

CULTURAL – FOLKLORE EVENTS – PROMOTERS OF THE CULTURAL TOURISM

University Lecturer Ph.D. **Carmen Maria IORDACHE**,

Assistant Lecturer **Roxana Maria POPA**

Constantin Brancoveanu University, Romania

Abstract

In an era of overcalling output and of removing state borders, it is very important to know and to be able to identify ourselves. Cultural folklore holidays/festivals represent one of the most extensive and complex elements of the immaterial popular culture, acting as an icon because they integrate social, ethic, aesthetic, cultural values specific to a nation.

Most tourists have looked for and will continue to look for this icon and to discover it during their holidays and journeys, wishing to know, to explore and to experiment other peoples' culture and way of living.

Key words: culture, cultural tourism, cultural-folklore events, impact, promotion.

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INTRODUCTION

The title of this paper induces a truth which is known by many people but appreciated and used by a few ones for its real value: the cultural-folklore events (in their original form as holidays and traditional popular customs or in their derived form as performances, holidays and cultural-folklore festivals) they exert a major role in promoting what we may call “the most developed industry at world –wide level” – the tourism.

The revelation between culture (mainly cultural-folklore events) and tourism has given birth in the last few decades to the best and the least harmful product – the cultural tourism. This relation is emphasized through the analysis of the triad – place-role-impact, namely:

➔ **place** – the place held by the cultural-folklore holidays in the culture system (traditional culture, mass culture) and within the tourism activity (reasons of traveling, forms of tourism – especially cultural tourism, rural tourism, place in primary touristic offer, more specifically in the ethno-folkloric component of the anthropological potential);

➔ **role** – the role played by these cultural folklore events in tourism promotion. The affiliation of these events to the two fields – culture and tourism determines the approaching of the problem from a reciprocity perspective: it is very clear that the touristic offer involving components and cultural attractions, determines their promotion and their

inclusion in the national and international touristic circuit and the ampleness, the value and the attraction of a cultural-folklore event means, all in all, both a reason determinant for accomplishing the journey in touristic aims, an image generator for the place/host country and the development of some forms of tourism – mainly cultural tourism in areas with less generous natural potential;

➔ **impact** – the impact of the cultural-folklore holidays on tourism, with its multiple implications and benefits: economical, social, cultural, environmental.

1. CONNECTION CULTURE – TOURISM. CULTURAL TOURISM

We find the concept of culture both in the reasons of journey, forms of tourism and in (as we may see later) the touristic offer. We may say that the relation culture – tourism is mutual, goods and cultural products are promoted mostly through tourism and the touristy offer includes, in most cases, cultural attractions.

The tourism economy has a direct connection with the territory, the place where culture and cultural diversity are expressed. The many facets of the territorial patrimony (human, natural, cultural) make up image, attraction, location and production of the tourism industry ...”

No matter how we approach this connection tourism-culture, in a wider or more restricted sense, it is important that it exists, and it develops, in a generally profitable way for both fields and the most eloquent form of manifestation of the interaction between these two is the “**cultural tourism**”.

Two significant tendencies regarding traveling will dominate the touristic market in the next years:

- mass marketing is replaced by “one - to one” marketing, with specialized touristic products in accordance with the individual customer’s motivations/reasons;

- a bigger and bigger number of visitors became those tourists who place culture – arts, patrimony and other cultural activities as main reasons for traveling.

According to the new tendencies of tourism market, cultural tourism appears as an important **niche market**. Expressing an increase rate of 10 to 15% a year., the cultural – tourism represents 1/5 from the tourism market. While the cultural tourism is far from being considered a new phenomenon, the extension of the cultural tourism and the new forms of culture which can be consumed are new indeed. Beyond a

peripheral attraction added to the travel itineraries, culture has become more and more a catalyst for the experience of a journey on the whole.

The definitions of the cultural tourism are not few. According to The World-Wide Tourism Organization (WTO) “*the cultural tourism refers to a segment of the tourism industry which emphasizes mainly the cultural attractions. Those attractions are varied and they include: performances, museums etc. In developed areas, cultural attractions include museums, orchestra performances, and plays. In less developed areas they may include traditional rituals, religious rituals, popular art or cultural – folklore events*” (Gee , C.Y., Fayos-Sola).

European Association for Tourism and Leisure Education (ATLAS) defines cultural tourism as: “*persons’ traveling towards cultural attractions from the usual living place, with the intention of getting new information and experiences which should satisfy their cultural needs*” (Richards, G.).

Another concept defines the cultural tourism as being “*that activity which determines people to explore or to experiment different ways of living reflecting social, religious and traditional customs.*”

A widely accepted definition of the cultural tourism is that of White House Conference on Travel and Tourism, namely: “*the cultural tourism is the tourism directed to the experiment of arts, cultural patrimony and special characteristics of a place*” (Meethan, K.).

No matter how many ways of defining the cultural tourism, the researchers of this field are obliged to admit that the cultural tourism is the domain with the fastest growing from the tourism industry.

The cultural tourism proves to be extremely profitable. No matter if there are visits to the museums, participations to art festivals, cultural shows, things, historical monuments or patrimony, the genuine cultural attractions educate, raise the intellectual level and create high spirits to the tourists world over.

The cultural tourism is among the “new” forms of tourism which claim to be less injurious than the mass tourism. The “cultural” tourists taking part in this form of tourism describe themselves as being “thinking tourists” and they are more attentive, more sensitive and more constructive in their behavior.

C. Origet de Cluzeau synthesizes the main themes of the cultural tourism and ways of touristic manifestation which it generates in his paper “Le tourisme culturel”:

THEME	TOURISTIC FORMULA
Religious	Pilgrimage, beautiful and charming meetings
Discovery of towns, regions, countryes	Circuit, accommodation and trips
Historical	Visiting the site
Memory	Circuit and trips
Ethinc	Circuit, accomodation
Artistic	Circuit, probation
Workmanship, industry	Thematical circuit, trip to industrial places
Parks and gardens	Circuit, accomodations, trip
Festivals, cultural manifestations	Accomodation
Gastronomical	Accomodation, circuit,cooking probation
Shopping	Going to town
Linguistic	Staying in schoolsm families
Pedagogy of culture	Lessons outside schools

In the same way, another identifies a series of characteristics of the cultural tourism, which we show here (Origet de Cluzeau, C.):

→ tourist’s flows are characterized by their own customers who can be specialized in certain themes (capable of walking impressive distances in order to surprise another facet of their passion) either attracted by cultural or occasional which is usually of a majority and they are holiday to rest and enjoy themselves visiting the anthropological sights from the place;

→ participants’ affiliation to superior socio-professional categories or with medium or high level education as pupils, students, intellectuals and that’s why its mass character is uncertain;

→ tourist’s cultural rituals are quite different, varying from visiting museums and monuments with the aim of knowing their patrimony to their simple using, as a setting for playful experiences (for example going to a café or a bar situated close to a patrimony objective);

→ the “cultural” tourists have a higher income than the ordinary ones and they spend more than an overage tourist;

→ urban population who travel longer periods of time is preponderant in making tourist’s flows;

→ there is a difference of cultural rituals according to sex: women are more attracted by plastic arts and architecture dominating cultural tourists movements; men prefer technical and scientifically sites, traditions and popular arts;

→ generally speaking there is a preference for cultural sites on the outside, ruins attracting more visitors than many well – kept monuments.

Cultural experiences may be distinguished by the mental and specific behavior of some peoples. Therefore, the investigation made in France, the main

destination of world cultural tourism, shows a certain superficiality of the Spanish, a preference of the Germans for the Roman art and the Middle Ages, North – Americans' wish to find their cultural roots, the attraction of the Danish for villages, the interest of the British for discovery of monuments and places which remind of French – English relations, while the Italians prefer sanctuaries and cult places (www.arts.endow.gov).

During the last years, the forms of practicing cultural tourism have diversified very much taking the form of linguistic accommodation or gastronomical tourism.

The enrichment of the cultural tourism offer can be realized under the pressure of two factors: public demand, more curious and more exacting and local communities' attitude which want to get benefits through cultural activities they finance.

The efficiency of the cultural tourism is the most reduced of all types of tourism, but its development has a series of advantages referring to the fact that the demand is stable, solid and it doesn't take into account fashion as it happened with the balneal - climacteric tourism.

2. THE ROLE OF CULTURAL-FOLKLORE EVENTS IN PROMOTION OF TOURISM

The ethno-cultural and ethno-folklore potential has a wide spread and consists of elements from material and spiritual culture connected with the rural way of living.

Ethno-cultural goods promoted under the sign of authenticity and value, inside the country and abroad, are brands bearing national and community identity. They are structured as follows:

❖ *popular art* materialized in interior and exterior architecture of the houses, trades, popular installations, popular costume;

❖ *ethnographic museums* are culture institutions to collect, preserve, keep and display ethnographic objects, being, in the same time, tourists objectives of high interest;

❖ *folklore holidays*, festivals, folklore performances are forms of cultural-artistic turning to good account the traditional customs of a community divided into two big categories: family customs and yearly customs.

For those looking from the outside, customs are without any doubt, picturesque folklore manifestations, and great performances. But beyond all of these, they gather deep meaning of the relation between man and the surrounding world, nature and between people.

Customs express the social life of the human community, different aspects of its organization. They are expressions of social life and mechanism through which social life is realized.

In many countries folklore, some customs have kept ample forms of displaying in which old rites mix with ceremonial acts spectacular manifestations.

They are true popular holidays rich in songs, dances, poetry and mime and dramatic acts.

The customs includes all the folklore manifestations connected with a certain event or a certain date.

In traditional communities, the custom is a usual folklore manifestation which a certain community holds regularly on a certain occasion, considering it right and compulsory. Most of popular customs are sent through tradition. They were subjected to a context and these provided their durability.

It is a reality the fact that customs are a permanent and irremovable part of people's way of living.

They, ceasing of being specific, through their function and role, but for certain communities or areas, emphasize their *unitary, national character*, because of their essence and the resonance they got in contemporary cultural life. Thus, customs make one of the most extensive and complex elements of the immaterial popular culture, acting as an icon because they integrate social, ethic, aesthetic, cultural values, and specific to a nation.

The affiliation of the cultural-folklore events to the two economic fields: culture and tourism, entitles us to approach the problem of the role played by the events in promotion of tourism from a reciprocity perspective.

The tourist offer includes components and cultural attractions, determines their promotion and their inclusion in a tourist circuit, and the amplexness, value, attraction and authenticity of a cultural folklore event may generate the development of new forms of tourism-cultural tourism, rural tourism even in areas with less generous natural potential.

The role of the cultural-folklore events in promotion of tourism can be determined in cases such as:

A. Spreading out cultural exchanges at national and international level through participation of folklore ensembles at festivals inside the country and abroad. So:

➤ *visiting card of an ensemble* includes tourists guide marks of origin place or country;

➤ *representative leaflets of the ensembles* are accompanied by leaflets, offers or films on CD/DVD of the travel agencies from the origin area or country;

➤ *folklore shows* represent cultural attractions which are a very important determinant in taking the decision of making a voyage in the area or country by the participants, spectators of the festivals;

➤ *members of the participating ensembles* become bearers of tourist offer of the host community and also of the offers from the tourist areas of the other ensembles participating to the festivals;

➤ *members of the participating ensembles become customers of tourists product* in the host country.

B. Cultural – folklore Events and Tourism national and international market places. Tourist's offers may be accompanied by folklore shows live (illustrating popular costume, traditions, customs, dances specific to the area or country) having multiple valences:

➤ realize a special ambient background favorable to presenting the offers;

➤ draw visitors' and tourism operators' attention on the tourist offers;

➤ make up the living proof of the cultural attractions which the potential tourists will find in the voyages through the country they came from;

➤ make up the premise of inclusion the most significant cultural-folklore events as points of attraction and reason determinant for choosing the destination by the potential visitors in tourist offers.

C. Inclusion of main cultural-folklore manifestations of an area or country or of ethno-folkloric characteristics of certain communities in tourism offers presented in mass-media or on website of the agencies and travel offices has a double significance.

D. Cultural-folklore events (Habits and Customs Festivals, Festivals and Folklore Performances) *promote and develop the cultural tourism in areas rich in traditions and customs of the communities but poor in other natural, historical attractions.*

Festivals Organizers' Association from Europe says that the cultural tourism has very much developed due to the folklore festivals.

3. THE IMPACT OF THE FOLKLORE FESTIVALS ON THE CULTURAL TOURISM

To know the dimension of the impact of folklore festivals, *we should know that these* (www.arts.endow.gov):

→ *are a big business*, determining impressive expensive made by the tourists and of course, good enough cashing for those working in this domain;

→ *attract tourists having money* – over 90% from the participants to the folklore festivals are tourists;

→ *develop new public* - give the opportunity to the audience to bring new people, friends, acquaintances, family members. Every year, 9% of the participants (tourists or people from that place) are new;

→ *are accessible and well received.* The audience of the folklore festivals is much younger than people may think. This is due to the fact that the tourists participating to the festivals come with their families considering them “real holidays with music and dance”;

→ *develop and stimulate the communion between people and people themselves*, gather people for some days and give them the possibility to live, to know and to be happy together.

People and community that house a folklore festival give the visitors a valuable cultural product and the opportunity to experiment the dowry and the local cultural tradition. Festivals Organizers' Association from Europe says that “*the cultural tourism has grown due to the development of the folklore festivals*”. Tourism may raise the vitality of a community in many ways. A good example would be that due to the growing of visitors, the festivals have been rejuvenated and developed according to the tourists' interest.

Folklore festivals have many implications on the host community and they are of a cultural, economic and social nature. The festivals have a positive and a negative impact on the host locality but the accent is on economic benefits. Chriss Hall suggests that the ability of the cultural-folkloric events organizers to attract benefits represents the official justification for housing such events: “*the economic analysis of the events shows why these festivals take place and which the effects on the region are. Anyway, many of the social ones are not tangible.*”

The economic benefits due to the development of the cultural tourism with the help of the folklore festivals are similar to the economic roles of the cultural events defined by Getz, who says that: “*the economic role of the events is to behave as a catalyst in order to attract visitors and increase the expenses and the duration of staying. Events are also seen as an image generator for the place they make a special profile as a tourist destination and offer it a competitive market advantage*”.

The economic impact may be presented using the result of the analysis cost/benefit, the analysis of coming-in coming-out ore, more simple benefits brought to community and local tourism. Appreciation of the economic impact often includes the multiplied calculation, in order to demonstrate that increasing tourist's expenses has direct benefits, indirect and induced ones for the local economy. Basically, the technique of analyzing the economic impact, estimates the overage expenses/person, multiplied by the member of visitors to determine the direct expense and their multipliers for estimating indirect economic effects are used. The usual multiplier used in tourism impact studies is “income multiplier” which in fact is a coefficient exposing quantity of income generated in an area with every unit of expense made by the tourist.

CONCLUSIONS

The dual approaching (cultural and tourist) of those events will allow the clearer quantification of economic, social, image benefits brought to the place or host country. These benefits have demonstrated that they really exist (referring only to those tangible, economic ones) and these festivals become supported projects which succeed to draw both the actors and the cultural market and the economic agents, tourism operators.

In order to accomplish this thing, we should become aware of the fact that folklore festivals do not mean art for art but art for the public, for tourists, for money and at the same time we should not give up criteria of authenticity and value, art for promoting and development of community/place/host country, art for the development of communion among people, art for a privileged place of the zone on a tourist market fully developed.

The international experience has proved that we can manage and turn to good account the cultural

values and can promote touristic products with the help of cultural-folklore events.

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