

CONȚIU, HADRIAN-V. - **BAZELE GEOGRAFICE ALE FENOMENULUI TURISTIC** [The Geographical Bases of the Tourism Phenomenon], Presa Universitară Clujeană, Cluj-Napoca, 2012 (B5 format, 382 pages, out of which: 360 pages of text, 48 figures and 39 tables within the text, 12 maps, 274 references and 51 websites, 3 pages of Summary and 4 pages of Contents, as well as 414 footnotes). ISBN 978-973-595-384-3



The Geographical Bases of the Tourism Phenomenon completes the series of books (quite a large one, highlighted also by the bibliographical sources quoted by the author) that focus on tourism from a geographical perspective, bringing an up to date vision upon its latest research trends.

The author placed the analysed phenomenon in the context of sustainable development and thus he placed once more tourism in direct connection to the practical requests of Geography in the 21st century. He also underlined the interdisciplinary features of tourism from a conceptual and methodological point of view and especially from the perspective of social and economic practice.

In the *Foreword* to his book, Hadrian Conțiu gave a series of arguments from the field of economy in order to support the necessity of a new

study on the tourism phenomenon (that he named “a real barometer of the society” – p. 9). Therefore, he used statistical data made public by the World Tourism Organisation in order to bring to the front the magnitude that tourism had in the world and its dynamics. Moreover, this kind of statistics is in itself a strong enough argument to facilitate understanding for anybody that tourism is “a stimulating factor of the world economic system, having an active role in the process of development and modernisation of the economy of any state that engages in developing this sector” (p. 9).

In addition, the author also gave arguments through the importance that social research and especially geographical research had in order to shed light on the complexity of this human activity: “The purpose of this book is related to the necessity of clarifying the essence of the tourism phenomenon, which has a bipolar structure, social and economic, and tends to be deformed while undergoing changes caused by the results of the ‘smokeless industry’; placed under the mirage of financial efficiency, the research of the tourism phenomenon risks sliding forever towards the economic approach at the expense of its social and obvious geographical approaches” (p. 10).

Tourism space is part of the geographical one and therefore tourism is one of the main research subjects of Geography. Thus, the author brought conceptual and methodological clarifications realising in this way an introduction to the research of the tourist activity from a geographical perspective.

The *Foreword* is succeeded by a chapter on a series of notions that the author considered to have the value of introducing the reader (1) to approaching tourism as a complex phenomenon for research in Geography and for research from an interdisciplinary point of view, (2) to the Geography of Tourism and to the contribution that this branch of Geography as well as geographical research as a whole had to researching and developing tourism.

After presenting the necessary introductory notions, the author divided the book in three parts including ten chapters.

Part 1, The methodological and conceptual basis, included two chapters that were meant to make the reader familiar with the tourism phenomenon. In this context, in

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Chapter 1, the author presented research principles, methods, means and methods used in the Geography of Tourism, models of spatial analysis of the tourism phenomenon (models of tourist fluxes focusing on trips or on itineraries; structural models and evolution models for tourist fluxes), methods and indicators for analysing the tourism phenomenon (methods of obtaining statistical information and indicators of tourist activity).

Chapter 2, *Concepts, definitions and opinions*, hosted author's research on the notions of *tourist* and of *tourism*, spare time and leisure, tourists and their typology and other notions that illustrate the essence of the tourism phenomenon (tourism infrastructure and material basis; tourist facilities and tourist resorts; tourist fluxes; tourist products, etc.).

Part 2, *The tourism phenomenon. Genesis, evolution, and typology*, consisted of four chapters. In Chapter 1 the author analysed tourism motivation according to Maslow's model of making a hierarchy of human needs.

Chapter 2 presented *the genetic factors of the tourism phenomenon* (the general ones – economic, demographical, psychological, political, and social factors – and the restrictive ones), after classifying them according to a series of criteria.

In Chapter 3, the author presented the *appearance and evolution of the tourism phenomenon* identifying five stages: incipient tourism and tourist trips during Antiquity; the Middle Ages; the 15th to the 17th c. stage; the industrial revolution and the appearance of modern tourism and of contemporary tourism.

In Chapter 4, on *Types and forms of tourism*, the author discussed a series of classification criteria and peculiarities and then defined, characterised and exemplified the major types of tourism, the classical forms of tourism and other forms of tourism such as urban tourism, rural tourism, eco-tourism, and agro-tourism.

Part 3 on *Tourism Potential* included four chapters. Chapter 1, *Terminology used in studying tourism potential*, is valuable due to its rich theoretical basis: the author identified opinions and systemised terminology used in studying the tourism potential and he also presented a critique of the use of

this terminology in contemporary Romanian geographical literature.

In the frame of a classical presentation from a geographical point of view, in Chapter 2 and 3, the author characterised *the natural tourism potential* (the geomorphologic, the climatic, the hydrological and the biogeographical potential) and *the human generated one* (the potential of prehistoric vestiges, of historical edifices, of religious edifices and of religious tourism, of cultural edifices and of cultural events, of economic edifices and activities, of leisure arrangements and activities, of edifices for sports and of major sporting events, etc.).

Chapter 4 is on *Assessing tourism potential*, where the author compared the role of quantitative and qualitative methods in approaching the tourism phenomenon and that were meant to assess individual's perception on tourism potential, his objectivity and subjectivity in measuring this potential.

The author superimposed on a classical analysis scheme of the tourism phenomenon from a geographical point of view, *a modern, innovative perspective*. He approached tourism from a narrower and more specialised perspective, the geographical one, and, at the same time, he placed it in the larger and richer in meanings perspective of sustainable development, by discussing the economic, social, and environmental impact of tourism, also stating that "*Geography offers not only to geographers, but also to the others a support for a better understanding, in the context of sustainable development, of relationships between tourism and the environment we inhabit*" (p. 11).

The book written by Hadrian-V. Conțiu is a comprehensive approach on this subject, and this quality, together with the clarity, rigour, and pertinence of the theoretical and methodological writing on the Geography of Tourism, recommend it as compulsory reading for those who start studying the tourism phenomenon, no matter their specialisation: geographers, economists, social scientists, etc.

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