

**RELATION CULTURE-RESOURCE-COMPETITIVENESS AND
ATTRACTIVENESS IN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM**

**RELAȚIA CULTURĂ-RESURSE-COMPETITIVITATE ȘI
ATRACTIVITATE ÎN TURISMUL DURABIL**

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Abstract: Contemporary tourism is a social and especially a cultural process; it is a way of life of today's man. Up to modern times, the basic social relations represented a function of social proximity. The local communities, with a local cultural environment, sharing fundamental values, have eased the definitions of identity by the individuals and have given a meaning to the social groups, which are generally stable. All the values are combined within the "mass culture" society, which leads to the isolation of an individual among the "many loners". The process is unfolded in various parts of the Globe. This aims mainly at the developed countries and regions, but it gradually expands to the whole world. Tourism is, before all, a form of the human behaviour. Man is the essential subject of tourism. This can be explained if we understand man, as a human being with its social, cultural needs. This article will look at the big picture of tourism development impacts and approaches to deliver low impact development. It will teach a holistic approach to planning and tourism development that reviews governments' and international donors' role in rural land development, stressing bioregional planning as a key tool for governments and their donors to move rural areas into a more thorough process for sustainable regional development.

Key-words: *sustainable tourism culture, tourism, human geography, tradition, social impact.*
Cuvinte cheie: *turism cultural durabil, turism, geografie umană, tradiție, impact social.*

INTRODUCTION

Through culture, we understand the beliefs, the values and the preferences influencing the economic behaviour of the individual.

The differences in the religious beliefs between the societies are the clearest examples of how the cultural differences may influence the economic behaviour. Another important example or even more important than luck, geography and institutions in influencing economic problems, is represented by the preferences regarding the importance of the wealth related to the other activities generating social status, as well as the patients of the individuals.

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METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this paper is to highlight the role and impact of cultural values on sustainable tourism. It is a descriptive analysis that can guide the development in future development strategies of cultural destinations (Mazilu, 2012). Broadly, culture may influence the economic results by two ways.

The first one may influence the choice of the individual between the current and the future consumption, respectively between various activities. This way, culture will influence the occupational preferences of the society, the structure of the market, the economy rates and the wish to accumulate social and human capital.

Secondly, culture may influence the degree of cooperation between individuals, and cooperation and trust are usually important foundations of the productive activities of the society.

The first one, and, at the same time, among the first versions of the hypothesis of the geographical frame, belongs to Montesquieu, who was convinced that climate was among the main determinants of the nation's destiny. He considered the climate (Mazilu and Marinescu, 2008), especially the heat, as being responsible for the human attitude and the willingness to make effort, and, through this channel, to influence the economic results as well as the social ones. Marshall had the same vision (1890): "the vigour partially depends on the race's qualities: but these, as much as they can be explained, seem to depend to a great extent on the climate."

If the first version of the geographic hypothesis may seem naïve and unpolished for many, the second version, emphasising the impact of geography on the available technologies of a society, especially in agriculture, is more acceptable and has more supporters. This approach, which belongs to a winner of the Nobel Prize, Gunnar Myrdal (1968), states that: "serious studies on underdevelopment problems ... should take into consideration the climate and its impact on the soil, vegetation, animals, people and wealth - in short, the life conditions on the economic development."

Recently, Jared Diamond (1997), in "Guns, Germs and Steel", agrees with this vision and states that the geographic differences between the Americas and Eurasia have determined the moment of the appearance and the nature of agriculture, and, through this channel, the societies have developed the ability to create complex organisations and military and civil technologies. Jeffrey Sachs (2001) underlines the importance of geography in the productivity of agriculture: "at the beginning of the era of modern economic growth, if not earlier, the technologies from the temperate area were more productive than the technologies from the tropical areas".

This version of the geographic frame hypothesis, although more comprehensive, is subjected to criticism as well. The majority of the technological differences underlined by these authors refer to agriculture. However, the origins of the differentiated economic growth between the countries go back to the age of industrialisation. The modern economic growth appeared together with

industrialisation, and the present-day poor countries are the ones that have not managed to industrialise. The low agricultural productivity should create a comparative disadvantage in industry and thus would encourage those countries with an "unfavourable geography" to invest in industry before others did. The influence of agriculture on industrialisation is debatable: on the one hand, one might say that for industrialisation, a minimum level of agricultural productivity is needed, but, on the other hand, the poor countries have more fertile lands, fact which has created a comparative advantage against industry, not managing to benefit from the increasing scale yields of the manufacturing activities.

The third variant of the geography hypothesis that became popular in the last decade connects between poverty and "the burden of disease": "the burden of infectious diseases is ... higher in the tropics than in the temperate areas" (Sachs, 2000). Bloom and Sachs (1998)² and Gallup and Sachs (2001) state that only the malaria reduces the annual rate of growth of the Sub-Saharan African economies with up to 2.6 percentages a year. Such a magnitude implies the fact that if malaria were eradicated in 1950, the income per inhabitant in the Sub-Saharan Africa would be the double of what it is today. If we added the effect of other diseases, we would have even bigger effects. The World Organisation of Health states the same viewpoint: "in today's world, the poor health has damaging effects on the economic development in the Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, and other regions with many disease and great poverty", and "the access to basic medical services ... of the poorest of the world could save million lives annually, would reduce poverty, would stimulate the economic development and would promote global security".

This third version of the geographic hypothesis is much more plausible than the first two, because it is a well-known fact from the microeconomic literature that the unhealthy individuals are less productive and maybe less capable to learn and thus to accumulate human capital. However, the burden of diseases is a consequence as well as a cause of poverty. The European nations have confronted with several epidemics during the 18th and 19th centuries, but the economic development allowed the eradication of these epidemics and the creation of a healthier environment. The fact that several poor countries have healthy environments is, at least in part, a consequence of the lack of economic development.

The economic development is a complex phenomenon, at least judging by the idea of identification and understanding of its real sources. However, in order to explain why the people save, invest, learn and seek knowledge that could be used; we must give a special attention to the different institutional systems and to the value systems, which are found at the basis of the success and of the failure.

The last fundamental cause of economic growth emphasises the idea that the different societies (or especially races or different ethnic groups) have different cultures, due to the different experiences or different religions.

² Paper presented at the annual meetings of the AEA, New Orleans LA, 7 January 2001
<http://www.agecon.purdue.edu/staff/masters/MastersAndSachs-ClimateAndDevelopment.pdf>

In order to put an emphasis on the changes occurred in the structure of the farming land use in the Desnățui Plain, both before and after the communism fall, there were taken as reference years: the year 1970, when the political system was thriving, the year 1989, which led to the end of the communist regime in Romania and the beginning of a new stage in the Romanian agriculture (privatization) and 2009, the year for which the most recent data have been gathered.

Statistic data have been used; they were picked up from the locality chart, for each commune in the Desnățui Plain, and they have been processed by means of mathematical formulas and construed based on diagrams and maps.

CULTURE-A KEY DETERMINER OF VALUES IN SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Culture is seen by certain social researchers as being a key determiner of values, preferences and convictions of individuals and of societies and these differences play a key role in the economic performance (Fig.1).

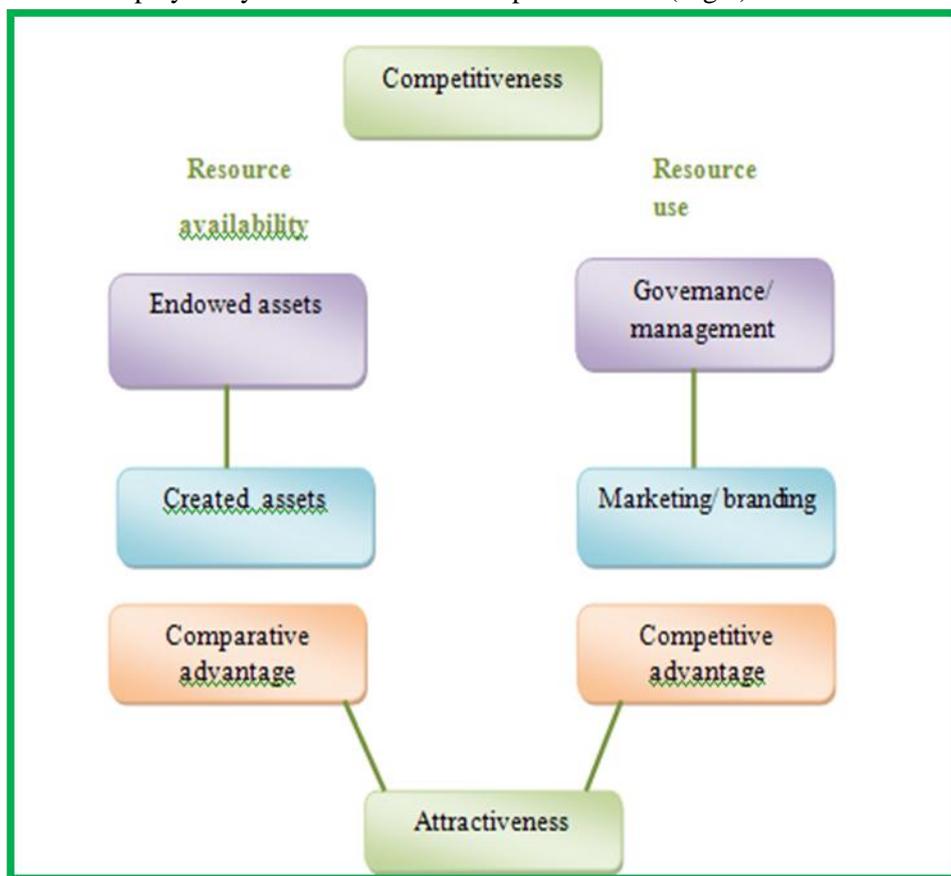


Fig. 1. Relation Culture-Resource-Competitiveness and Attractiveness

At a certain level, the culture may be considered the factor influencing the balances of a given set of institutions. As mentioned above, the problem of choice appears in the presence of multiple balances.

Maybe the culture is correlated to this process of balance choice. The „good” cultures may be considered those ways that lead to superior Pareto³ balances. Indeed, the possibility that an entire society should be caught into a balance where all the members lead worse lives than within an alternative balance, is not only implausible, but also this would be a counter-argument regarding the importance of culture.

Alternatively, the different cultures generate sets of different convictions about how people behave, and these may change the balance for a set given by institutions (for instance, certain convictions shall allow the punishing strategies while others shall not). Weber⁴ (1930), who claimed that the origins of industrialisation in Western Europe might be found within a cultural factor - the protestant reform and the appearance of Calvinism, proposed the most important connection between culture and economic development. He offers a summary of this hypothesis: “Montesquieu says that the English have developed the most in the world especially in three important aspects: piety, commerce and freedom. Is it really possible that their commercial superiority and their adaptation to the free political institutions to be somehow related to the piety that Montesquieu attributes to them?”

The argumentative elements, with origins in anthropology, claim that societies may become "dysfunctional" because their cultural values and their convictions do not encourage cooperation. An original and ample version of this argument is developed by Benfield's analysis⁵ (1958) on the poverty from the South of Italy. His ideas have been taken over by Putnam (1993)⁶, who suggests the idea of „social capital” – phrase that defines the cultural attitudes leading to cooperation and other „beneficial results”.

CONCLUSIONS

Regarding the social and cultural impact (Mazilu and Mitroi, 2011) on the population visited, a series of aspects connected with the changes within the social structure may be emphasised through the passing from the agricultural work to the one from the services sector, the need to raise the level of culture through the learning of foreign languages, of some cultural and civilization elements specific to other people, the learning of knowledge in the economic field, the use of modern

³ The theory of partial optimum is drawn up by Vilfredo Pareto (1848-1923) in his studies “Political Economy Course” (1896-1897) and “Political Economy Manual” (1906). The economic optimum refers to the most rational formula, thus, the best formula of allotment of limited available resources ensuring the highest relative level of well-fare of the entire society.

⁴ Karl Emil Maximilian "Max" Weber (21 April 1864 – 14 June 1920) was a German sociologist and political economist, who profoundly influenced social theory, social research, and the discipline of sociology itself. Weber's major works dealt with the rationalization and "disenchantment" he associated with the rise of capitalism and modernity, culture and development.

⁵ Edward C. Benfield (1916–1999) was an American political scientist, best known as the author of *The Moral Basis of a Backward Society* (1958), and *The Unevenly City* (1970).

⁶ Robert Putnam has been described as the most influential academic in the world today. His book *Bowling Alone* seems to have struck a chord with many concerned with the state of public life.

means of communication, especially the internet, mentality changes at the level of the traditional family regarding the role of women in the traditional peasant families as well as regarding the relations

between parents and children that become more liberal, the reduction of the national nature prejudices, the revaluation and the development of the local culture: the customs and traditions, the traditional cuisine, the protection of the natural environment, the increase of the level of culture and civilisation, and, last but not least, the quality of life, the revaluation of historical monuments, the stimulation of artistic and artisan creativity development.

- It is clear that **tourism and culture** have become increasingly closely linked as their role in regional attractiveness and competitiveness has become clearer. Culture in all its forms is likely to feature strongly in the tourism product and promotion of most regions, even those which have traditionally relied on their natural assets, such as sun and beach or mountains, for their attractiveness. Destinations are also trying to increase their comparative advantage by adding to their stock of cultural attractions (e.g. building new museums or heritage centres). They are also trying to develop their intangible culture and creativity (e.g. selling “atmosphere”, cultural events and gastronomy).
- **Culture and tourism** are linked because of their obvious synergies and their growth potential. Cultural tourism is one of the largest and fastest growing global tourism markets and the cultural and creative industries are increasingly being used to promote destinations and to increase their competitiveness and attractiveness.
- **Culture and tourism** are therefore essential tools to support the comparative and competitive advantage of regions in global markets (Maziliu, 2011b).
- **Cultural tourism** is one of the largest and fastest growing global tourism markets and the cultural and creative industries are increasingly being used to promote destinations and to increase their competitiveness and attractiveness (Cândea et al., 2009).

At the same time, as a consequence of the special growth rhythm of the international circulation, tourism represents a way of contact with the realities and the peoples of other places, contributing to the promotion of the best understanding between the people belonging to different cultures and civilisations, to the revival of traditions and to the revaluation of the universal cultural heritage.

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