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RURAL TOURISM IN THE ROMANIAN CARPATHIANS

Mihaela DINU^{}, Adrian CIOACĂ^{**}, Monica RAȚIU^{*}, Andreea Diana PĂȘCUȚ^{*}*

Abstract: Rural tourism in Romania, which is based on a great number of natural and anthropogenic attractions, is considered to be a relatively new, but also an older practice at the same time. Tourism, as a form of activity that takes place in the rural areas of Carpathians in Romania, even though it started to be practiced in the last decades, became more and more popular after the 90s. The great tourism potential in the Romanian countryside brought into attention the positive economic changes that can occur in rural spaces with the practice of rural/agri-tourism. The main purpose of this study is to analyze both the evolution and the current state of rural tourism in the Carpathian area of Romania, in view of the well known fact that the Carpathians constitute the richest land space for tourist attractions in our country. Additionally, our aim is to reveal mainly those activities specific to mountain settlements that play a major role in the sustainable development of rural tourism. This research is both quantitative and qualitative in its structure and, despite the existence of poor statistical database in this field, some data regarding the tourism phenomenon in the mountain area have been provided by The National Institute of Statistics in Romania. In order to enrich our study, the following qualitative analysis completed the first one through online and field research carried out in different areas. Overall, the study will function to reveal the importance of finding out those activities appropriate for each rural destination in the Romanian Carpathians, the necessity for investment in both tourist infrastructure and service improvement, and also the decisive role that plans and strategies, both local and national, can have for sustainable tourism development.

Keywords: Rural tourism, Mountain area, Tourism product, Rural ecotourism, Romanian Carpathians.

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COPRENEURSHIP AND RURAL TOURISM: OBSERVATIONS FROM NEW ZEALAND AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

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Abstract. *This paper discusses copreneurship within rural tourism businesses in New Zealand. It presents a brief picture of the businesses and the respective owners/operators. As part of this, the paper explores the experiences of owners of rural tourism accommodation businesses in New Zealand within the framework of copreneurship. The paper shows that the rural tourism accommodation sector in New Zealand is characterized by lifestyle entrepreneurship, with non-economic lifestyle motivations being important stimuli to business strategy which suggests that a gendered ideology persists in copreneurial relationships in rural tourism. Copreneurial couples appear to engage in running the accommodation business using traditional gender-based roles mirroring those found in the private home. The paper reflects on the research undertaken in terms of both method and data collected, and presents some observations, along with future research directions.*

Keywords: *Copreneurship, Rural tourism, Gender, New Zealand.*

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METHODOLOGY OF DETERMINING THE AGRI-TOURISM POTENTIAL ON GEORGIA'S EXAMPLE

Dali NIKOLAISHVILI, Lika MATCHAVARIANI*, Otar DEMETRASHVILI**

“All provinces of Georgia, and generally the nature of that country, are the most beautiful on the face of the Earth”

Arthur Leist – German writer, publicist and translator

“Georgia is destined for tourism”

Franchesko Frangialli – Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

Abstract. *The goal of this paper is to elaborate the methodology of evaluating the agri-tourism potential based on comprehensive analysis and indicating the natural, social-economic and historic-cultural factors in Georgia that could encourage development of agri-tourism in the country. In order to achieve that goal based on GIS analysis and overlay procedures several different parameters according to Georgian administrative districts have been determined. These parameters were grouped in accordance with three main factors, which have the biggest impact on agri-tourism potential of Georgia. Particular attention was paid to some issues: systematization of data accrued in various scientific sources, evaluation of main driving forces and functions of agri-tourism potential, creation of database and thematic mapping. Based on the comprehensive analysis methodology of defining agri-tourism potential has been elaborated, which enables to define high and low agri-tourism potential of various administrative districts. The obtained results can be used in territorial planning. Maps of agri-tourism potential have been elaborated according to Georgia's administrative districts with the use of GIS technologies, which allow comparing the agri-tourism potentials of various districts with each other taking into consideration quantitative and qualitative indicators. Peculiarities of uneven territorial distribution of agri-tourism potential in Georgia have been revealed.*

Keywords: *Agri-tourism; Agri-tourism potential; Georgia.*

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RURAL TOURISM AND ARTS ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE NORTH CAROLINA APPALACHIAN MOUNTAINS

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Abstract. *Rural communities throughout North America rely on entrepreneurship for economic sustenance strategies. Accordingly, it is important to understand the attributes of rural communities that foster tourism entrepreneurship so that these supportive attributes can be nurtured and expanded. Using an online survey method, this study explores the characteristics of the communities and residents in the rural western North Carolina Appalachian Mountain region in the United States, and the relationship of those characteristics to tourism entrepreneurship in the region. It was found that communities with a high number of 'tourism package' elements contained significantly more tourism entrepreneurs. No significant relationship was found between entrepreneurial climate and number of tourism entrepreneurs. The relationships between various entrepreneurial traits of residents and the supply of tourism entrepreneurs were found to be significant; the higher the level of business skills, entrepreneurial mindset, networking skills, risk-taking traits, and "can-do" attitude of residents, the higher the supply of tourism entrepreneurs.*

Keywords: *Entrepreneur, Rural Tourism, Entrepreneurial Climate, Tourism Package, Resident*

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ANALYSIS OF THE PROCESS OF LOCAL AGRIFOOD PRODUCTS DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM IN A RURAL AREA: A CASE STUDY IN THE SOUTH OF BELGIUM

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Abstract. *This article considers the question of the relationships between tourism in a rural area and the valorisation of local agrifood products (LAPs). This research examines the role and position of LAPs that have been mobilized as resources for tourism development projects in rural areas, by means of a case study focusing on a territory in the south of Belgium. We approach this question by means of the analysis and understanding of the processes of valorisation for tourism. Using the concept of tourism valorisation, we aim to examine the role of the players involved in such campaigns, the conditions under which these are rolled out, as well as the resources and methods used. We seek in particular to understand how and why local agrifood products come to be part of the local tourist scene. More generally, the aim of the project is to understand how and under what conditions LAPs will become resources at the service of tourism strategies and projects in rural areas.*

Keywords: *Tourism valorisation; Local agrifood products; Rural areas; Tourism development projects, Belgium*

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RURAL TOURISM TO THE RESCUE OF THE COUNTRYSIDE? OLTENIA AS A CASE STUDY

Liliana POPESCU*, Amalia BADITA*

Abstract. *Tourism has been a driver for the economic development of many countries, ever more states considering the tourism sector as a priority, elaborating various policies for the development and promotion of their tourism offer on both national and international markets. During the last decades, rural tourism, having a long tradition in western European countries, is gaining popularity in the eastern part of the continent, national and local governments hoping that this form of tourism will help revive the economy of the countryside. The present paper aims at presenting the current state of rural tourism in Oltenia, one of Romania's development regions, the challenges for the development of rural tourism in the area, as well as the extent to which rural tourism is a realistic economic development option for rural areas.*

Keywords: *Rural tourism, Economic development, Tourism potential, Oltenia, Romania*

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RURAL TOURISM DEMAND: DURATION MODELING FOR DRIVE TOURISTS' LENGTH OF STAY IN RURAL AREAS OF THE UNITED STATES

Sangchoul YI, Jonathon DAY*, Liping A. CAI**

Abstract. *The current study applies the duration model to tourism demand for the rural drive-tourist market. Initially, three conventional demand estimation methods were performed to establish the demand for rural tourism, Ordinary Least Squares (OLS), Poisson model, and Negative Binomial model. These models were compared with the performance of the duration model. The duration model with log-logistic regression was ultimately selected because of its efficiency and accuracy in estimating rural tourism demand. The current study has found that socio-demographic characteristics and the characteristics of the trip are key determinants for rural drive-tourism demand.*

Keywords: *Drive Tourist, Duration model, Rural tourism demand, Survival analysis*

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RURAL TOURISM IN LIJIANG, CHINA, AND ITS IMPACT UPON THE LOCAL MINORITY COMMUNITIES

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Abstract. *The paper examines the critical links between rural tourism in a minority region, Lijiang, Southwest of China, and its impact upon the local ethnic group, the Naxi. The findings show that by and large, the rapidly developed tourism economy has indeed significantly modified the existing urban/rural division with regard to socioeconomic provisions, e.g. widened connections with the outside world including paved road, improved medical treatment, more employment opportunities and other public services. The traditional dichotomised society has been transformed to a multilayered model, in which a wider range population, especially those living in rural areas, can not only participate in tourism business but also benefit from its long-term social progress. Nonetheless, the advent of tourism triggered tensions between different social groups over the usage of limited resources and the distribution of tourism wealth. The study proposes that tourism in Lijiang is largely organised by local authority without implementing a proper negotiation procedure between different social groups to the extent of which some households were rather suffered than benefited from the immense economic boom. In future, the social mechanism that unevenly distributes its economic affluence will jeopardise its further development to certain extent.*

Keywords: *rural/urban division, socioeconomic improvement, mass grouped tourism*

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