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Long-distance attachments and implications for tourism development: the case of the Western Ukrainian diaspora

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ABSTRACT

This study analyzes the perspectives of roots tourism through the experiences of Western Ukrainian diaspora members. Their sense of attachment to the ancestral homeland and their visits to the places of origin are investigated, together with the views by tour operators specialized in roots tourism and public authorities dealing with tourism in the region, evaluating the actual or potential impact in terms of tourism development opportunities. The peculiar history of this territory makes it a distinct research target, with dynamics that are different from the rest of the country. The desire to turn Western Ukraine into a solid tourist destination and the aim of stimulating economic development in a region that is still struggling to re-emerge from its marginality are widespread and form a fertile basis for the growth of diaspora tourism as a solid asset. Lights and shadows emerge from the diaspora tourists' experiences and perceptions. Specialized tour operators clearly see the enhancement of this form of tourism as an important business opportunity, while public authorities are not currently focusing on this segment, preferring general tourism promotion.

1. Introduction

The term "diaspora" generally tends to include many kinds of population groups, such as migrants, political refugees, foreign workers, overseas communities, ethnic and religious minorities living out of their original homelands for different reasons (Mitchell, 1997; Shuval, 2000). These people usually maintain cultural and psychological attachment to their places of origin, even after several generations (Baldassar, 2001; King, 2010; Stephenson, 2002). According to the new mobilities paradigm, travel and communication technologies have enabled the multiplying of connections and such distant and intermittent connections are crucial in holding social life together (Sheller & Urry, 2006). One of the most common ways to keep bonds with the homeland is traveling with the aim of preserving or strengthening personal and emotional links and to re-discover the places or re-define their often hybrid identity (Kelner, 2010). A key theme is a search for identity reaffirmation and a connection with one's cultural roots, a quest that may re-affirm a sense of

belonging that may be absent in the host country (Coles & Timothy, 2004; Duval, 2003; Hall & Williams, 2002).

English terms such as “roots tourism” and “diasporic”, “genealogical”, “ancestry” or “nostalgic” tourism embrace this form of travel and underline its two main dimensions: identity and tourism. People are motivated to travel to places where they believe they have roots and from where their families are thought to have originated.

Topics related to roots tourism have been covered by scholars such as Basu (2005), McCain and Ray (2003), and Coles and Timothy (2004). According to Basu (2005), the “return to the roots” is a real physical movement, as well as an act of belonging expressed through visits to ancestral heritage locations, and a more generalized collective project of connection to the homeland. McCain and Ray define roots tourists as “individuals who travel to engage in genealogical endeavors, to search for information or to simply feel connected to ancestors and ancestral roots”. Similarly, Cole and Timothy consider roots tourism as a form of personal heritage tourism which involves people who possess emotional connections to the land of their ancestors.

However, depending on the complexity of individual and collective histories, for some members of the diaspora subsequent visits to the homeland may reinforce their homeland-identity whilst for others it may heighten their sense of hybridity (Kibria, 2003; Louie, 2004; Stephenson, 2002; Tie, Holden, & Park, 2015).

This study contributes to the literature on roots tourism by exploring and discussing visits to the homeland made by members of the Ukrainian diaspora, and their descendants, living in Canada and the USA, after their emigration from the region of the present Western Ukraine, with its specific socio-economic features that turned it into a place of origin for important flows of migrants between the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries. Specifically, this study analyzes what induces those people to visit Ukraine, how they perceive and experience the places, and how tourism business and local authorities deal with this segment of the tourism market, in order to evaluate its current and potential impact within the tourism sector in Western Ukraine and the rest of the country.

The main originality of the study stands in the investigation on diasporic heritage tourism in a relatively under-explored geographic/ethnic context. No comprehensive studies on the perspectives of roots tourism have been done in Ukraine, yet. Although some issues of nostalgic tourism development have been discussed by several authors (Kuzyk, 2011; Lozynskyy, 2012; Lozynskyy, Kuchynska, & Dorosh, 2013; Shandor & Klyap, 2013; Zubyk, 2013), and the question of the complex identity of the Ukrainian diaspora has been analyzed by Smith and Jackson (1999), Satzewich (2002), Wolowyna (1986), Isajiw (2010), the key issues related to the motivational behavior of nostalgic tourists, their relationship with the Ukrainian cultural environment, as well as the aspects related to the organization of related travel services and the opportunities for local development in Ukraine, also considering the role of local and national authorities, have not been sufficiently explored, yet.

The ultimate aim of this survey is to evaluate the role that roots tourism can have within cultural and rural tourism development in Ukraine. According to our findings, beyond the current geopolitical tensions and conflicts in the Eastern part of the country, with their heavy negative impact on tourism in the whole of the country, the Ukrainian diaspora needs focused, complex and well-grounded economic and cultural policies in order to preserve and strengthen significant relations between the current places of living and the

regions of origin over longer terms and thus become a strong and recognized tourism segment.

2. Roots tourism

Diaspora studies over the past decades have produced increasingly complex views on the relations among identities, places and transnationalism. According to Cohen (2008), diasporas emotionally and physically span across two cultures: their homeland and their adopted lands. Bhabha (1998) criticizes the traditional monolithic concept of diaspora and calls for recognition of growing cultural hybridization, while Stuart Hall (1990) argues that cultural identities are far from being eternally fixed in an idealized past, and are subject to the continuous “play” of history, culture and power. The relations among diasporic communities and their original homelands thus vary across time and space, with each case being different from the others (Mavroudi, 2007; Ní Laoire, 2003).

Various scholars (Brah, 1996; Cohen, 2008; Safran, 1991; Shuval, 2000) remark that diasporic peoples and their descendants generally maintain multiple connections with the homeland, preserve cultural memories and feel some degree of alienation from their current place and society of residence. Feelings of “in-betweenness” describing diasporic identities and the connections among people and the spaces of their past and present, may produce identity crisis, causing some people to wonder who they are and where they come from (Basu, 2007; Timothy & Guelke, 2008). Alternatively, individuals may embrace transnationalism and may feel comfortable, even at home, in more than one place.

In spite of the positive sides of living and integrating in a new place of residence, the feeling of nostalgia for homeland, people and places and the desire to seek or strengthen cultural and social identities are strong factors compelling trips back home (Baldassar, 2001; Hirsch & Spitzer, 2002; Iorio & Corsale, 2013), even for those whose ancestors migrated several generations earlier (Akhtar, 1999; Nguyen & King, 2004). According to Basu (2007), homeland visits imply a reassertion of a territorial basis of identity, since the past may be objectified or externalized in the landscape, which, at the same time, provides sources of identity for roots tourists.

Morley and Robins (1995), as well as Chambers (1994), argue that an over-emphasis on the homeland as the point of reference for identity construction may overshadow the fact that identity is continually being reconstructed in response to global forces; as a consequence, particularly among successive generations of diaspora, identity tends to be tied to a plurality of “places” rather than a single one (Featherstone, 1996; Friedman, 1999; Lowe, 1991).

This complexity is mirrored by the varied and composite motivations to visit a “homeland”, ranging from visiting relatives and friends, searching for roots, experiencing the land of the ancestors, maintaining cultural identities, attending festivals or celebrations and engaging in different forms of tourism (Baldassar, 2001; Lowenthal, 1985; Pickering & Keightley, 2006). Their experiences may be varied and prior expectations are not always met. Standards of living, social norms and political structures of the homeland, as well as the physical appearance of the places, may have changed since migrants left. Thus, a true homecoming may not be possible and the idealized picture of the homeland often collides with the reality of a place that has changed in the meantime (Brah, 1996; Levy,

2004; Markowitz, 2004; Read, 1996). The fear of facing these changes and the difficulty of accepting them are reasons why many former migrants decide not to travel back to their homelands (Baldassar, 2001; Smith & Jackson, 1999).

According to Duval (2003, p. 83), "the essence of measuring change and transformation is really one of comparison and identity negotiation". The outcome of self-evaluation in relation to the culture of the homeland may result in "troubling, disconcerting and ambiguous experiences as well as newfound ambivalences" (Coles & Timothy, 2004, p. 13). Several studies have focused on Chinese diaspora members born in the Western world visiting the "homeland" and failing to feel a sense of belonging, rather a sense of being "out of place" (Kibria, 2003; Louie, 2004). This sentiment was also expressed by the Italian diaspora of Australia returning to Italy, who found that the lifestyle had substantially changed from what they remembered or heard of, resulting in a reinforced connection with their "new" home (Thompson, 1980). In some cases, these ambivalent feelings and emotions are caused by disappointing reception in the ancestral homeland (Stephenson, 2002). For example, African-Americans returning to Ghana found themselves labeled as "obruni" by the local Ghanaians, meaning "white and foreign" despite their self-perceived identity of being black (Bruner, 1996). The interpretations of experiences of diaspora returning to their homeland are thus uncertain, ranging from a re-enforcement of association to challenging and uncomfortable cultural interactions that may alternatively reinforce a sense of a hybrid identity, enhancing the sense of social well-being and contentment in the new country (Chetkovich, 2002).

However, many roots tourists seem to achieve the sense of identity affirmation and belonging that they initially desired (Basu, 2007; Bruner, 1996). They tend to experience and consume the places symbolically (e.g. sightseeing, photographing, gazing) or materially (e.g. consuming local food, buying local products) (Coles & Timothy, 2004). The activities undertaken during the journey are usually focused on the experience of an emotional landscape which is reconstructed by visiting worship places and cemeteries, looking for houses where ancestors lived and places where they used to work and talking to local people with the hope of collecting information about ancestors (Basu, 2007; Nash, 2002; Timothy & Guelke, 2008). The landscape helps re-constructing not only personal family histories, but also broader community histories, either real or imagined, from where roots tourists believe to originate (Hirsch & Spitzer, 2002; Peleikis, 2007), even when little is known about individual ancestors or the exact places or houses where they lived (Basu, 2007; Bruner, 1996; Schramm, 2004).

Over the past decades, roots tourism has become increasingly popular, particularly amongst people of Irish, Scottish, Jewish and African-American descent living in North America and Australia (Birtwistle, 2005; Coles & Timothy, 2004). The implications of roots travel for tourism industry are relevant, although difficult to evaluate (Coles & Timothy, 2004; Timothy & Guelke, 2008).

In some cases, diaspora members, expatriates and other potential travelers with recognizable genealogical backgrounds have been targeted by tourism development agencies, leading to the production of institutionalized and commercialized diasporic travel services. According to Peleikis (2007), travelers in search of some kind of roots often behave as conventional tourists and engage in social practices described as tourism, such as gazing at landscape, taking photographs and videos, purchasing souvenirs and so on.

The remarkable business potential related to this phenomenon has led to the appearance of specialized travel agents and tour operators who offer dedicated products to diaspora tourists of various backgrounds (Basu, 2007; Legrand, 2002; Morgan, Pritchard, & Pride, 2002; Nash, 2002; Schramm, 2004; Timothy & Guelke, 2008). Professional family historians, accommodation and food service suppliers, and transportation providers linked with these forms of tourism are also growing in number (Timothy & Guelke, 2008).

Examples range from Ireland's National Tourism Development Authority, which manages the Discover Ireland website, providing support for tracing one's ancestors before embarking on a trip or upon arrival in the island, to the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs in the States of Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, which sponsors a project allowing persons of Indian origin to have their roots traced with the goal of increasing tourism and philanthropy within the Indian diaspora. The African Diaspora Tourism site shows the ways through which African countries are working to attract visitors including heritage tours, festivals, and other cultural events, with the active support of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).

Diaspora populations can also play an important role as bridges to broader markets. Tourists from the diaspora are more likely than most international tourists to have or make connections with the local economy, staying in locally-owned, smaller accommodations (or with relatives), eating in local restaurants, buying goods from local vendors, etc. While they may not spend as much money as foreign tourists, on average, diaspora tourists' stays tend to be longer and their expenditures are more likely to go directly into the hands of local businesses (Asiedu, 2005; Duval, 2003; King & Gamage, 1994). The hospitality of family and friends may defray some expenses. This may be counterbalanced, however, by the obligation to bring presents or make cash gifts to family and friends.

Thus they generally have a different and, in some respects, more positive development impact (Pérez-López, 2007). Moreover, diaspora tourism is not necessarily as seasonal as international tourism, as it can be potentially linked with a wide range of attractors such as festivals, saints' days, and holidays; professional association meetings and conventions; vacations for seniors; and trips for medical treatment. Also, diaspora tourism may result in geographic expansion of tourism within the homeland country. Pérez-López suggests that diaspora tourists indulge in standard mainstream tourist activities associated with other forms of tourism (cultural, natural, rural, mountain, seaside, etc.), but also reach less-visited sites than other international tourists by traveling to see friends and relatives, participating in local cultural and sporting events, and visiting secondary or regional sites.

Thus, diaspora tourism seems to occupy an intermediate space between international and domestic tourism (Scheyvens, 2007). Two streams of tourists can be identified: one is made up of people who have weaker links with the origin country and may not be able to call on friends and relatives for food and lodging; the second is composed of more recent emigrants who still have close family ties in the country of origin. As Scheyvens's illustrates in the case of Samoa, visiting emigrants and their families may use the same kinds of facilities that domestic tourists and local residents use, thus supporting domestic entrepreneurship.

Some educational tourism offerings are specifically intended to acquaint members of the diaspora with their ancestral homeland, particularly targeting young people who have little or no direct experience of the country of their ancestors. Programs such as

those run by the Fund for Armenian Relief (Birthright Armenia) and Birthright Israel are intended to foster a durable sense of belonging to the broader nation, which in turn often leads to a sense of obligation to the homeland and a desire to contribute to its development. Scotland's Homecoming 2009, renewed in 2014, is an example of a very deliberate effort to increase the benefits of diaspora tourism.

The Executive Committee of Overseas Vietnamese in France, together with the Vietnamese National Tourism Authority, is pursuing a campaign to encourage every person in the diaspora community to persuade 10 French friends to travel to Vietnam, and a World Bank study found that migrants do indeed give advice to others about vacationing in their home countries (Newland & Taylor, 2010). Governments may also encourage diaspora investment in the tourism industry through financial and technical support, as in the case of the Ministry for the Moroccans Residing Abroad, in Morocco.

Diaspora members may have better information about potential threats to safety in their countries of origin than other tourists, and may be able to correctly interpret such threats, for example, distinguishing among subregions that have different levels of security, whereas foreign tourists may be more likely to dismiss an entire country because of reports of trouble in one area. However, diaspora travelers are as sensitive as any tourist to the threats posed by armed conflicts, lawlessness, corruption, dangerous infrastructures, unwelcoming local services, unfair treatments, etc. (Newland & Taylor, 2010).

Interest in homeland tourism varies by generation, whether within a given diaspora or across diasporas. In some diasporas, especially those that originated in traumatic events and refugee flows, the first generation is alienated from the homeland government and discourages all interaction. Subsequent generations, however, may want to explore their roots and exploit their comparative advantages of linguistic and cultural familiarity in business or other forms of engagement. In other situations, instead, the first generation maintains very close personal ties that fade in later generations or turn into less personalized cultural interests.

The identity hybridness issues and quests for roots within diasporas have been extensively covered by successful novels, such as *Roots. The Saga of an American Family*, by A. Haley (1976) and films such as *West is West*, directed by A. De Emmony (2010) and *Almanya. Welcome to Germany*, directed by S. Şamdereli (2011).

The issues of Ukrainian diaspora, in particular, have already been explored in novels and films. The recent success of Jonathan Safran Foer's novel *Everything is Illuminated* (2002), together with its acclaimed film adaptation directed by Liev Schreiber (2005), shows the popularity of the theme of roots research connected with tourism.

3. The Western Ukrainian diaspora

Ukraine is a traditionally multicultural country, as its territory has long been inhabited by various nationalities and ethnic groups.

This research is mainly aimed at investigating roots tourism-related experiences of the Ukrainian diaspora which originated from the western regions of Ukraine, as the emigration history of this part of the country has been particularly long and complex, thus creating large and heterogeneous communities abroad (Smith & Jackson, 1999). Divisions between socialists and nationalists, Catholic and Orthodox churches, new-wave immigrants and longer-settled members of the community have all at some point fractured

the Ukrainian diaspora, which, nevertheless, still largely perceives itself as one single group (Satzewich, 2002).

In different periods of history the term “Western Ukraine” was used with different meanings.

- (1) After the second and third partitions of Poland (1793, 1795), and during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the name “Western Ukraine”, or “Ruthenia” used to indicate the regions of Ukraine which became part of the Austrian empire (later known as Austro-Hungarian empire), partly coinciding with the Austrian provinces of Galicia and Bukovina;
- (2) Between the two world wars, territories which were part of Poland, Romania and Czechoslovakia (Galicia, Western Volhynia, Western Polesia, Northern Bukovina and Transcarpathia) were identified by Ukrainians as Western Ukraine.
- (3) Nowadays, the term “Western Ukraine” usually indicates the administrative units located in the western part of the country, namely the oblasts (provinces) of Lviv, Ivano-Frankivsk, Ternopil, Volhynia, Rivne, Chernivtsi and Zakarpattia.

According to Zastavnyy (1991) the term correctly identifies the territories which became part of the Soviet Union during or right after World War II. In this research, Western Ukraine is used in the aforementioned sense.

Several socio-economic and cultural factors further define Western Ukraine as a distinct part of the country: ethno-cultural characteristics, the common historical territorial development, the kinship feeling of the local population, the same system of life values, and common problems in the political and economic transition.

Massive emigration started affecting Western Ukraine at the end of the nineteenth century.

Due to the numerous socio-economic issues that affected Galicia and Bukovina, particularly at the turn of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, several organizations started to operate in order to help the different ethnic groups living in the region, particularly Ukrainians, Poles, Jews and Germans, to move overseas. The Austrian government authorized the opening of numerous branches of nautical companies whose agents promoted the emigration option among local people. As a result of the activities of the government and nautical companies, hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians, Poles, Jews and Germans migrated mainly to North and South America. Following World War II and the subsequent border changes, the ethnic composition of Western Ukraine saw drastic changes. Nowadays, Ukrainians form the vast majority of the population in all the oblasts, while Polish, Jewish, German, Romanian, Hungarian and Russian communities form dwindling minorities.

The emigration of ethnic Ukrainians from Western Ukraine occurred through four main waves (Hodovanska, 2011; Satzewich, 2002; Zubyk, 2013). The first one was primarily caused by economic reasons and lasted from the beginning of the 1870s until the First World War; the second one was caused by both economic and political factors and coincided with the period between the two world wars (1918–39), while the third wave was mainly political and started during World War II lasting into the immediate postwar period. A fourth wave, mainly characterized by labor emigration, started after the independence of Ukraine in 1991 and is still going on. During the Soviet time, forced population mixing within the Union created large Ukrainian communities currently living in Russia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia and other former Soviet republics.

The main destinations of the first three emigration waves of ethnic Ukrainians were Canada and the USA, with smaller flows heading towards South America, mainly Brazil, Argentina and Paraguay, Western Europe and Australia, while the most recent one is mainly directed towards Western Europe (Kacharaba, 1995, 2003). According to different estimates, the number ethnic Ukrainians living abroad ranges between 12 and 20 million people (Institute for Ukrainian Diaspora Studies; Ukrainian World Congress).

3.1. The Ukrainian diaspora in Canada

The Ukrainian diaspora community living in Canada is the largest in the Western world. According to the 2011 census, 1,251,070 people in Canada declared Ukrainian ancestry out of a total of 34,342,780 people, up from 1,209,085 in 2006, although their share of the total population dropped from 3.9% in 2006 to 3.6% in 2011. They currently form 14.7% of the population in Manitoba, 13.6% in Saskatchewan and 10.2% in Alberta. According to the same census, 111,540 of them speak Ukrainian as mother tongue, down from 134,500 in 2006. In 2011, 2,455 people from Ukraine migrated to Canada out of 248,748 immigrants (1.0%) (Statistics Canada). Both Greek-Catholic and Orthodox churches, with services in Ukrainian and English languages, are present within the community. Although the Prairie Provinces still maintain large communities, Ukrainians have been spreading across the country in search of better economic conditions and better quality of life. The urbanization trend has been pronounced for a number of decades, and now 75% of the Ukrainian population of Canada lives in cities, similarly to the general population of the country (Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies).

The Toronto Ukrainian Genealogy Group identified three Ukrainian immigration waves to Canada, each differing in numbers, in the conditions which attracted them into Canada and in the reasons which made them leave their homeland. The first and largest immigration began in 1891 and ended with the First World War; the second immigration arrived between the two wars; the third began in 1946 and is still continuing, although, between 1961 and 1991, its numbers were reduced to a trickle. The number of arrivals is estimated to be about 170,000 for the first immigration, about 68,000 for the second and 37,000 for the third. Conflicting data are a result of widespread confusion between place of birth and ethnic origin. Most of these migrants were from Western Ukraine. In particular, the first immigration consisted almost entirely of land-hungry peasants from the former Austrian provinces of Galicia and Bukovina, attracted by the Canadian policy of granting virtually free lands or "homesteads" to settlers, while the most recent flows, after World War II, include professionals from sciences, humanities and arts along with craftsmen, laborers and farmers, coming from all the regions of Ukraine (Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies; Toronto Ukrainian Genealogy Group).

3.2. The Ukrainian diaspora in the USA

The number of Ukrainian descendants in the USA, according to the census of 2010, comprised 931,297 people (0.3% of the total population), up from 740,723 in 1990 (United States Census Bureau), although some American demographers believe that the actual representation of Ukrainian ethnos in the USA is more than 1.5 million people (Institute of the Ukrainian Diaspora Studies). According to the 2010 census, 15.34% of Ukrainians

declared speaking Ukrainian language at home. The States with the largest numbers of Ukrainian descendants are New York (129,603 people, 13.92% of total Ukrainian population in USA), Pennsylvania (112,078 people, 12.03%) and California (92,943 people, 9.98%). The community mainly belongs to the Greek-Catholic faith (Ukrainian Greek-Catholic Church and Ruthenian Catholic Church), but the Orthodox faith (Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Kyivan or Moscow Patriarchates and Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the USA) is also present; all of these churches hold services in Ukrainian and English.

Ukrainian immigration to the USA started in the latter part of the nineteenth century. At first, the US immigration records only noted the country of origin, and not the nationality of the immigrants. Consequently, since the territory of Ukraine was divided between the empires of Austria–Hungary and Russia, Ukrainian immigrants were listed as Russians, Austrians, or Hungarians, according to citizenship. This hinders an accurate count of the actual number of Ukrainian immigrants, estimates varying from 240,000 to 500,000 persons until 1900.

Most of the first wave immigrants came from Western Ukraine and were working class people seeking jobs. They mainly settled in the coal mining towns of Pennsylvania and West Virginia, and in the farmlands of Virginia, New Jersey, New York, North Dakota, and Texas.

Between 1900 and World War II approximately 250,000 persons arrived in the USA from Ukraine and mainly settled in large industrial cities such as New York City, Philadelphia and Chicago. They sought employment in major industries, such as iron and steel, glass, rubber, shoe, furniture, automobile, rail car factories, flour mills, and sugar refining plants.

During the period between the World Wars, immigration as a whole was restricted by the “Red Scare”, isolationism, and by the quota system. An estimated figure of between 20,000 to 40,000 Ukrainians arrived in the USA during the interwar time. Some historians claim that, by 1930, there were some 568,000 Ukrainians in the USA. The matrix of Ukrainian American organizations grew stronger as a result. In the years following World War II, some 85,000 Ukrainian refugees were admitted in the USA (The Ukrainian Museum of New York City; Ukrainian Institute of America).

Immigration from Ukraine is continuing at a slower pace: 8,292 Ukrainians obtained legal permanent resident status in 2011, down from 17,140 in 2006 (United States Census Bureau).

4. Methodology

In order to investigate diasporic tourism related to Ukraine, with its complex features and implications, a multidisciplinary approach was chosen, including research on the specific historical background and economic context. The complex and changing relations between diaspora and identity (Bhabha, 1998; Cohen, 2008; Hall, 1990) were considered. A mix of qualitative and quantitative methods was adopted. The authors considered both the statistics related to the potential and the effective business associated with tourism, particularly diasporic tourism, in Ukraine (using quantitative methods), and the information directly obtained from selected stakeholders and tourists in terms of personal histories, identities, experiences, expectations and views (qualitative methods). In particular, concerning the qualitative part, data collection incorporated the three main sources of information recognized in qualitative research: consultation of secondary sources,

observations and questionnaires/interviews (Merriam, 2002; Patton, 2002). Prior to entering the field, a range of secondary sources was consulted. A review of international literature on diasporic-roots tourism and its economic impact, part of which has been presented above, was undertaken to provide a broad academic context for the research and conceive an innovative contribution. Materials that directly or indirectly dealt with the Ukrainian diaspora were consulted in order to better place the study in its geographical setting.

The direct investigation was conducted in three stages:

- first, the potential or actual consumers of the Ukrainian nostalgic tourism product were surveyed, that is, a sample of tourists who have already visited Ukraine and have Western Ukrainian origins, or are just planning to travel to their historical homeland;
- the next stage of the project was surveying tour operators specialized in the organization of nostalgic tours to Ukraine;
- finally, the authors studied the vision of state and local authorities, which are responsible for planning and strategic orientation of Ukrainian tourism development as to the perspectives of nostalgic tourism and its economic benefits.

The objectives of the survey among current/potential consumers of the nostalgic tourism product were studying the motivations for emigration from Ukraine, the relations with the Ukrainian cultural environment, as well as the aspects of nostalgic tours organization to Western Ukraine.

In the first stage, current or potential nostalgic tourists were approached through existing online forums and communities linking the Ukrainian diaspora members in Canada and the USA during the months of April-September 2013. The aims of the academic research were clearly presented, calling for volunteers willing to tell about their sense of belonging and identity, their travel experiences or plans. Only questionnaires from self-declared ethnic Ukrainian people who had links with Western Ukraine were analyzed, regardless of their religious identification. The survey was focused on communities living in North America, rather than Western Europe, in order to better show links between diaspora and homeland over longer time after emigration and on longer distances. A total of 45 people participated in the survey. Males represent 61% of the respondents and females 39%. Most of the respondents (82%) were born in the 1930s, 1940s and 1950s; 88% of the respondents identified themselves as second and third generation of the diaspora, 12% as first generation. The questionnaire included a series of questions, mostly allowing open answers, aimed at highlighting their connections with Western Ukraine, their expectations and reactions related to traveling in Ukraine, and their suggestions for tourism services improvement and for tourism development in the region and in this specific segment.

In the second stage, tour operators dealing with Ukrainian nostalgic tourism, both local and foreign, were approached through the internet during the months of September and October 2013. In this case, as well, the aims of the research were openly presented, calling for voluntary contributions about their experiences in this tourism segment and their views on obstacles and potential. The questionnaire included a limited number of questions, mostly allowing open answers. A total of eight tour operators joined the project; five of them are based in the USA, Canada and Australia, while three of them are based in Ukraine.

The authors acknowledge that the first and second stages, dealing with voluntary participation of target groups, may be biased, but the analysis of questionnaires showed an

adequate variety of personal histories and links with both the homeland and the diaspora which correspond to the expectations coming from the quantitative part of the research and from the broader international literature.

In the third stage, representatives of municipal and provincial authorities dealing with tourism management and development were directly interviewed in Ukrainian language in the oblasts of Lviv, Ternopil, Ivano-Frankivsk and Chernivtsi during the months of September–November 2013, in order to identify the perspectives of different tourist markets and flows, analyze the activities undertaken by these entities in order to promote the tourism potential of the regions, evaluate the programs to attract potential nostalgic tourists of different ethnicities (Ukrainians, but also Jews, Germans, Poles, etc.).

The information obtained from the quantitative analysis and from the questionnaires and interviews was cross-analyzed in order to better understand the reality, the weaknesses and the potential of this sector.

5. Research findings

Diaspora tourism has the potential to become a solid asset for Ukrainian economy. Since promoting Ukraine as a tourist destination in the international market is quite difficult, due to limited knowledge of the country in the Western world and security issues worsened by the 2014–15 crisis, diaspora populations can play an important role spreading correct information and acting as “first movers” in opening new opportunities, besides becoming tourists themselves (Newland & Taylor, 2010), ultimately attracting non-diaspora customers to Ukraine.

The survey participants were first asked to describe their personal, emotional, cultural, social, religious attachment to Western Ukraine, in order to highlight the existing connections with the ancestral homeland and to identify the images and expectations associated with the idea of engaging in roots tourism to Ukraine. In fact, cultural and religious aspects of Ukrainian identity and their importance for the diaspora members should be considered when planning the incoming tourism development and targeting potential roots tourists (Figure 1).

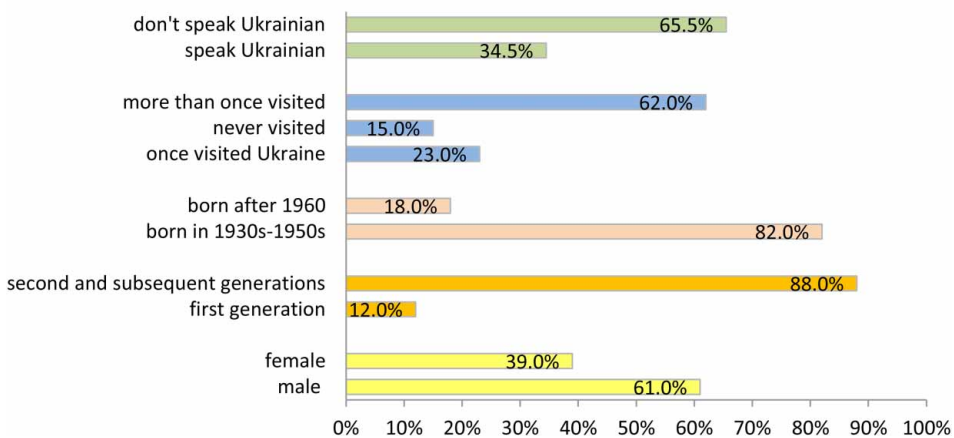


Figure 1. Some characteristics of the research participants, share %.

5.1. Attachments

Practices of education, religion, language and customs are acknowledged determinants of diaspora's identity (Brown, 2011; Isajiw, 2010; Tie et al., 2015). The majority of survey respondents show high interest and involvement in Ukrainian culture. Most of them declare being tightly connected with several kinds of Ukrainian cultural organizations abroad. Even though some know very little about Ukraine and its culture, they express interest in learning about it.

According to Isajiw (2010) and Satzewich (2002), generational Ukrainian identity retention among Ukrainians in Canada occurs through different practices; food, handicrafts and folk customs, for example, largely tend to survive through the second and third generation, while the ability to speak the language tends to drop between the second and the third (Isajiw, 2010).

This was confirmed by the survey results, as only 34% of respondents are able to speak Ukrainian, and several of them lost the ability after they started learning English at school.

In spite of this decline, however, many diaspora members attend classes in Ukrainian language, history and culture. Ukrainian Catholic and Orthodox churches, as well as various cultural organizations, run a network of community-sponsored supplementary schools and accredited language schools within the public school systems of Canada and the USA. Classes are held outside of normal school hours, usually on Saturdays. Satzewich (2002) stresses that the second and subsequent generations of Ukrainians living in North America tend to retain a distinct Ukrainian identity even when they may not be fluent in Ukrainian language. This was also confirmed by the survey results.

Besides the language, other important aspects of long-distant attachment to Ukraine, as emerged through the survey, are cooking typical Ukrainian food, possession of characteristic objects (e.g. painted wooden eggs, or "pysanka") and traditional celebrations of religious holidays, particularly Christmas, Malanka (Old New Year, January 14th), Easter, etc. Ukrainian dancing and singing, as well as wearing traditional clothes (e.g. embroidered shirts, or "vyshyvanka"), are also indicated by respondents as strong elements forming their sense of belonging and national identity. For example, Jason, 67 years old, from the USA, third generation migrant, writes "my mother was renowned for her Ukrainian Easter eggs. It was her legacy to us", showing the symbolic importance of that tradition.

As observed through the survey, a very important form of social connection and attachment to the homeland occurs through membership in different kinds of Ukrainian cultural NGOs, such as Ukrainian Village Society, SUM (Ukrainian Youth Organization), Plast (Ukrainian Scout Organization), dance ensembles, Ukrainian Canadian Congress, other charitable societies, etc.

Some families with virtually no other connections to the organized Ukrainian community still send their children to learn hopak, kolomyika and other Ukrainian dances.

Most respondents (62%) report frequently attending events connected to Ukrainian culture, among which the Toronto Ukrainian Festival (Ontario, Canada), the Annual Baltimore Ukrainian Festival (Maryland, USA), the Ukrainian Day in Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village (Alberta, Canada), the Vegreville Pysanka Festival (Alberta, Canada), the Chicago Ukrainian Festival (Illinois, USA), the Saint Josaphat's Ukrainian Festival in Rochester (New York, USA), etc.

One of the most distinctive features of Ukrainian communities living abroad is their belonging to either the Ukrainian Greek-Catholic or the Ukrainian Orthodox churches, separate from Roman Catholic and Russian Orthodox churches which are largely perceived as alien to Ukrainian identity. Religion, through distinct Ukrainian churches, is indicated by survey respondents as an important aspect of their Ukrainian identity, through mass attendance, religious calendar observances, children baptizing, religious weddings, regular celebratory events.

All surveyed tour operators, both based in Ukraine and abroad, show high awareness of these peculiar forms of attachment. Travel packages targeting the diaspora always include Ukrainian traditional restaurants, stops at handicrafts shops and markets, dancing and singing performances and numerous visits to churches, monasteries and holy places related to both the Greek-Catholic and the Orthodox faith. Several surveyed tour operators organize their travel packages with the direct assistance of both Churches. In these cases, advertising normally appears in religious newspapers and websites.

5.2. Expectations and experiences

The research on the potential root tourists, their demographic, social and cultural characteristics, the patterns of diaspora activities, their visions and expectations, may help to identify and target their needs as roots tourists. According to Brown (2011), Isajiw (2010) and Tie et al. (2015), the first generation of emigrants generally focuses on renewing familial connections, while second and subsequent generations tend to seek cultural and historical links, since their living family connections are usually weaker.

Among the survey respondents, visits to Ukraine are highly popular, 62% of them having visited the "homeland" more than once. Only 15% of the respondents have never visited the country. Most of them clearly see the potential benefits of this form of tourism. For example, Betty, 70 years old, from Canada, third generation migrant, writes "in our Canadian family we have grown to approximately 390 people. Until now I have been the only one to visit Ukraine. I'm sure there are many families like ours. I think root tourism is an economic opportunity there".

A high percentage of respondents (79%) declare to be willing to visit Ukraine again, which shows that the desire to maintain ties between the diaspora and their historic homeland remains strong after the first visit. None of the respondents answering the question about their desire to revisit Ukraine in the future says "no"; 21% answers "do not know".

Among the motivations for traveling to Ukraine, survey respondents principally indicate researching family history (54%) and visiting friends and relatives (50%), which partially overlap; besides familial and personal connections, the respondents show high interest in discovering cultural heritage (67%) and natural environment (21%) of Ukraine, also beyond the Western part of the country. Respondents also show high interest in genealogy (84%) and have already done (64%), or intend to do (16%) some form of genealogical research.

The majority of respondents (52%) first visited Ukraine in their 60s; 24% did so in their late 40s. The average age for the first visit was 49.1 years [Figure 2](#).

Most respondents traveled with spouses, children, parents; some traveled with dance ensembles or choirs. The majority of them stayed in hotels (86%), although some were

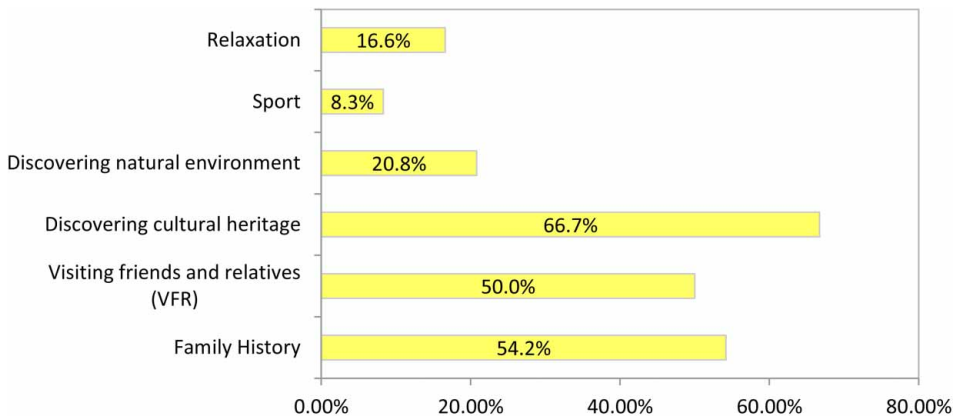


Figure 2. Motivations for visiting Ukraine, share %.

Note: The sum may exceed 100% as respondents could choose more than one answer.

hosted by relatives or stayed in apartments. The average spending of surveyed tourists during their visit to Ukraine was about 150–200 USD per day, which confirms available statistical data, as, in 2012, the average spending of a foreign tourist was 208 USD per day (State Statistics Service of Ukraine). Considering their longer stay in Ukraine (12–14 days instead of 3–4 for conventional tourists), the expenditures are then significantly higher than other foreign tourists' (Duval, 2003; King & Gamage, 1994) **Figure 3.**

In order to get information on Ukraine before their visit, respondents consulted friends and relatives (52%), the Internet (48%), travel agents (24%) and travel books (19%). Most of them eventually chose organized tours and packages instead of organizing and traveling individually. Among the motivations cited by respondents for this preference, language barriers, lack of adequate tourism information on the Internet and bad reputation of transportation and road conditions were listed. Security also emerged as a serious issue, even before the threats posed by the war in Donbass in 2014–15. The image of Ukraine as a dangerous and tourist-unfriendly country is deeply rooted even among its diaspora.

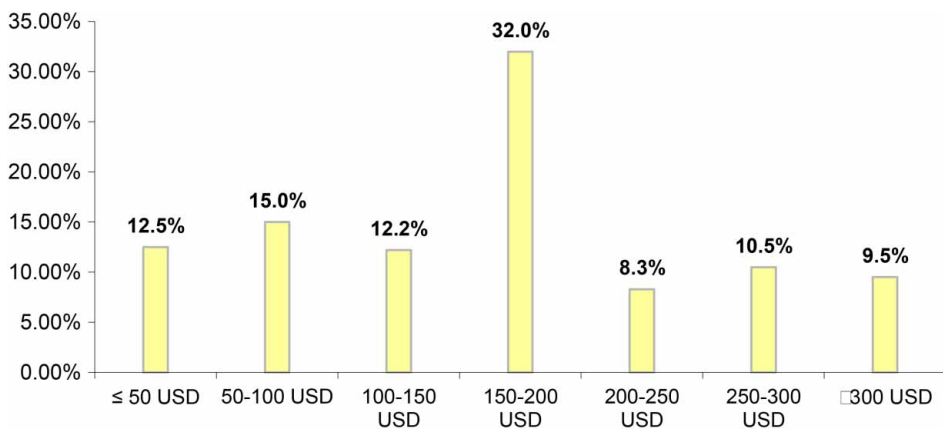


Figure 3. Roots tourists' expenditures per day in Ukraine.

This image strengthened during the 1990s when, after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the Iron Curtain, many thousands of Ukrainians from the diaspora could visit the country for the first time and were targeted by fraudulent travel agencies and resurgent crime, leading the country to be perceived as “not safe” for standard individual Western visitors, including diaspora members.

When in Ukraine, surveyed visitors engaged in a variety of commemorative activities. They visited places connected to their family history, such as villages, houses, schools, workplaces, churches, cemeteries, etc., although they often notice that many of those places are now in bad conditions. Many of the visitors traveling with standard tourist groups engaged in individual side trips. Some travel agencies include this type of service as an option, so tourists who desire to visit their ancestral villages or places of origin have a chance to arrange a side trip for 1 or 2 days and later join the group again.

Among the survey respondents, the most frequently mentioned positive aspects about their visits to Ukraine are: good food, beautiful countryside, cultural heritage, evocative churches, friendly people, diverse historic sights, etc. For example, Iryna, 35 years old, from the USA, third generation migrant, significantly writes “when travelling to Ukraine, I felt very connected to many of the churches and religious places visited. St. Sophia is the mother of the Ukrainian church and I belong to St. Sophia Ukrainian Orthodox Church here in Chicago. It felt like a pilgrimage”.

At the same time, according to the results of the research, the interviewees found some widespread weaknesses: roads in bad conditions, poor knowledge of foreign languages, lack of professionalism of hotel and restaurant staffs, lack of public washrooms, few dining options in rural areas, lack of elevators in hotels, etc. Several respondents lament the hard economic and social conditions in Ukraine, especially in rural areas, as well as the gap between the idealized picture of their homeland and the reality of a country where architectures and landscapes were deeply and negatively altered by the Soviet age. Visits to Ukraine thus intensify the feeling of a changed and ultimately lost homeland, and only 8.5% of respondents report that they might consider moving back to Ukraine at some point of their life (e.g. after retirement).

The widespread demand for genealogical and travel support by diaspora members willing to visit Ukraine created significant business opportunities for tour operators specializing in this field. According to Isajiw (2010), at least 25 major travel agencies, owned or operated by Ukrainians, organize group tours in Ukraine from Canada, USA, UK and Australia. They generally operate with the help of local partners from Ukraine, as few of them risk organizing tours themselves (Isajiw, 2010). Following the growth of inbound tourism, many Ukrainian companies that used to specialize in outbound tourism, such as beach holidays in Turkey, Egypt and Croatia, tend to diversify their activities and create new company departments in order to attract foreign tourists to Ukraine.

All of the 8 surveyed tour operators consider diaspora tourism to be an opportunity for Ukraine and also think the country has a large and still unexpressed tourist potential. For example, a specialized travel company from Chicago writes “Ukraine is an undiscovered gem in the tourist world. It is not part of major travel companies’ packages so most are not aware of Ukraine. Many non-Ukrainians in North America know almost nothing about Ukraine, not even where the country is situated”. However, even these specialized tour operators still generally promote their tours amongst potential customers in traditional ways, advertising in newspapers for Ukrainian diaspora communities (100%),

church newspapers (25%) and radio commercials (25%). Only one of the surveyed tour operators promotes tours to Ukraine through the company website and none of them through the social networks. In spite of the perceived potential, most of the surveyed tour operators state that only about 15–25% of customers who traveled to Ukraine for the first time intend on coming back again in the future.

5.3. Public authorities' visions

Representatives of municipal and provincial tourism authorities of four Western-Ukrainian oblasts and towns were also interviewed, in Ukrainian language, and expressed their opinions about roots tourism development in the area.

In particular, the Deputy Mayor of Lviv, a specialist of the Tourism Department of Lviv City Council, the Chief of the Tourism Information Center in Lviv, the Head of the Tourism Information Center in Chernivtsi, the Head of the Department of International Relations and Tourism of Ivano-Frankivsk regional administration, a specialist of the Tourism Department of Ivano-Frankivsk City Council, the Chief of the Tourism Department of Ternopil City Council and a specialist of the Tourism Department of Ternopil Regional Administration participated in the survey.

The aim was to learn if diasporic tourism is regarded as a promising form of tourism and if any efforts are made to attract nostalgic tourists to the region.

The results show that efforts of local authorities are mainly aimed at making Western Ukrainian regions or cities interesting to all general tourists without emphasizing any particular segment. All respondents are aware that the area is still largely unknown to most international tourists.

In the opinion of officials, the major restrictions for tourism development in the researched area are connected with the poor quality of roads and bad transport connections, the lack of well trained staff, the poor tourist image of the country, etc.

The city of Lviv is currently by far the most important destination, often the only one, for international tourists visiting Western Ukraine. Although no major promotional campaigns are held to catch nostalgic tourists, a differentiation policy to attract tourists to the city based on age, income and social status segmentation has been experimented. For example, during the "Lviv Days", a periodic promotional presentation of the city held in different national and international locations, meetings with representatives of different audiences have been held. Moreover, the Lviv municipal authorities support various Ukrainian diaspora organizations in the world and, in 2013, the World Congress of Ukrainian Diaspora was held in the city.

Besides Lviv, the town of Chernivtsi has also started exploring roots tourism opportunities through the opening of one of the first museums devoted to the Ukrainian Diaspora, in 1992. The exhibition describes the emigration movement from the territory of Bukovina between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and, among other exhibits, it shows the promotional posters of the companies encouraging people to move overseas.

Among the elements that could attract potential nostalgic tourists to travel to their historical homeland, the authorities list the improvement of transport connections, as in the whole Western Ukraine only Lviv has a modern international airport, the creation of a positive image of the region in the international tourism market, the presentation of special (nostalgic) tourist products at travel exhibitions and conferences in countries where

Ukrainian diaspora is concentrated, and the organization of “fam trips” for travel agents from the target markets.

6. Strategies

Considering the social and cultural characteristics of the Ukrainian diaspora, the expectations and weaknesses related to their travel experiences, the forms of business that tour operators are exploring, and the partial and weak interest shown by public authorities, several elements need to be further discussed.

In order to support both individual and organized tourism, several surveyed diaspora members and tour operators alike suggest that the Ukrainian tourism industry develops and promotes a recognizable national brand, creates a competitive tourist identity, and actively advertises itself within the international tourist market. Media and social network marketing should thus be used to form an image of Ukraine as a tourist-friendly and varied tourist destination. So far, governmental tourist marketing has been episodic and fragmentary, and there is currently no official website of Ukraine as a tourist destination, besides private and non-governmental initiatives. In the absence of national support, efforts are being made by governmental bodies at the regional or local level, with some Ukrainian destinations successfully promoting themselves separately from the country as a whole (Lviv, Odessa, Kyiv, Kamianets-Podilskyi).

In order to facilitate diaspora tourism, further efforts should be made at the governmental and local level in order to facilitate information circulation, through tourist offices located abroad (e.g. Polish National Tourist Office, with branches in 14 countries around the world) and dedicated websites and phone lines (e.g. *Programa Paisano* operated by the Mexican Government).

Regarding specific demands from diaspora tourists, related to family roots research, several surveyed respondents complain about the difficulties in contacting and receiving information from the public archives regarding genealogy search, particularly for non-Ukrainian speaking people living abroad. Thus, the Ukrainian government may encourage genealogy tourism by cataloguing and facilitating access to birth, death, marriage and baptism records, following similar examples in other contexts (e.g. Discover Ireland and Visit Scotland websites).

Turning diaspora communities into active promoters of knowledge and appreciation about Ukraine would need focused initiatives to promote students' exchange programs, organize language, food, dancing, singing, crafts classes in Ukraine, tighten religious and cultural connections (e.g. Birthright Israel), involve them in social and environmental projects (e.g. Birthright Armenia and Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs), and create a sense of common attachment and engagement for the good of the country (e.g. Vietnamese National Tourism Authority and *Ministère des Marocains Résidant à l'Étranger*).

According to Nancy, 67 years old, from Canada, third generation migrant, “it would be easier to go to the area where your relatives came from if someone could help you hopefully find living relatives or your roots”.

As already noticed, surveyed respondents often indicate food, religion and folklore as basic elements of their sense of attachment to the Ukrainian people, and surveyed tour operators confirm that these demands are key elements of their packages.

The ongoing conflict in Crimea and the Donbass may jeopardize these efforts, as, in the absence of correct information and specific actions, the whole country is now widely perceived in the Western world as a war-affected and devastated area, while no wars have been recorded in Western Ukraine since World War II. At the same time, the country is now better-known and more easily distinguished from Russia, and nationalistic feelings are on the rise among the diaspora. Since there are many examples of tourist destinations around the world where conflicts in one part of the country do not prevent tourism development in other parts (e.g. Israel, Sri Lanka, Georgia, Egypt), the diaspora could directly engage in tourism in safe areas and spread truthful information on security issues in the countries where they currently live (Kelner, 2010). For example, Mary, 67 years old, from Canada, second generation migrant, writes “before my first visit to Ukraine, in 1996, I was told not to take any jewelry with me. Now I can say it is safe there”.

Signs and scars left by the Soviet age on the architecture and the environment, not very appreciated by surveyed respondents during their travel experiences, should not be seen as impediments, rather as part of the complex and often painful history and identity of the country.

As already noted, diaspora travelers are generally likely to expand the geographic boundaries of tourist trails visiting remote areas and reducing seasonal unbalances (Newland & Taylor, 2010). This was confirmed by the surveyed respondents, who show interest in visiting relatively remote regions or smaller towns from which their families originated, as well as consolidated destinations such as Lviv, Kyiv, Odessa, the Carpathian mountain resorts and the historic towns and castles of Podillya. Surveyed specialized tour operators confirm this tendency of coexistence of both major and remote destinations among the requests of roots tourists. Ukrainian mountainous and rural regions suffering from high levels of unemployment and poor infrastructures, but rich in cultural and environmental resources, could thus benefit from the (re)establishment of emotional and business connections with the diasporic communities in North America and beyond. Governmental support, in terms of support for local ventures, tourist infrastructures, improved local governance, training programs, would be needed, within a broader context of increased awareness of the role of the diaspora in local development, both in the Ukraine and abroad.

7. Conclusions

Roots tourism shows a wide variety of dynamics related to different connections among diaspora individual members, broader communities, old and new “homelands”, changing landscapes and perceptions, varying actions by tourism industry and governments. In spite of this diversity, however, cultural, social and economic networks related to identity, genealogy, ancestry, nostalgia, show a clear tendency to grow.

As shown in paragraph 2, roots tourism is emerging as a solid asset for tourism and general local development in many countries with recent or older emigration histories, within the complex and ever-changing international mobilities phenomena. The most successful cases of roots tourism development seem to imply clear and focused policies aimed at reinforcing the ties and attachments between the country of origin and the diaspora. Stronger involvement of diasporas in protection of cultural and natural heritage, social aid, economic investments and marketing for homeland export products are

important side opportunities which can arise from a strong roots tourism sector. Again, though, governmental support, fertile economic contexts, adequate quality of services and positive attitudes of local communities seem to be necessary for this potential to become effective opportunities.

The case of the Ukrainian diaspora and its relations with roots tourism is important because it holds partial yet significant similarities with many other diaspora histories and groups. The emotional links with the homeland are strong among the first generation migrants, while second and further generations of Ukrainian migrants show weaker personal connections with Ukraine, yet still show widespread interest in visiting the country of their ancestors.

This study focused on Western Ukrainian diaspora communities living in Canada and the USA, where they count over 2 million self-identified members. The actual and potential importance of this tourism segment is evident and growing numbers of people from the Ukrainian diaspora annually visit the country, with the notable exception of 2014 due to the conflict in Crimea and Donbass regions.

As emigration from Ukraine has been intense for the past two decades, and is still going on due to economic and social circumstances, with the most consistent flows going to Italy, Spain, Portugal, United Kingdom, Germany, France and Poland, new Ukrainian diaspora communities are rapidly growing in Central and Western Europe. Since this is a recent phenomenon, labor migrants visiting Ukraine once a year cannot be described as tourists, but the next generation, the descendants of the present labor migrants, will likely form new segments of roots tourism.

Even though diasporic tourism still presents evident weaknesses and is still far from being a major economic sector for the country, in the nearest future it has all perspectives to become an efficient economic tool for local development, especially in rural areas. Surveyed nostalgic tourists visit rural areas more frequently than other tourists, they stay in Ukraine for a longer period of time (12–14 days on average), they tend to spend more money, they can generate business contacts with richer countries, and they promote and preserve Ukrainian culture as an important link with the ancestors.

As previously shown, marketing programs and actions by the Ukrainian Government and by county and municipal authorities in order to develop roots tourism in the country have been weak and episodic, so far, and no specific policies have been adopted. The fading identities already recorded among second and subsequent generation diaspora members prove that this kind of promotion ought to be adopted in the nearest future. Forms of partnership with the USA and Canada, as well as the European Union countries, could strengthen marketing policies and the creation or opening of archives, registers and cadastral maps could provide further important tools. Economic and cultural policies could be introduced in order to turn diasporas into resources for local development. For such policies to be well grounded, further investigation on residents' attitude towards hosting roots tourism would be very useful, as well as exploration on their willingness to preserve the heritage of diasporic groups, particularly in areas characterized by deep social, economic, political, cultural and demographic changes which occurred after the migration time. Working for the preservation of local and dispersed tangible and intangible heritage, strengthening the inter- and intra-generational ties within specific cultural communities and elaborating development projects that

may be able to translate these potentials into opportunities for effective sustainable development should become strategic aims.

Five key challenges for further diasporic tourism development in Ukraine arise from this research, through suggestions provided by surveyed tourists and tour operators and comparisons with best practices from other countries:

- the need for collaboration between local authorities and travel operators in order to promote this type of tourism, both in the Western and Eastern parts of Ukraine, aiming at increasing the number of people of Ukrainian origin visiting their historic homeland;
- the need for tourist services improvement, such as the creation of proper informational infrastructure for foreign tourists arriving to Ukraine, informative web platforms, road signs and informational boards about the local tourist attractions in English and other languages besides Ukrainian and Russian, etc.;
- the creation and promotion of cross-border tourist routes including Western Ukraine and neighboring Central-Eastern European countries (Poland, Hungary, Slovakia, Romania), which would help strengthening the competitive position of Ukraine and its tourist products at the global tourist market;
- the necessity to diversify the programs of tours and tourist activities traditionally offered by Ukrainian and foreign travel companies specialized on tours to Ukraine. Many tourists expect more than just visiting churches, monuments and museums and also want to participate in traditional Ukrainian festivities, weddings, Christmas and Easter rites, cooking or music classes, etc.
- the need for effective marketing campaigns improving the image of Ukraine abroad.

In conclusion, the motivations and experiences of Western Ukrainian diaspora visiting the historic homeland could be described as positive. The interest in roots tourism for Ukrainian descendants clearly emerges through the survey. The economic opportunities related to this kind of tourism, which can also support sustainable cultural and rural tourism, are relevant yet still underdeveloped. Tour operators are aware of business potential and have started exploring this market segment, while public authorities are still trying to promote the development of tourism in general, without focusing on the diaspora.

The aim of this research was to show reciprocal relations among diaspora tourists' attachments, expectations and impressions, tourism services and institutional actions towards this particular form of travel, within the new mobilities paradigm. Subsequent research steps will focus on the accommodation activities, in order to see how different forms of structures, that is, hotels, guesthouses, agrotourism farms, interact with this tourism segment. Another focus will deal with roots tourism in Western Ukraine related to non-Ukrainian nationalities once living in the region, particularly Poles, Jews and Germans and the corresponding attitude of local and diaspora communities and authorities.

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