special emphasis on the inner and outer peripheries of the city from the viewpoint of tourism.
- To form practically utilizable research findings in urban tourism marketing and tourism planning.

Research methods applied

We used different basic research methods in case of the theoretical chapters and in the applied research studying Szeged. In the chapters focusing on the clustering of the urban space according to tourist functions and the theoretical background connected to this process, we applied the *secondary methods*.

Upon the international and Hungarian literature consulted, we were able to apply the classical research method of *resource analysis*. In these chapters we also applied *content analysis*: the method through which we learnt how the local actors employed professionally in tourism use the city of Szeged as a scene of tourism (e.g. studying the routes of sightseeing programmes offered in brochures and tourist guides, and their comparison).

Spatial use for tourist functions and its development are reflected by the spatial situation of service provider companies and enterprises in the city. To find them, we used the *statistical data* of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office, the Hungarian Trade Licensing Office and Szeged's internet databases. The results are shown on thematic maps, however, mapping was also the tool used during and after the examinations of the sightseeing programmes' spatial routes offered in local tourist brochures.

However, the rather limited secondary resources (tourism statistics, tourism history) available for social geographic examinations of functional spatial use are not enough to satisfy the needs of the analysis, therefore it was necessary to build *primary databases through empirical research methods*. To meet this objective, we carried out examinations that made a more in-depth study of the city's state of tourism and the preparation of a comprehensive situation analysis possible.

The primary database we used was a *questionnaire* carried out in 2003, the findings of which we also used when making Szeged's tourism plan, and which study was officially approved as a development document in 2004 by the Municipality of Szeged. This research served the primary purpose of exploring the city's situation regarding tourism, the opinions, wishes and expectations of both sides of supply and demand. In conducting it, 398 domestic and foreign tourists, all local enterprises interested in tourism (120 units) and 223 residents filled in the questionnaire. As part of this research process, we carried out *deep interviews* with local experts, and their opinions also proved decisive from the aspect of the city's tourism analysis.

In the methodology we also applied a representative *mental mapping* method: we involved 208 civilian residents of the city and examined how they see Szeged as a utilizable space for tourism. Mental mapping did not evolve freely but upon the proper indication of sights named in the questionnaires on blank maps, therefore, it served a two-fold purpose: on the one hand, we could draw conclusions on what the important sights are from how often the locals mentioned them as the most important ones, and on the other, we could see how well they know the space of tourism: i.e. how successfully or accurately they managed to indicate the place of a given sight on the blank map.

III. Conclusion of the results

The main results of our research aims at the theoretical issues of urban tourism on the one hand, and the main topic of the dissertation, i.e. the tourism geographical approach of Szeged's tourism, in particular, a functional analysis of the tourist space in the city on the other.

1. Our study defines urban tourism as all activities connected to tourism in a city involving all tourist activities, all services and institutions created to meet tourist needs and all the activities attached to these processes. By examining general spatial processes of urban tourism, we made an attempt at typifying urban space as applied in the context from several points of view. The definition makes a unified interpretation of urban tourism possible, thus, provides the theoretical framework for the examination of the sub-areas.

2. *Expanding the theoretical background of urban tourism* In these examinations we identified the concept of space which is already used or exploited by tourism and that which is potentially exploitable, furthermore, we pointed out what opportunities there are for classifying this spatial area. We found that the space already in use is well-identified by tourist supra-structure institutions (e.g. accommodations and restaurants). They are primarily concentrated in a space where they see their investment's rate of return at its highest. In other words, they are centred around places of attraction where tourists are most frequent. Apart from the spatial spreading of tourist services, the space used can be accurately and precisely identified upon the usual tourist spatial routes. This can also be measured quantitatively by the number of visits of popular sight attractions and the results of questionnaires answered by tourists. However, we face a greater problem when trying to identify *spaces* which are *exploitable*, as in this case, we can rely merely on development plans, trends and forecasts.

The analysis of the *space used* can be conducted from various aspects, which also means that we can further divide the functional space of tourism into partial spaces (or subspaces).

One approach of examination and method of classification of functional spatial use of tourism is by the examination of the *motivations for travelling*. There are significant differences regarding spatial use from this aspect among the tourists visiting Szeged. As on the one hand, a leisure tourist attempts to visit all sights upon what he read about in brochures, heard from friends and upon how much time he can spend in the city – and so, he uses a significant portion of the urban space; whereas on the other hand, a professional tourist, due to his strict professional itinerary, cannot – and most often does not even intend to – visit the frequented tourist sights in a city. The members of the latter group therefore use a much smaller urban space for tourist functions than those who go on holiday to a given urban area.

However, tourists of *different age groups* have a different urban spatial use as well. Young people tend to walk or use public means of transport to explore a city, and visit “alternative” sights beyond the preferred mass tourist sights, however, the

seniors, who usually go on a package tour, prefer the more comfortable ways of sightseeing, i.e. mainly on a private bus. Also they prefer to reach their destination supplemented with little walk only as there are certain health problems that can make long-term walking hard.

Functional spatial use may be influenced significantly by the *size and type of a city*. It may show a great difference in a metropolis, in a middle city or in a small town. The basic difference lies in the variance of spatial use and the size of the area covered: in large cities and metropolises tourist attractions are rather diffused, not concentrated exclusively on the historic city core or the newly-established city areas. This naturally also means that the facilities of supply (accommodation and restaurant services) are also balanced over the entire area of large cities.

		FUNCTIONAL SPACES	
		USED	EXPLOITABLE
ACCORDING TO:	USERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • INHABITANT • TOURIST • INHABITANTS WORK FOR TOURISM 	
	MOTIVATIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LESURE TOURIST • PROFESSIONAL TOURIST 	
	AGE GROUP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • YOUTH • IN „ACTIVE” AGES • SENIOR 	
	SIZE OF CITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • METROPOLIS • BIG • MIDDLE • SMALL 	
	TYPE OF CITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HISTORICAL • PORT • RESORT • RELIGIOUS CENTRE • SPA (etc.) 	

Figure1 Structure of functional spaces of tourism in the city (Ed: T. Juray)

In our research we found that the difference in demand can behave as space differentiating factors as well: tourists, who tend to spend less, can find lower-rate accommodation and restaurants at the peripheries of the city, which services set up their businesses and can keep up their lower price position due to their relatively unfavourable geographical situation. From the aspect of the industry's success, these services are just as important as the prestigious ones since these units are

situated near airports, harbours, railway stations and by the main roads (by the motorways, their ring roads and access roads) of major cities, but within the “body” of these settlements. Upon the latter group we must draw the attention to the fact that a city’s transit travel is a major space-forming factor.

3. *The thesis presents Szeged’s complex tourism geography.* A summarizing work of this kind has not been made so far; plans that served tourism development partially or wholly were drawn earlier, however, they did not concentrate on the spatiality and urban development impact on Szeged’s tourism. The thematic maps made upon the secondary data available on certain elements of the tourist supra-structure showed some interrelations. From these maps we can see that the centres of tourist services are mainly concentrated on the area bounded by the small boulevard named ‘Tisza Lajos körút’. There are no sub-centres or branches by the access roads or in the outer city districts. The city’s tax income from tourism shows the economic weight of tourism and its potential settlement development role. Upon the examinations we found the followings:

- Spatial use of tourism in Szeged is still concentrated on the city-centre, i.e. in a narrow sense of the word, the area bounded by the small boulevard, and in a broader sense, the area bounded by the main boulevard both from the aspect of the situation of tourist services (travel agencies, accomodation and restaurant services) (*Figure 2*), and the sights and programmes listed as the city’s attractions in brochures.
- Tourist facilities are so much concentrated on the area bounded by the small boulevard that we can see the growth of a simple central tourist district (GETZ, D. 1993).
- A characteristic feature of tourists’ spatial use in Szeged is that the spatial structure of service providers and that of the preferred sights outside the CTD (central touristic district) have not realized tourist sub-centres within the city. The realization of such sub-centres has been impeded partly by the size of the city, partly by the present spatial distribution of the supra-structure and partly by the fact that the well-known and popular sights are almost exclusively concentrated on the city-centre.
- The travel agencies’ situation forms a special axis along the pedestrian precinct of the city-centre as part of the expansion of the tertiary and quarterly industries in the city-centre. This transition has a great impact on the urban formation group characteristic of the area. The owners of the agencies running their businesses in high rise buildings, with entrances on the street level are usually leaseholders, rarely owners of the premises. That is how tourism becomes a city’s morphological marker as well.
- In case of Szeged, tourism is a significant image forming factor by the selection of emblematic sights characterizing the city on the one hand, and a well-ordered city centre on the other, where most tourist service providers are concentrated.

- In the tourist programmes of information brochures we can see the endeavour local tourism policy makes to join the inner and outer peripheries of the city to tourism attractions (*Figure 3*).

4. *Functional research of urban space of tourism in Szeged upon the residents' mental mapping.* Mental mapping of the residents presented the most valuable results on spatial use of tourism in Szeged. However, the analyses on the spatial approach of tourism published by the city's tourism development and marketing experts proved also important sources of our study. Upon the above, the most important results we achieved are the following.

- Upon the spatial location of the most important tourist attractions in the city indicated by the mental maps of residents not employed in tourism we can say that, almost invariably, the residents' knowledge of the city regarding tourism is highly limited to the city-centre. The civilian population's view on tourist space can be detected from several aspects: what attractions they mention, how often they do it, how many of these attractions' they indicate on the maps and how accurately they do so (*Figure 4*).
- The areas outside the main boulevard can be regarded as (inner) peripheries of the city from the aspect of tourist spatial use. This is also true for the historical part of Szeged situated on the left bank of River Tisza named 'Újszeged' and its tourist attractions. In these areas there are few punctiform, but highly attractive sights which can be seen also on the mental maps of residents not employed in tourism (e.g. the Botanical Garden and the Zoo). (*Figure 5*)
- On the inner peripheries the indication of sights proves much less accurate as we get further from the city-centre; however, the accurateness is also determined by the knowledge of the local home area.
- The outer peripheries of the tourist area are the districts of the city that were joined to Szeged in the 1970s. These areas strongly preserve their identities, their "psychic independence", which can be detected in the fact that they have not integrated entirely into the body of the city – merely in an administrative sense. As a consequence of the above, this has both a negative and a positive effect on tourists' spatial use. A positive effect is that some traditional activities have lived on in these districts (earlier independent settlements); for example, rose growing (in Szőreg) or matting (in Tápé), which by today have become such particularities that may attract tourists if programmes are organized suitably. However, this has a negative effect in itself. These suburbs with their special attractive features have not gained a value of interest among the residents of Szeged. Due to the lack of real integration, even to the locals they are little known.

If we compare the preferred attractions of the city visited by tourists to the ones mentioned and most properly indicated on maps by locals, and compare them to the sights published in the official information brochures, we can find an obvious correlation. We can state that the city's residents, both civilians and

those employed professionally in tourism, collectively form and shape tourists' spatial use in Szeged through informal and formal channels as well, which fundamentally determines functional spatial use of tourism.



Figure 2 Travel agencies in Szeged, 2007 (Source: own research)



Figure 3 The permanent itinerary of sightseeing tour by electric train (Design: T. Juray)

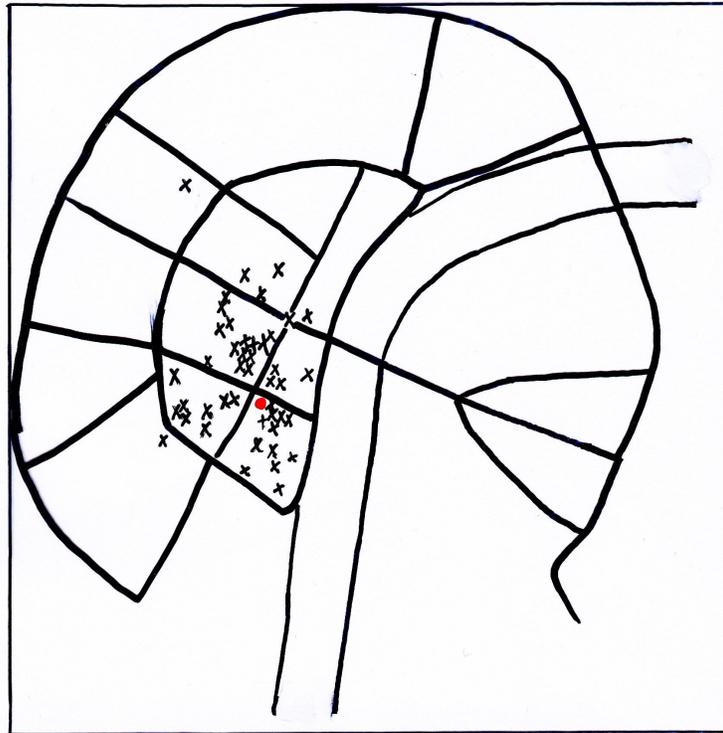


Figure 4 The incorrect marks of Dóm on mental map (Source: own research)
 Legends: red point=real place of the attraction; black X=incorrect mark
 (Source: own research, 2007)

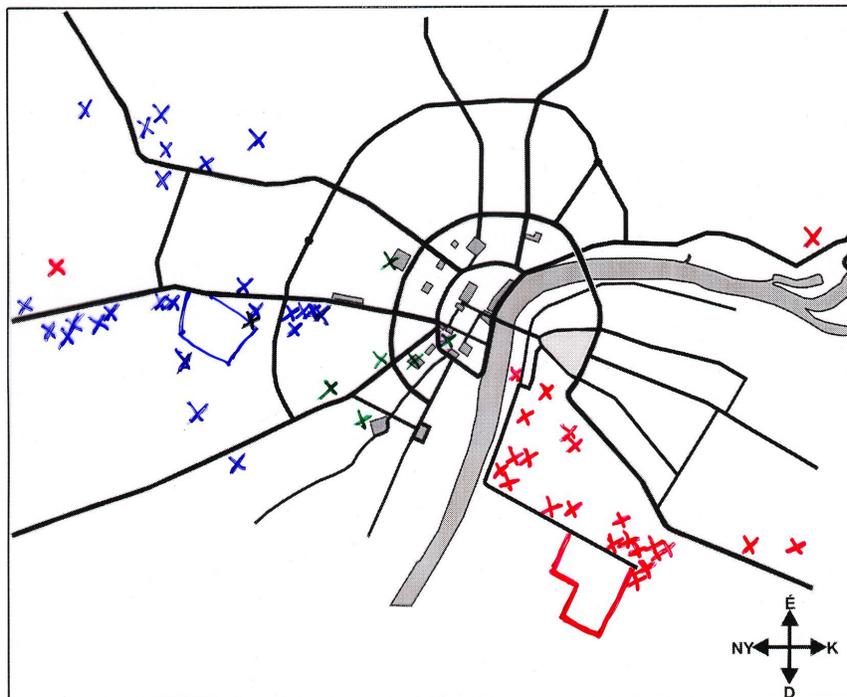


Figure 5 Peripheral attractions on the mental maps
 Legends: red x=Botanic Garden; blue x=ZOO; green x= Alsóvárosi church incorrect mark
 (Source: own research, 2007)

III. Opportunities for utilizing the results and continuing the research

The results of the research can primarily be utilized in two areas: the theoretical results can be used in urban tourism studies of tourism geography (based on the results of the primary research), and the practical results can serve Szeged's tourism policy in the development stages.

1. The definition of urban tourism we formed makes a unified interpretation of the tourist phenomena in cities possible, furthermore, the classification of spaces already in use and those which are exploitable from various aspects provides a theoretical background for the functional spatial structure examination of urban tourism.
2. The results of the research – with special emphasis on the empirical studies – can be utilized in conscious tourism development plans in Szeged as this is the first complex study carried out in the city which has focused on spatial processes of tourism and explored the different aspects of the industry at the same time.
3. The results of the examinations can be used by tourism promotion organizations in Szeged since this is the only way how the goal of expanding the space used in tourism can be realized in practice.
4. The results of our study show that we can draw the attention and intensify the visits to the attractions and sights of the inner peripheries, which are still part of the body of the city, though outside the city-centre, and the outer peripheries, by promoting them more dynamically through the tourist programmes presented in tourism marketing publications of the city.
5. As a follow-up to our research, we intend to explore the recreational spatial use of the residents of Szeged (which may truly represent the population's standard of living and changes of lifestyle), furthermore, to carry out a more detailed examination of the significant inter-settlement tourist connections in Csongrád county, the entire South Great Plain Region, and, as a result of a competition analysis, all over Hungary.
6. It seems reasonable that later on we carry out an exploratory analysis on the spatial routes of Hungarian and foreign tourists arriving in the city, and compare its results to the findings of our present study.

We hope that upon the results of our dissertation research some new aspects will appear in the conscious tourism development plans of Szeged apart from the traditional ones. Therefore, in the long run, the sights on the peripheries will also be involved in tourism, the success of the industry can be enhanced and so, Szeged's competitiveness in Hungarian and international tourism can be intensified.

IV. Publications in the study area

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2. T. JURAY 2004: The tourism of Szeged or back to the future. in: R. MÉSZÁROS (ed.) Szeged the aspect of social geography, Szeged pp. 139-153.
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6. T. JURAY 2005: Questions of tourism development and urban improvement: the example of Szeged, Hungary in: C. VERT (ed.): The Evolution of the National Colocviums in Geography of Population and Human Settlements, Temesvár-Buzias, (CD-ROM) pp. 239-253. (English)
7. JURAY T. 2007: Relations between tourism development and urban improvement: the example of Szeged. in: Cs. KOVÁCS (ed.): From villages to cyberspace. pp. 249-260. (English)

V. Other publications

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6. T. JURAY 2004: The impacts of demographic changes on tourism. 2nd Conference of Hungarian Geographers (CD-ROM)
7. Development strategy of Duna-Körös-Maros-Tisza Euroregion 2005: HAS Centre of Regional Studies, Great Plain Research Institute Békéscsaba.
8. T. JURAY 2005: The tourism and its development possibility in the Duna-Körös-Maros-Tisza Euroregion. in: SZÓNOKYNE A. G. (ed.) Borders and Regions, Szeged. pp. 493-501.
9. T. MEDGYES-B. KÓBOR-E. PÁL-MOLNÁR-T. JÁNOSI- **T. JURAY** 2006: Planning of regional label market policy to access the European Union sources in the South-East Hungarian Region. Szeged. Geo-Karrier.
10. T. JURAY (ed.) 2007: Strategy of youth tourism in the South-Great Plain Region
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12. **T. JURAY T.-L. CSORDÁS** 2007: The second homes as spatial forming factors tényezők in: Hungarian Bulletin of Geography 2007/3. pp. 187-203.