

THE IDENTIFICATION, EVALUATION, QUANTIFICATION AND CAPITALIZATION THROUGH TOURISM OF THE AUTHENTIC RESOURCES FROM CRISANA-MARAMURES WITH THE PURPOSE OF ELABORATING A STRATEGY OF CROSS-BORDER INTEGRATED SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

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Abstract: Romania's integration in the EU is a long-term process and if considering tourism as the winning version for the national economic system, the suggested approach may be a key element. Identifying, assessing, quantifying, promoting and integrating the natural and anthropic, genuine and traditional heritage within a solid development strategy means goals and activities that are regularly structured and scientifically grounded through mechanisms and instruments accounting for such a scientific approach. Crișana and Maramureș are two historical provinces lying in the North-West of Romania, that are characterized by genuineness and traditionalism starting with their composing cells known as "countries", such as Oaș, Maramureș, Chioar, Beiuș, Zărand, up to particular towns. By applying some methods and instruments scientifically tested into other areas, by promoting the local features as standard element, by identifying the specific elements and mechanisms that set up the working of the traditional territorial systems, we can create the key of a scientific approach that is well grounded and supported by theory and practice, as being the foundation for producing a strategy and

some models to give value to the identified heritage. It is a scientific approach necessary in a context where globalization is about to standardize cultural values, and in the case of the Romanian area these are still priceless and hard to identify in other European countries.

Key words: Crișana, Maramureș, tourism resources, genuine heritage, functional territorial systems

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INTRODUCTION

Identifying, assessing, quantifying, promoting and integrating the natural and anthropic, genuine and traditional heritage within a solid development strategy is a necessary step in the permanent process of European integration of the Romanian political area. The current study is a theoretic element whose final goal is to highlight the logical sequence of some stages and activities necessary for reaching some practical purposes. Applying a methodology through proper instruments will mark out those resources characterized by genuineness and traditionalism in Crișana and Maramureș, two cross-border historical-geographical provinces. It is a scientific approach necessary in a context where globalization is about to standardize cultural values, and in the case of the Romanian area these are still priceless and hard to identify in other European countries. Taking an account of these elements and creating other “*in situ*” preservation models are necessary steps to prevent the menace of their disappearance or transformation; in the circumstances of an emphasized mobility of meanings and frequency of the international movement, this process may take place in a very short time. The Romanian countryside has a reach source of genuine and traditional elements, which corresponds with the practical and theoretical grounding of the initiated scientific approach, representing thus the fixed foundation element. Simultaneously, the second dynamic element, the peasant, has to be considered as designer of this area, creator of traditional elements produced by his daily needs and who, in the present circumstances has to be made responsible for, educated and motivated for these assets, customs and traditions in the context of a suitable natural environment. The natural and the anthropic environment are inherently connected, one’s changes determining effects in the other’s structure, which assumes the production of some incorporated strategies and intervention plans. Applying a suitable methodology in a context of composing elements of some territorial systems, on different scales, yet functional and produced by the territorial facts will produce models that can be applied within some strategies focused on complementarity and peculiarity.

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

The great variety of the physical-geographical conditions, the great number of depressions located at the margin of the mountains or within, the significant riches in soil and subsoil distinguished themselves within those units called “the countries”, like “natural fortresses” that offered since the oldest times some of the best conditions for the population to set and settle (Ilieș, 1999). For this purpose, on the territory of Crișana and Maramureș, broadened from northward Tisa up to southward Mureș, at the margin or within the mountains there exist since the beginning: “Zărand Land”, “Beiuș Land”, “Oaș Land”, “Maramureș Land”, “Lăpuș Land”, “Chioar Land”, (figure 1) etc. Currently everybody is aware of those territorial groupings, places that people are curiously fond of, and which do not correspond with any other objective division that is to be spotted nowadays. Thus, hundreds of ages afterwards, the feeling of belonging perpetuates from one generation to another, and the territorial unit is a mental construction. The same patrimonial value has other areas such as The Crișul Repede Valley, The Ierul Valley, Sylvania Country, The Codru Region, The Crișuri Plain, The Someș Plain etc.

METHODS AND METHODOLOGY

The information analysed within the current study comes from authors' direct observations took on the spot for many years, as well as from official sources of statistical data such as the local, regional and national statistical institutes in Romania. The methodological basis relies on the total of elements forming the system-region or the territorial system (Ianoş, 2000), whose analysis implies two stages, each presenting specific phases: *diagnosis*, that concerns precisely setting the current state of the system; *prognosis*, that implies drawing up the design of the future state of the system with the purpose of preventing possible shortcomings. By using the structure of a territorial system according to their suitability for a certain type of managing the space, the four categories of components: *general*, *favourable circumstances*, *restrictive and pressure*, the potential of each component and its suitable or restrictive nature towards a certain type of exploitation may be precisely quantified, assuring thus optimum space management (Ianoş, 2000). Simultaneously, in the context of a regional study, identifying the three sets of components is necessary: *support components*, that group all the elements of the natural environment, respectively the possibilities of fructifying them along with the risks, *intervention components*, represented by the human component and its habitat; *derived components* (Cocean, 2005).

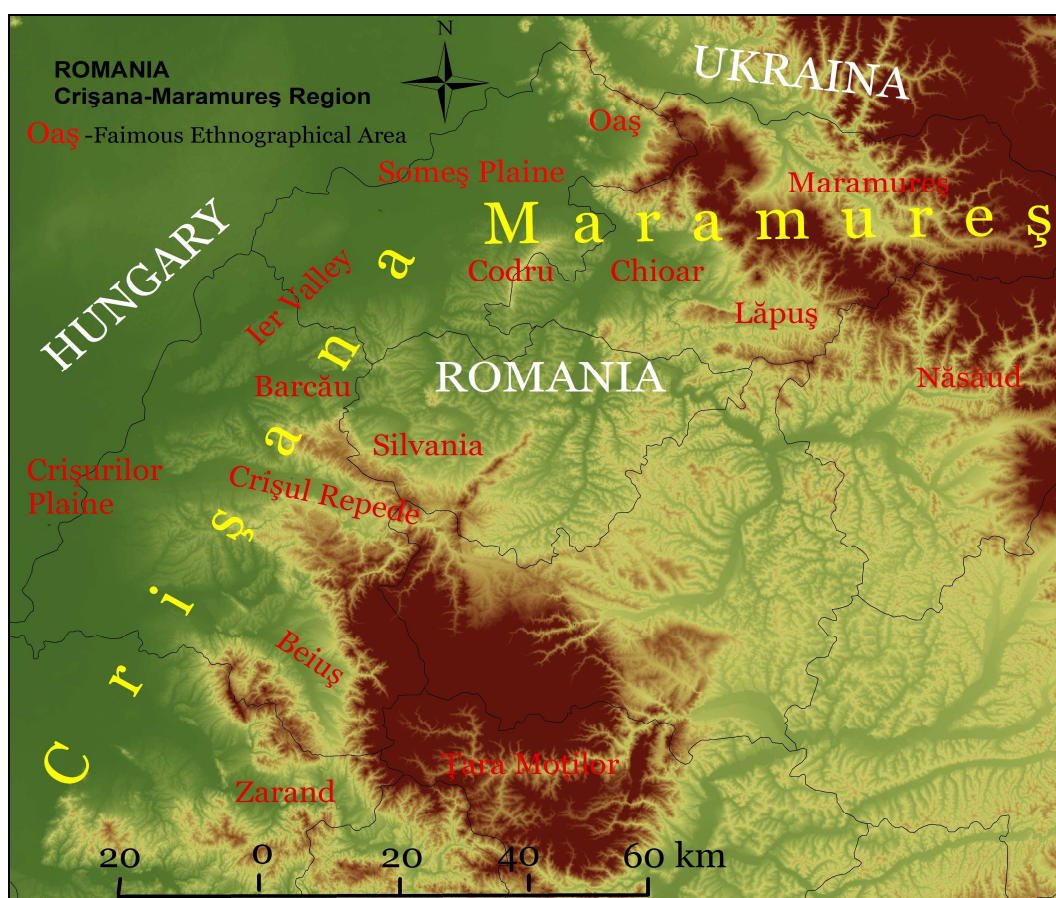


Figure 1. Romania. Crişana-Maramureş region and its famous ethnographical area

Starting from the two framework-concepts mentioned, simultaneously with using some models that have already been applied into other areas and identifying the specific elements and mechanisms that set up their working, we can create the key of a well grounded scientific

approach. Promoting the concept of integrated tourism (Rieser, 2000) and creating functional territorial systems on different scales (Ianoș, 2000; Cocean and Filip, 2008; Ilieș and all., 2009a), by using principles, methods and instruments checked in the specialized literature (Martinez, 1994; Hall and Lew, 1998; William, 1998; Timothy, 2001, 2002; Cazalais and all, 2000; Ianoș, 2000; Cocean, 2005; Veal, 2006; Ciangă and Dezsi, 2007; Bufon, 2008; Ilieș, 2008 etc) constitutes the pattern of a scientific approach that is trying to ground answers to the three questions *where? why? and how?* as to end by identifying nuclei of the local and regional development in the suburb areas.

From methodological point of view another significant aspect is to establish optimum working parameters of the territorial system subject to land management based on the specific elements of the tourism management concept (Ciangă and Dezsi, 2007, 32-33; Ilieș and all, 2009) such as: adapting the territory subject to land management in comparison with the peculiarities of the genetic factors; the complex character of the action irrespective of the taxonomic rank; implementing a systemic vision; creating some convertible and multifunctional systems; real quantitative and qualitative knowledge of the attractive resources; professional assessment of the natural environment tolerance limit, beyond which the emerged imbalances lead to damage of the system functioning mechanisms. Thus, for a territorial system to become model applicable in places where the composing subsystems are complete and systemic only from the point of view of the natural environment, encountering big differences from the point of view of the development level, the basic strategy has to combine flexibility, differentiation and diversity (Erdeli and Gheorghilaș, 2006; Timothy and Boyd, 2003). The LFA (Logical Framework Approach) analysis assures: accuracy and relevance of the information necessary for the decision factors, fast and efficient communication between the parts involved (Ianoș, 2000, 135) in achieving the land management project. In the same analytical context, another important aspect is that of economic efficiency, simultaneously with the long term preservation of the environment (Butler, 1991; Murphy, 1994; Timothy, 1999, Ilieș D., 2008) and good practices that ground the sustainable development of tourism (Bramwell and Lane, 1993, 2; Timothy, 1999; Castaldini, 2008) based on principles as: ecological integrity, efficiency, equity and balanced integration (Wall, 1993; Timothy, 1999, 183).

ANALYTICAL COMPONENT. DEBATE

In order to reach the general objectives applicable in the first phase of fulfilling such a scientific approach we mention as imposed activities: clear delimitation of the analysis area; informational and methodological documentation etc. In a second stage, having an environment clearly delimited from territorial-administrative point of view, for a realist theoretical and applicable grounding we detail the specific objectives, activities and methodological aspects to end with identifying the key elements in producing a strategy and some integration models of the touristic heritage of Crișana and Maramureș.

Gathering the information is being achieved through continuous on-spot activities in the countryside towns and especially in the “pilot” ones (figure 2) in Maramureș and Crișana, by carrying out thematic video and photographic documents, by studying the specialized documentation in libraries and other specialized institutions etc. Valuable bibliographic resources (Dezsi, 2006; Ilieș, 2006; Ilieș, 2007; Pușcaș, 2007; Cocean and Fillip, 2008; Josan, 2009) may be indentified within the archiving centres and libraries of the university centres in Cluj-Napoca, Bucharest, Timișoara, Oradea etc, in *The Țării Crișurilor* museum of Oradea, *The Țării Oașului* museum of Negrești-Oaș, *Maramureș* museum of Sighetu-Marmației, *Ethnographic Museum of Transylvania* of Cluj-Napoca, *County* museum of Satu Mare etc. Within the pilot towns, based on an action plan, activities of identifying, registering and quantifying the genuine heritage elements are required. Simultaneously, the framework elements for identifying the genuine character are being composed, outlined, updated and settled, with the possibility of extrapolation to the whole analysed area. Based on these elements, the other towns of the analysis area will also be listed and ranked for the final purpose of producing an image as clear and as real as possible of what genuine and traditional mean and where they can still be found.

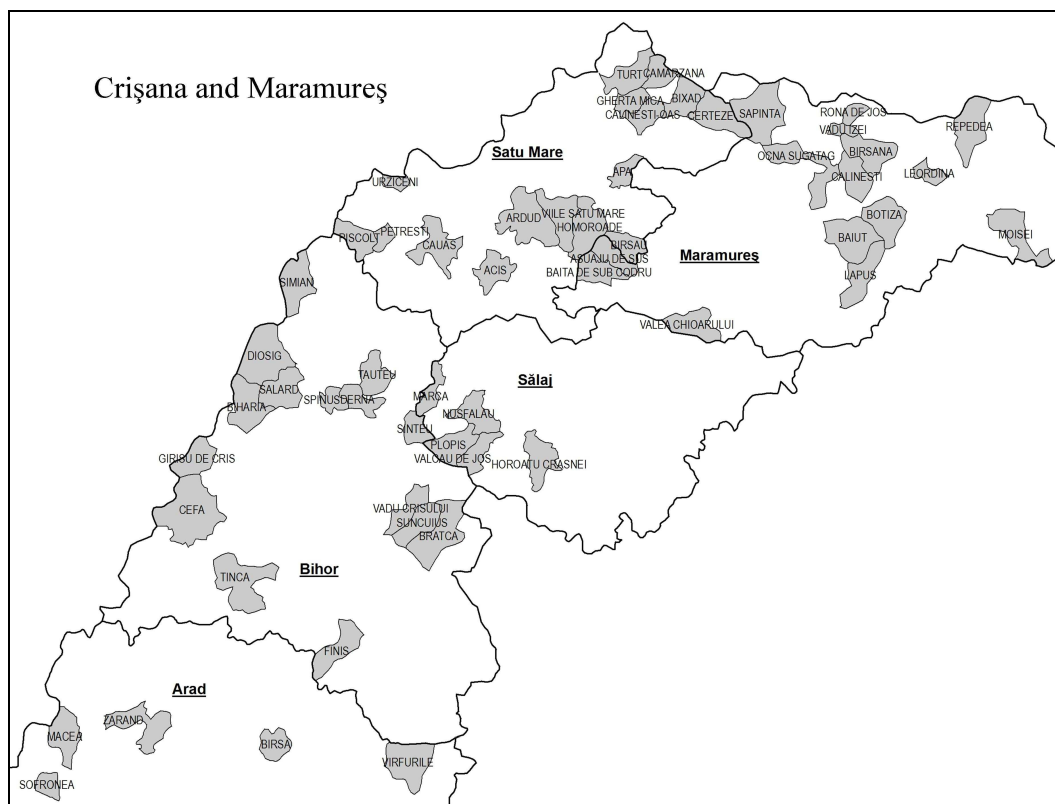


Figure 2. Representatives “Pilot” villages from study area of Crișana and Maramureș (proposal)

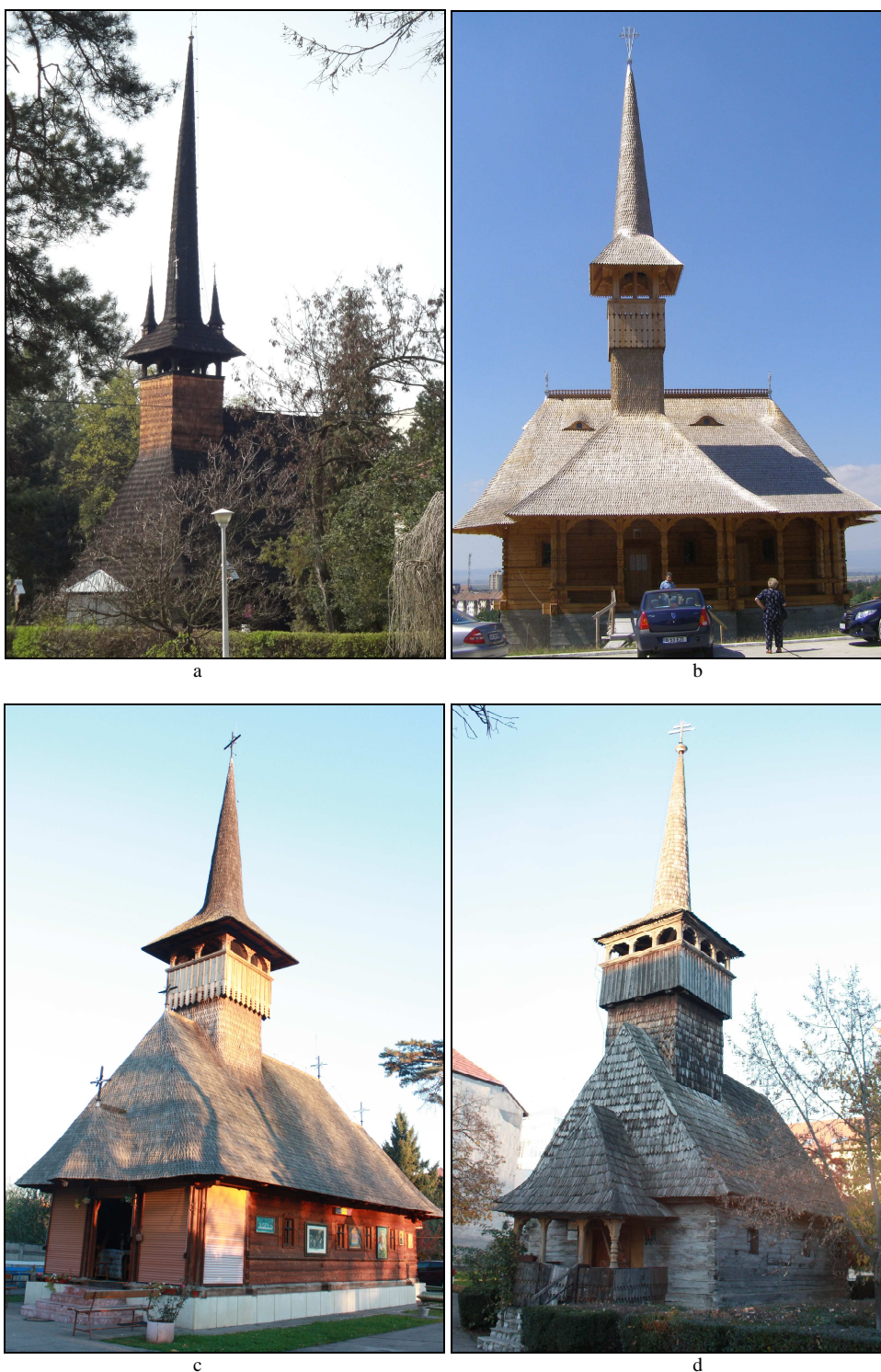
Creating a database structured on operational categories by basic selection and processing of the available information implies similar activities and a methodology with instruments adjusted to the structure of the database. In this ongoing stage the digital format is being created, the basic information is being introduced and processed in the database etc. Thus, the information gathered from the practical activities and the databases of specialized institutions are being entered in the project database which is managed through specific software, having the possibility of being permanently updated and creating specific and typical graphic and cartographic products (figure 3).

Developing some specific concepts and models by outlining some characteristic areas implies creative, analytical activities based on complementarity and interdisciplinarity. The suggested approach becomes a certainty through regular debates of the work team on one hand, and discussions between them and other specialists in the field on the other hand, starting from the working hypotheses and directions previously launched as basis of the new experimentation direction producing experienced methodological hypotheses.

Continuous study of the effects of “globalization” and “cultural levelling” on the genuine component of the touristic potential ease our access to identify the main ways and means that put at risk the genuine traditional resources. Simultaneously with creating some measures and means of “stopping” this levelling approach, producing an “immune system” able to react to the harmful stimuli of “modernism” and non-culture is a necessary step. This approach is based on continuous actions, carried out through investigations and surveys took in the studied area, through making the local characters aware of the menaces created by “globalization”, for in the end to identify, organize and scientifically establish alternative solutions chosen from the local area, instead of the universal ones (figure 4 a and b).



Figure 3. Data base models and cartographic product (2010): Quantitative and qualitative evaluation of wooden-gate from Sârbi Village (Maramureș)



Figures 4. Wooden Churches in “*maramureș*” style built in: a.) Băile Felix Spa, Bihor County; b.) Covasna Resort, Covasna County; c.) Oradea – Armatei Române str.; d.) – Wooden Church “imported” from Sălaj County (Letca village) in campus of University of Oradea)

Establishing the acquired methods, techniques and models compatible with the analysed environment is an ongoing action for obtaining the scientific certification of the research results. A significant aspect in point of view of identifying the territory with traditional and genuine values is the reference time sequence. Thus, we can highlight very old structures and elements that can act only as background and temporal cultural mark, without being actively included in the tourism circuit. That is why, in terms of methodology, based on the territorial facts and bibliographical sources, in case of each territorial structure included in the research area it is necessary even from the beginning, a temporal position depending on the historic thresholds that seriously marked the architectural style of the households in the Romanian countryside (figure 5). Considering the lifespan of such an element of “material heritage” as core when speaking of the households, 4 temporal sectors can be identified: prior to the First World War, the inter-war period, the socialist period and the post-socialist one. Such a typology was drawn up in case of Oaș Country by M. Ilieș in 2006, which caught the way in which the houses of Oaș evolved, “*that passed through at least 6 initial phases, overlapped with coexistence periods.*” (Ilieș M., 2006, 162, 164). Scientific grounding of these 4 temporal sectors is necessary to be achieved as a result of an extensive activity on the spot with the purpose of identifying, mapping, registering, assessing and quantifying the specific structures and elements of the areas subject to research as regards quantity and quality. Simultaneously with this temporal scale, another one is necessary, namely that of the comeback of a certain traditional style, one that is stylized again in most of the cases and that may represent a trend for the contemporary period.



Figura 5. Alternatives for new and old – Solution for the tradition conservation: Sârbi Village from “Maramureș Land” (left); Botiza Village from “Maramures Land” (right)

Promoting preservation and protection of the in situ genuine ethnographic-cultural heritage and local and national legislative support represents a set of objectives based on approaches carried out in promoting actions of the local heritage values among and with the local characters. For this purpose, promoting some norms to preserve and protect the genuine heritage is highly important in order to avoid actions that led to its quantitative and qualitative decrease. With this aim in view we mention the selling of frame houses of Maramureș to some foreign contractors, who subsequently demolished them, and the wood having significant value and age became fit for export for the Italian furniture industry. Within the same approach we map and register through practical activities the elements newly introduced in the rural system under the care of developing the rural infrastructure and with the help of some significant European and governmental funds. These measures are absolutely necessary to qualitatively restrict the size of the catastrophe affecting the genuine values of a traditional countryside. Two basic principles are necessary of being implemented in drawing up the solid local and regional development strategies: cooperation and complementarity (figure 6a and b).



Figure 6a. Cooperation. Wooden Church from Apșa de Jos (Dibrova), Ucraina (romanian village); left and wooden church from Săpânța Village (Maramureș; right)



Figure 6b. Complementarity. Traditional female port from Ukrainian village Ruscova (Maramureș Land) (left); traditional port from Romanian village Budești (Maramureș Land)

KEY-ELEMENTS IN ELABORATION PROCESS OF STRATEGY AND INTEGRATION MODELS OF TOURIST PATRIMONY

Drawing up a strategy and some models of cross-border integration of the tourist heritage of Crisana and Maramures with that of the adjacent border areas carries on through practical activities in the corresponding Hungarian and Ukrainian border area with the purpose of knowing the facts specific to the analysed theme aiming at complementarity and cooperation. The development of some cross-border relation systems showing high degree of functionality is based upon the population's freedom to relocate and the easiness of trespassing the state borders. In this context, the analysed area may be identified with one or more of the 4 types of cross-border relations between adjacent states, proposed by Martinez (1994, 3-4): without relations; coexisting (minimum opening); interdependent and integrated. In this context, within the actions performed one identifies elements that may compete and those that can be managed in complementary cross-border systems. In the first case, we

are trying to identify solutions and models that transform a potential rivalry into integrated and functional systems using juxtaposed systems (figure 7). For example, we have the situations in the historical Maramureș located on both banks of the Tisa river where one can find both common elements that may produce circuits symbolized by a cross-border approach, and elements that can produce complementary tourism systems with cross-border functioning.



Figure 7. Romanian-ukrainian cross-border territorial system with tourist function (model; Ilieș and Grama, 2010, 141)

Tourism planning and land management is based upon a key-concept – flexibility (Ciangă, Dezsi, 2007, 26), and in case of the cross-border territorial systems, planning typology is based upon the systemic plan (Williams, 1998, 127-129; Martinez, 1994; Timothy, 1999; Ilieș and Josan, 2009) where changing an element causes disorder in the whole system; the basic method required is to decipher the structure and understand its functioning. Thus, the interdependency of the 4 key-elements: space and time as development ground, activities and communication as instruments for action and dissemination, create the path for drawing up some models of tourism development of a cross-border system that may be implemented on different scales, aiming at different intervention hierarchical levels, from local and regional up to an international one (Williams, 1998; Ciangă, Dezsi, 2007, 27). For instance, changing the role and functions of the border, the rhythm and evolution of the phenomenon on an appropriate/inappropriate time segment causes deep structural-functional changes of a border and cross-border tourism system.

Within such an approach, the quantitative and qualitative assessment of the tourism system components, the interdependency relations between them on one hand and with the system on the other, are based upon: the geographical setting; relief structure and degree of accessibility; climatic conditions; means of communication system; connections with other systems and subsystems; quantitative, structural and qualitative features of the tourism resources; initiating the development

of the rural tourism activities; socio-economic and political conditions etc. All these are elements that create a favourable/unfavourable framework for strengthening and good functioning of an integrated tourism system.

Instead of **conclusions** we specify that by going over the stages presented, the purpose of such a scientific grounded approach will produce key-elements in **drawing up a strategy and some integration models** of the identified heritage, among which:

- *Land management models imported and implemented without being adapted to area peculiarities.* For this purpose, it is important that the identity and defining elements of rural and cultural tourism mingle with the facts in the area and the genuine character of the inherited traditions. A realistic measure on this line would have required separating the boarding houses and the rural boarding houses into two categories: a lower category (1-5 stars) which would comprise those households included in the tourism programmes, but which are not typical for the architectural style of the region; and a higher category (more than 5 stars) for buildings in compliance with the traditional architectural style (figure 8a and 8b). The first group, should it benefit from minimum investments, would allow the owner to get some supplementary incomes by including those buildings in the touristic circuit; the second group, more expensive, being the main attraction, could benefit from financial support (a form of subvention) according to the degree of authenticity and illustration of the local peculiarities. As compared to the first category, the second one is also a motivation for developing the tourism process.

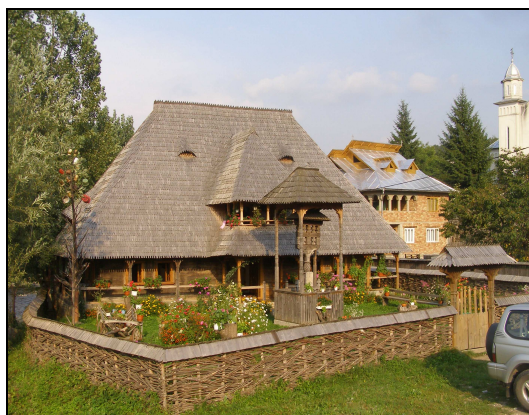


Figure 8a. Tourist pension in according with architectural style of region (Botiza village – Maramureș)



Figure 8b. Tourist pension in a new modern house (Ferești village, Maramureș)

- *Reassessment, promotion and re-branding.* Comparing the information gathered through the office work with those during the practical activities, updating it and completing the documents with the features of the new data, are steps taken in order to redesign the idea of genuine tourism based on territorial facts, getting thus to know the real situation of what has been left from “*traditional and genuine*”, being able to estimate the importance of the forged counterfeit as compared to the destroyed authenticity, respectively the one that should be preserved in situ. As starting point for reaching some objectives requested by such a scientific approach, selecting, assessing, quantifying and classifying the information gathered during the practical activities are being necessary; this necessity is determined also by the fact that most of the specialized literature with reference to the natural and anthropic resources and especially of the cartographic ones that are tourism specific are old and out of date. By synthesizing the information one can create specific models comparable with those existing in the specialized literature, but adapted to the area peculiarities. Oaș, Chioar, Codru, Lăpuș, Maramureș, Ier, Plopiș, Beiuș or Zarand may be the main areas reassessed and classified as models having representative territorial structures for the Romanian ethnographic-cultural tourism,

underlying at the same time the promotion of the brand specific for each region. In order not to introduce and promote non-native elements within the functioning mechanism of a traditional functional system, it is necessary to study the effects of “globalization” upon authenticity (which is part of the touristic potential), and to identify the main ways and means that put at risk the genuine traditional resources. It is a difficult, but not impossible to achieve objective which implies a broad campaign of making people aware of the values, mainly at the local level then up to the international one. One can note that the deterioration of the authentic patrimony is due to a great extent to the local characters and to the fact that the specialists do not get involved into taking the decisions regarding preservation and management of a rural wealth that is getting poorer and poorer.

Traditional versus modern, authentic versus non-value. Tradition and authenticity are traits often associated with the potential of the Romanian rural tourism. With this purpose, the “countries” of the Romanian ethnographic area are still real living museums where the environment and the lifestyle obviously differ from the western-European “civilization”. Lagging behind like this may be an extremely valuable advantage for the Romanian tourism, and the case of Maramureș, area of tradition and genuine values is relevant for this purpose (Ilieș and all, 2009b). It is necessary to include into the national programmes some components that aim at “*subventioning the maintenance of tradition and authenticity*” in the struggle against kitsch on a base resembling the activities carried out in agriculture (Ilieș and all, 2008). Thus, in a few years, like in the case the western rural tourism, trying to revive what has been left, we will have to stage old time plays with modern actors.

Non-native versus native. Another problem regards moving some traditional architecture elements from their origin area and implementing them into regions showing different ethnographic features (figure 9). It does not regard the open air regional museums (those in Bucharest, Sibiu, Cluj-Napoca etc) where Romanian original and representative elements are grouped, but introducing some non-native elements to the detriment of the native traditions. The effects of such approaches will be devastating upon area peculiarities, distorting reality and making it impossible for the young generations to distinguish the characteristics of the place where they were born or currently live. It is a process whose effects are similar to globalization and cultural levelling by: decrease of the interest for the source areas, occurring thus the possibility of admiring an architecturally distorted church of Maramureș, right in the centre of Bucharest.



Figure 9. Wooden Church in “maramures” architectural style, moved from Cornești Village (Maramureș) in “Maramureș Land” Museum of Sighetu Marmației (Maramureș; left); Wooden Church in “Maramureș” architectural style built in Băile Felix Spa (Bihor; right)

Under these circumstances, we can estimate that the fast change of villages raises the problem of saving the architectural heritage formed of wood, stone, reed or other specific materials, by identifying, recording, mapping and promoting a larger and larger number of local elements. The main menaces are the cheap kitsch and distorted or outdated information. Following the suggested logical approach by identifying some answers to the questions *where? why? and how?* leads to positive answers and implicitly to territorial systems showing high degree of functionality.

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