

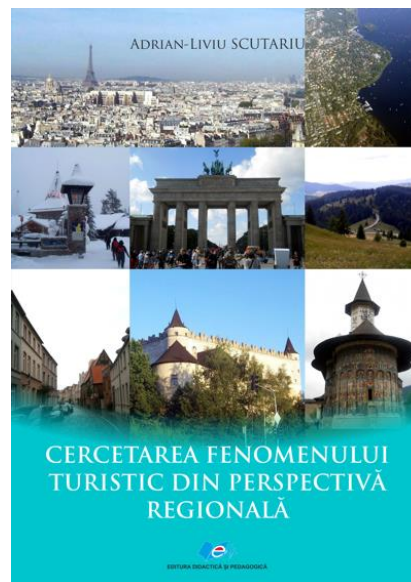
BOOK REVIEW FOR “RESEARCH ON TOURIST PHENOMENON FROM A REGIONAL PERSPECTIVE” BY ADRIAN-LIVIU SCUTARIU

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"Research on tourism phenomenon from a regional perspective" is a work that analyzes an important theme, but also very current, bringing into discussion the role of tourism in the framework of the regional development process.

Tourism has vastly developed in recent decades, reason for which it can contribute to the attenuation of inter-regional development imbalances. This is the main argument for which it is necessary to analyze tourism in the regional context, a necessity enhanced also by the creation of development regions in the European Union, by the trend towards decentralization, by the importance of the Structural Funds and the European policies of social and economic cohesion.

This research has a clearly defined *general objective*, this being the analysis of the evolution and the determination of the tourist activity intensity in the North-East region of Romania, compared to the other regions in the country, on the one hand, and in relation to two other similar regions from Poland and Slovakia, on the other hand. The *specific objectives* are formulated in such a way that the essential aspects for the research can be revealed while conducting it.

The book includes the author's doctoral research findings and is organized as follows: introduction, six chapters, conclusions and annexes, resulting in an effective structuring and a logical sequence of the parts which give it consistency.

Chapter 1 reveals *the current state of knowledge in the field*, highlighting the essence and the evolution of the main theories of regional development: theories of location, theories of regional growth and development theories. It has been made reference to the conceptual delimitations of the term *region* and of the one of *regional development*. Regional development theories have aroused the interest of many researchers, through the different approaches recorded in the work, succeeding the reflection of some important aspects from the regional science development.

In **Chapter 2** they have highlighted the outlines of the EU regional development policy, policy that aims at reducing existing regional imbalances by stimulating balanced development and by the revitalization of the underdeveloped areas. The regional development process in Romania is

then analyzed, as part of the EU regional development, then bringing to attention the current division into eight regions, with its positive and negative aspects.

Chapter 3 brings tourism in the foreground, highlighting its ability to contribute to the inner development of a region and to the reduction of regional imbalances. *Tourism* experienced a spectacular development in recent decades, becoming one of the largest industries in the world, also boosting other economic branches through its multiplier effect. It is obvious that tourism contributes directly or indirectly to economic growth, but with its extensive development one must also prevent the negative effects that this could produce on the natural and socio-economic environment. In this chapter it is performed a synthesis on the role of tourism in achieving the goals of the regional development policy, also revealing the presence of tourism in the regional programs.

In Chapters 4 and 5 it is analyzed the tourist activity at a regional level, from a statistical point of view. The research was based on tourism indicators and has two components: the first is a comparative study, in terms of tourism activity, of the North-East region with the other regions of Romania (**Chapter 4**), and the second is a comparative analysis of the tourism activity of the North-East region with the one of Subcarpathia from Poland and Central Slovakia, in order to identify the influences of the EU adhesion on tourism (**Chapter 5**). Each of the two components includes three parts: the analysis of the tourism indicators evolution, the analysis of the significant differences and the analysis of the correlations among them. Chapter 5 is structured from elements that are in a logical sequence: an overview of tourism in the EU (including Romania, Poland and Slovakia), the investigation of the regional tourism activity in the three countries and tourism evolution comparison from the three regions.

Chapter 6 continues and details the comparative analysis of the North-East, Subcarpathia and Central Slovakia regions, in terms of tourism evolution. The factors that determined the recorded evolutions are revealed and the favorite areas for tourism are identified. There are also outlined some proposals and measures to contribute to the intensification of tourism in the North-East region, having as a landmark the experiences of the Subcarpathia and Central Slovakia regions, but also taking into account the local specificities.

Conclusions outline the relevant issues that emerged during the course of conducting the study and summarize very well the findings of the conducted research.

In order to achieve this work, the author has resorted to a documentation from a variety of bibliographic sources, the list being comprehensive and diversified - 253 titles: books, scientific studies and articles, web resources. The selection was made carefully, so that the titles are representative for the theme, a fact that led to the achievement of a comprehensive research, with a consistent volume of information processed thoroughly, which did not prevent maintaining a global vision of the issues approached. Simultaneously, the author highlighted his own views and opinions, arguing and basing them from the scientific point of view.

For the elaboration of the book, he also resorted to synthesizing in a personal manner of some theoretical concepts, having as basis important works from the professional literature. These processes were absolutely necessary because they facilitated the understanding of the regional development evolution and of the implications of tourism in reaching the regional policy objectives. In the pages of the book it is used an adequate scientific language, the approach constantly referring to the current national and international professional literature.

The collection of the necessary information for the research was also based on the use of data from official statistics, published by the National Institute of Statistics of Romania, the Statistical Central Office of Poland, the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, Eurostat and the World Bank. There were also used data obtained from own processing, resulted from the application of some statistical-mathematical methods, which allowed the highlighting of some aspects concerning the evolution of tourism. The statistical methods (the calculation of the evolution indexes, the analysis of the significant differences, the analysis of correlations) and the use of various types of graphs contributed to synthesizing and analyzing the information.

The paper highlights laborious research, uses an accessible, coherent and lofty style, keeping at the same time the scientific rigor, the terminology and the concepts specific for the field being

used properly. The approached theme has also practical implications, through the fact that it gave the possibility to draw some development directions of tourism in the North-East region based on the experience of some similar regions from Poland and Slovakia. The research carried out allowed the author to reveal the fact that the North-East region registers an average tourist activity, compared to the other regions of Romania. Tourism hasn't a significant share in the economy, nor in the North-East region or nationally, but this field can have a considerable importance in certain areas. It is a fact that tourism development can bring important benefits: increasing revenues received, increasing employment, use of unused resources and stimulation of some related economic branches. The comparison of the North-East region with Subcarpathia and Central Slovakia shows that the tourist activity in the latter is much more intense than in the other two. It is noteworthy that the work outlines the fact that in the context of Poland, Slovakia and Romania adhering to the EU, there were recorded: positive evolutions of tourist activity in the Subcarpathia region, less relevant changes in Central Slovakia (maintenance of the intense tourist activity), less significant effects on tourism in the North-East region.

In the elaboration of this work the author has used the experience gained from specializations conducted abroad: in Slovakia at Zvolen (2006), in France at Strasbourg (2006) and especially in Finland at Oulu University of Applied Sciences (2010), by participating at Intensive Program Socrates - Erasmus "Innovation in Rural Development". As a result of these internships, the conducted research benefited from a better documentation.

The information obtained and the conclusions formulated after conducting the research may prove their *utility* by the fact that there is the possibility for them to be considered as basis for the elaboration of different strategies for the future development of tourism, in order to solve the current problems of tourism and to improve certain aspects related to the capitalization of the opportunity of joining the EU. The approach of such a research theme has its *opportunity* in the possibility of using it as a useful tool in decision making of the authorities and organizations from this activity sector.

The *methodology of the research* is appropriate for this approach, using the following investigation tools: analysis, observation, induction, deduction, causal explanation, synthesis, comparison, classification.

Regarding the *own contributions* and the *originality of the approached theme*, in theoretical terms, but especially in practical terms, several aspects are to be noted, among which we mention:

- the analysis of tourism from the perspective of regional development, observing the evolution of some tourism indicators and highlighting the influence of tourism activity on the economy;
- the elaboration of a documentary study about the evolution and the current state of knowledge in regional science, completed by clarifying the aspects and links with regional development;
- revealing the increasingly important role of tourism in the world economy, given the extraordinary development of this field;
- the resort to suitable statistical-mathematical tools for carrying out this work: evolution indexes for quantification of indicators course, the Anova method for revealing significant differences among the values of tourism indicators and correlative analysis to highlight the links among these indicators;
- measurement of tourism activity by making a comparison between the North-East region and the other regions of Romania and, then, comparing the North-East region with two other similar regions from Poland and Slovakia;
- highlighting, using statistical data, the impact which the EU adhesion had on the tourism activity in the three regions studied;
- drawing some directions of development for the tourism in the North-East region, based on the experience of Subcarpathia and Central Slovakia.

This ample work, both from theoretical and practical points of view, represents an original approach through which the author proves his capacity of analysis and synthesis. I can appreciate

that this book is the result of a valuable research work that meets all the requirements of an academic writing. The work is primarily recommended to academics and researchers in the economic field, but also to all those who want to deepen their knowledge in the field of tourism and regional development. This book has an obvious scientific character and we believe that it will make its contribution to the development of knowledge of the tourism phenomenon from a regional perspective, representing an important contribution to the specialty literature, to which it brings added value.