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All manuscripts must be edited entirely in English. Articles must include:

- Title
- Author's name(s). For each author you must mention the author's scientific title, his affiliation (institution) and e-mail address;

- Abstract (maximum 300 words);
- Keywords (not more than 5-6 words);
- Acknowledgments (if any);
- Main body of text (structured according to Introduction, Data & Methods, Results & Discussions, Conclusions);
- Illustrations (graphs, diagrams, maps, photos – should have indications of their positions in the text and title written in English) must be also submitted in electronic format, preferably in JPG, PNG or BMP format and must be referred to as Figures, which should be numbered with Arabic numbers.
- Tables must be numbered with Arabic numbers and should not repeat data available elsewhere in the text.
- References must be indicated in the text, between brackets and they must include the author's name and the date of the publication (Popescu, 2000). When three or more authors are referred, they will appear in the text as follows: (Popescu et al., 1997). References must be listed in alphabetical order at the end of the text.

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- for journals:

Miletić, R., Lukić, V., & Miljanović, D. (2011). Deindustrialization and structural changes in commuting flows in Serbia. *Forum geografic*, X(2), 244-254. doi:10.5775/fg.2067-4635.2011.009.d

- for books:

Bran, F., Marin, D., & Simion, T. (1997). *Turismul rural. Modelul european*, Editura Economică, București

- for papers from conference proceedings:

Deci, E. L., Ryan, R. M., (1991), A motivational approach to self: Integration in personality. In R. Dienstbier (Ed.), *Nebraska Symposium on Motivation: Vol. 38. Perspectives on motivations* (pp. 237-288). Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

Review process

All the manuscripts received by the editors undergo an anonymous peer review process, necessary for assessing the quality of scientific information, the relevance to the field, the appropriateness of scientific writing style, the compliance with the style and technical requirements of our journal, etc. The referees are selected from the national and international members of the editorial and scientific board, as well as from other scholarly or professional experts in the field. The referees assess the article drafts, commenting and making recommendations. This process leads either to acceptance, recommendation for revision, or rejection of the assessed article. Editors reserve the right to make minor editorial changes to the submitted articles, including changes to grammar, punctuation and spelling, as well as article format, but no major alterations will be carried out without the author's approval. Before being published, the author is sent the proof of the manuscript adjusted by editors. If major revisions are necessary, articles are returned to the author so that he should make the proper changes. Authors are notified by email about the status of the submitted.



Acknowledgment

2012 is an important year in the curriculum development and diversification of the Department of Geography, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Craiova. It marks the creation of a new Bachelor degree programme - Geography of tourism – starting with the 2012-2013 academic year and as well the quality of the human resources involved in the sustainable functioning of the department, all these metamorphoses occurring within the academic competitiveness.

The current publication, a thematic issue of the *"Forum geografic. Studii și cercetări de geografie și protecția mediului"* journal of the University of Craiova, is an Indexed DataBase journal, included in international databases and represents the proof of high quality and involvement of the Department of Geography academic staff who focus on the dissemination of relevant science in tourism and geography.

The 10 papers published in this issue gather together practitioners and researchers from many universities across the country such as: Academy of Economic Studies, Faculty of Geography- West University of Timișoara, Faculty of Geography- University of Bucharest, Faculty of Geography- University of Wallachia, Faculty of Tourism Management- "Dimitrie Cantemir" Christian University etc.

This thematic issue of the journal continues a previous scientific activity with a similar topic - the 1st International Conference on Tourism and Economic Development (TED '11), organized by WSEAS and hosted by University of Craiova and the Department of Geography (see <http://www.wseas.us/conferences/2011/drobeta/ted/>).

The journal succeeded only with the support of the scientific community in submitting high quality papers and in undertaking prompt and effective peer reviews.

I am most grateful to the Editorial Board but equally to the colleagues who worked on this *"Tourism and Sustainable Development"* issue (Manager Editor Dr. Liliana Popescu; Assistant Editor Amalia Bădiță, to our host, Dr. Sandu Boengiu- Editor-in-chief of the *"Forum geografic. Studii și cercetări de geografie și protecția mediului"* journal) and to all reviewers, authors and co-authors for supporting the Journal and responding to our common desire of increasing the scientific quality of our current and future publications. We look forward to your continuing collaboration in the future.

Editor

Professor Mirela Mazilu

Identity and Sustainable Development in Rural Tourism

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Abstract

There are many studies talking about the "anonymity" in which our country is sinking, in terms of international tourist identity, of the symbols that define us. We have never known how to promote ourselves using the unique elements that we have and not because we do not have these unique features, but because it is possible that we do not know or we have forgotten what really represents us. There were several initiatives, some of them recent and costly to create and promote a country brand, starting from tourism, but these did not have the expected impact. Why did not have the expected impact? Have we got an element/several elements that may render a sustainable image, not a temporary one, for us and for the Romanian rural tourism? Are the village, the traditions, and the gastronomy authentic elements of tourist identity for the Romanian village as an element within the tourist offer? What symbols, values, ideas, feelings, places, emotions, personalities, food, artistic expressions are by excellence truly Romanian? How many of us recognize them? These are only a couple of the many questions we try to answer, not desperately, but with the interest of the person who is not only in love with tourism, its values, with its message over time. The article tries to underline the role of identity in the promotion of a tourist product, the Romanian village, a valuable treasure up to the present based on an adequate methodology of the tourism geography research (questionnaires, diagnosis, analytical prospecting, etc.).

Keywords: *identity, rural tourism, authentic, Romanian village, image, sustainability*

Rezumat. Identitate și dezvoltare durabilă în turismul rural

Există multe studii care vorbesc despre "anonimatul", în care țara noastră se scufundă, în termeni de identitate turistică internațională, a simbolurilor care ne definesc. Niciodată nu am știut să ne promovăm folosind elementele unice pe care le avem și nu pentru că nu avem aceste caracteristici unice, ci pentru că este posibil ca noi să nu știm sau să fi uitat ce ne reprezintă cu adevărat. Au fost mai multe inițiative, unele dintre ele recente și costisitoare de a crea și de a promova un brand de țară, pornind de la turism, dar acestea nu au avut impactul scontat. De ce nu au avut impactul scontat? Avem un element/elemente care pot da o imagine durabilă, nu una temporară, pentru noi și pentru turismul rural românesc? Sunt satul, tradițiile, precum și gastronomia elemente de identitate turistică pentru satul românesc ca un element în cadrul ofertei turistice? Ce simboluri, valori, idei, sentimente, emoții, locuri, personalități, produse alimentare, expresii artistice sunt, prin excelență adevărat românești? Câți dintre noi le recunoaștem? Acestea sunt doar câteva dintre numeroasele întrebări la care vom încerca să răspundem, nu cu disperare, dar cu interesul unei persoane care nu este doar atrasă de turism și valorile sale, cu mesajul său de-a lungul timpului. Articolul încearcă să sublinieze rolul identității în promovarea unui produs turistic, satul românesc, o comoară de mare preț până în prezent, pe baza unei metodologii adecvate de cercetare în geografia turismului (chestionare, diagnostic, analiză de prospecțiune, etc.).

Cuvinte-cheie: *identitate, turism rural, autentic, sat românesc, imagine, durabilitate*

Introduction

The Romanian village was approached in the literature either from multiple angles or belonging to different subjects, from museology, anthropology to statistics, management or marketing with application in rural tourism (Bran et al., 1997; Bran et al., 1995; Mitrache et al., 1996; Nistoreanu, 1999; Bucur, 2006;

Mazilu, 2006). The common element of these studies is the intrinsic value of the Romanian village – i.e. object of study, raw material, offer, tourist product, all in one or taken separately, which are profitable elements in the perspective of the re-evaluation of this type of tourist product for marketing.

The identity is applied in activities as a resource and as a marketing instrument (external and internal)

for obtaining the competitive advantage, as well as in the case of entities (ethnic or geographical) for the

strengthening of the trust, the respect for oneself or for attracting new investments or tourists (fig. 1).

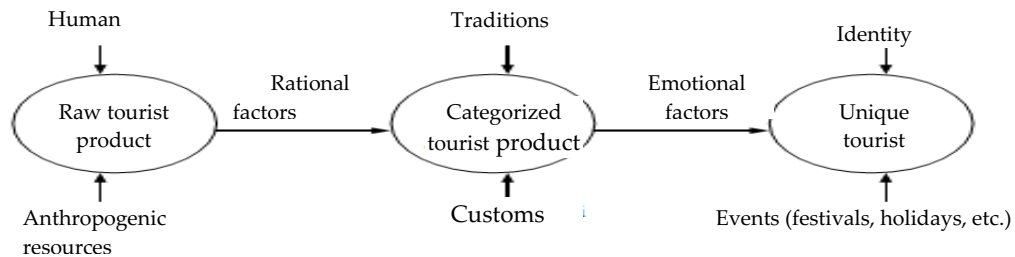


Fig. 1: The elements of differentiation/ uniqueness for the tourist products

The attractive elements of Romania in the field of rural tourism are special. A strong tradition and a multi-millenary rural culture have been and are still found nowadays. The folkloric customs, as well as the whole richness of the folklore, constitute constant elements in the rural entire ambiance. The attractive elements are: the natural beauty of the landscapes (mountains, lakes, forests, etc.), the history and the famous people, the commercial areas, the cultural, recreational and entertainment objectives, the sports arenas, the events and different occasions, buildings, monuments and sculptural ensembles, the people and other attractions. In fact, this analysis (called "the audit of attractiveness" in the literature) represents the basis of determining the regional marketing objective and the actions within the marketing program for the respective region.

Within the context of the regional entities, the identity may be viewed as an instrument of putting into practice a complex marketing planning process as a part of the strategic marketing process and, respectively, a marketing program.

The rural areas folklore, respectively the village, offers the identity of each geographical region of the country. In time, the purity of the old culture has been preserved mainly unaltered. Due to its vitality, the folkloric culture has been preserved over time with different accents, imposed by the specific touch of each rural community. It is necessary and important that the direction of the Romanian culture to not move towards an unknown direction, because at the moment, due to the modern media, the message of modernism has been spread everywhere and sent rapidly to the world of the village, triggering messages and elements opposite to the traditional values.

The rural architecture represents another attractive element of rural settlements, being the work of different communities and of time and it must be preserved as a cultural heritage of humanity.

Globalisation and the accelerated industrialisation brought out problems in each country related to the preservation of the rural habitat, without opposing to its evolution. Globally, the traditional rural settlements are threatened by different factors, although almost everywhere their value is related to the habitat. Behind these settlements, there is a philosophy, an attitude, a conception in relation with the social life and work, which confers the quality of a document specific for each people. However, the preservation of the villages enters into conflict with the wish of their people to take advantage of the modern elements of life. We must take into account the integration of the new in the traditional area when solving this problem. The development of rural tourism is a solution to ensure the transmission of traditions to future generations, not to deprive the future generations of identity.

The development of tourism/the recovery of the rural areas are proposing to solve, outside the essential objective of its activity, the satisfaction of the tourist motivation and the economic problems of the areas related to:

- ❖ the depopulation caused by the rural population migration to the urban centres, thus ensuring conditions for practicing some profitable activities in the villages aiming at the improvement of the life conditions, the protection and the preservation of the environment as a recreational and recovery factor of the creative potential of the individual;
- ❖ the creation of conditions for the development of economic, industrial, agricultural, commercial conditions in the rural areas.
- ❖ the stimulation of the state institutions, the private sector and the associations in the field to intensify the efforts for obtaining a corresponding infrastructure related to the level of tourist development.

Being considered a special and more complex form of tourism, rural tourism has an advantage in terms of the possibilities of spending the spare time,