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Study regarding a new dimension of tourism phenomenon – the political - administrative dimension

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Abstract

Starting from the fact that the dimensions of the tourism phenomenon treated by the specialists refer to the economic and geographic dimension and protection of the environment, respectively the socio-cultural dimension, we consider that the aspects linked to the political influence and tourism public administration, which have a major role in influencing this phenomenon, have been neglected in the speciality literature. We believe that the research of tourism phenomenon, characterized by complexity, uniqueness and originality, requires an approach that will ensure the treatment of all components, implications and influences, in correlation with economic, social, political, administrative, cultural, environmental aspects. The study has proposed to address the phenomenon of tourism through the political -administrative views and identifies and research of a new dimension, namely the political-administrative dimension of the tourism phenomenon, to establish this new dimension in the speciality literature. Tourism is a highly complex and sophisticated industry, which includes and relates a combination of sectors and fields of different industries worldwide. This is the reason why tourism, in order to have a coherent, consistent and efficient evolution requires an appropriate institutional framework for the organization and operation, which only the public administration, through its institutions, has the authority and mechanisms to organize them. The organization and supervision of the tourism industry, the rights protection and tourist's security is the concern and the responsibility of public administration and has as fundamental goal, achieving the public interest. Analysing the tourism phenomenon in this regard, we find out that it is largely influenced by the public administration and the governance performance. Administration of tasks in the field of tourism, or extending, from an activity field, by a ministry or other government body specialized in ministerial administration or by the local government, represents a political option of the party or coalition of parties that take governmental decisions, expressing the interests and political priorities. Therefore, it is obvious the influence of the politics on tourism phenomenon. Identification and treatment of political-administrative dimension, allows us to approach the tourism phenomenon in terms of political and administrative sciences, considering the following issues: tourism should be part of the governance and excellence in governance is necessary for tourism development. In conclusion, we believe that identifying and consecration of a new dimension - the political - administrative dimension of tourist phenomenon represents an innovative proposal for completing the research scale of tourism phenomenon treated in the speciality literature.

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Introduction

Starting by giving a definition to the concept of “phenomenon” - process, evolution from nature and society, and adding the definition of the concept “touristic” – referring to tourism, we can define the *touristic phenomenon* as being a process, a society evolution referred to tourism.

Touristic phenomenon, by its nature, is particularly complex, with deep economic, social, politic – administrative, cultural implications, through the interconnection of its eteregenous components creating a unic, specific and original phenomenon.

Touristic activity, which has known an explosion without precedent, is one of the phenomena, which enforced itself in the contemporary era, being a characteristic of the last century and especially of the second half of the century.

Taking into consideration the influence of economic, politic – administrative, social, biological, psychological factors we can imagine that in the future, for the majority of the world’s countries, tourism will transform itself from an occasional preoccupation in a permanent one, with the tendency of becoming a need, which will be felt stronger by the modern man, aspect which will determine an increase the specialists’ interest for this field.

The political - administrative dimension of the tourism phenomenon

Starting from the fact that the dimensions of the touristic phenomenon, treated by specialists, are refered to the economic, geographic - environment protection and socio – cultural dimension, we will continue to approach the political – administrative aspects of this phenomenon, through the identification and research of a new dimension, which is *the political-administrative dimension of the touristic phenomenon*.

Tourism is an extremely complex and sophisticated industry, which encloses and interconnects a combination of sectors and fields of different industries from all over the world. This is the reason why the touristic phenomenon needs coordination and cooperation, aspects that only the public administration, through its institutions, has the authority and the mechanisms to organize them.

As any other activity field, tourism, in order to have a coherent, unitary and efficient evolution, needs an institutionalized frame of organisation and functioning.

The organization and monitoring of the touristic industry, tourists’ rights protection and security considers the public interest and is under the public administration competence, having as final and fundamental aim, the accomplishment of the public interest.

Public administration system is built to accomplish organizing activities of executing and law enforcement, realization of public interest, meaning the entire country population and which applies to the entire state territory in its administrative – territorial units, its tasks being represented by the totality of the social needs, objectively determined, established by legal rules and politically evaluated.

Characterising the tasks of the public administration through the dependence of political power, we notice their implications and different meanings from one political regime to another, considering that the public interest and the final goal of political power are one and the same, which leads to the conclusion that the system of public administration is linked to the political system, the political environment being as well an important dimension of the public administration.

The system of public administration is structured from a territorial point of view, related to the state territory (subsystem of governmental public administration) and of administrative-territorial units (subsystem of local public administration), and from this functional point of view, in relation with activity domains and units.

The administrative unit, through which the activity of public administration is made of, is constituted from an assembly of organs, formations made of personnel, endowed with material and financial means and with a certain competence and legal personality, having as a final goal, satisfaction of public needs. Thus, at a central level, the public administrative organ which is the head of the general management of the public administration and ensures the internal and external country’s policies is the Government, the central organs of management and coordination of different fields of activity of the public administration, which are organized and function only under the Government and ministers; there can be as well other types of specialty organs under the Government or the ministers, respectively organs founded under the autonomy administrative authorities. At a local level,

decentralizing administration, at a county, city community level is done through the authority of the local public administration: local councils – as deliberative authorities, respectively, the Mayor – as executive authority. Carrying out public administration in the tourism field is achieved both at central level and at the local government level.

A vision on contemporary capitalism, which we embrace, is proposed by John Kenneth Galbraith, who uses the concept of institutional organization, so that, in the frame of the economic system which functions at the market request, the government has to interfere where the answer to this request is inadequate or imperfect, in order to correct the request and to harmonize it with the public interest. A modern economy cannot, without the government intervention, to reach a performing level and continues general progress[†].

We consider that the correct report between the state and the market economy mechanisms is one of complementarity, these not being able to be contrasted or substituted to each other. The economy of modern market is characterized by the fact that the majority of economic decisions is taken without the government's interference, but there some decisions which are assigned to the government (ensuring of durable rules for protecting the private property, of consumer, of an effective competition and a free exchange of goods and services providing the legal framework for economic activity).

Economy development includes the field of tourism as part of its objective. On one hand, tourism can represent an important sector of the national economy, its evolution being determined by the development level of this economy and, on the other hand, tourism encourages social-economic development. Regarding tourism field as a component of national economy, we realize the necessity of correlating it with the evolution of the other fields. Thus, the major implications of tourism implementation in a country's economy require the government involvement in implementing coherent politics in tourism. International competition in the field, national interest and the complexity of the specific characteristics of the tourism industry are arguments, which plead for the existence of a state involvement in tourism. Tourism, regarded as a more and more important component of the national economy, as a stimulator factor of the social – economic growth, as essential part of the economic assembly unit, requires the state intervention in its development, ensuring in the same time the correlation at a macro – economic level in comparison with the evolution of the other related components.

State's role in tourism has known, at a world level, significant changes for the last 30-40 years. If during the 60's, the first years of developing in the field of tourism, the government had a pioneer role (in many countries), in contemporary period, its role becoming essential in determining the tourism development (opening new touristic areas, ensuring the infrastructure and the necessary facilities for the tourism industry and the private investments in the field). It is certain the fact that, the private investments and those designated to tourism, can develop only in a trust climate created by the government.

State intervention in the field of tourism is determined by the following factors:

- national interest,
- the complexity of specific features in the tourism field,
- international competition in the field.

The Government, as holder of the national administrative power can ensure a perfect framework of tourism development, can carry out the following distinct functions:

1. the regulation and regulatory function, which provides the legal framework and institutional development in tourism;
2. coordination function of tourism;
3. representing function, which ensures, in the government's name, embodying of tourism at a national and international level;
4. administration function, which ensures the administration of the public funds in tourism.

In exercising the coordinating function, actual modalities of the government for the development of tourism are the following:

- defining the general strategy in tourism development, of supporting and encouraging through policies of creation of a favourable climate for investments, politics of growing and diversification of touristic offer

[†] Galbraith, J. K., *Societatea perfectă*, Editura Eurosong&Book, București, 1997, pg. 25

- (infrastructure investments, direct investments in touristic objectives etc), measures of monetary and fiscal policy to encourage the touristic production and to increase the touristic demand;
- evaluating the needs related to the housing structures and of travel agencies;
 - coordinating and amplifying the research in tourism;
 - regulation and function control of the components of the tourism industry in order to ensure the legal framework of activity, for protecting and fostering the tourism industry and tourists interests;
 - creating and implementing training programmes of human resources involved in tourism industry;
 - providing public services of a general interest (health, culture, public order, justice, environment protection etc) and, respectively, of some specific actions (reservations, natural parks, recreation), needed in tourism development;
 - development and sustaining tourism promotion campaigns.

The government is involved in the field of tourism through creating a legal and institutional frame of exercising the tourism activities, of establishing the conditions of entrepreneurship advancement in the field, of protecting the tourist's interests. Government role in tourism is embodied in tourism development stimulation, coordination, supervising and control of tourism industry, service providing and touristic promotion.

Analysing the existence of the domain in policies and decisions making and the level of government investment in the sector identifies thus, recognizing and supporting the tourism industry by the government as a priority of the industry.

Given the growing importance of the tourism industry in economic, social, cultural, political, organizational policy coordination, supervision, development and promotion of tourism is generally ensured by authorities of the specialized central public administration, subordinated to the Government or ministries.

Administration of tasks in tourism, or expanding, of a field activity by a ministry or by another specialized organ from the ministerial administration, represent a political option of the coalition of parties in government, decision expressing interests and political priorities.

Recommendations of OMT specialists reflects the necessity of „re-inventing” the public sector in the field of tourism[‡], essential being its retreat from the goods production and providing services through strategic approach inside the society, of trust generator in creating the social capital and unifier of social forces and energies of touristic industry.

In public administrations, in many countries, as a manifestation of the principle of decentralization, an important part of tourism skills belongs to the local authority, which plays an important role in developing and promoting this area, having a separate organization, holding their own services.

This organizational diversity suggests, on one side, the place and the importance of the tourism field inside the national economy, on the other hand, the existence of a multitude of authorities of public administration with responsibilities in tourism and of an important disproportion between the nature and the responsibility of the organ in charge with coordinating the touristic activity.

Due to the fact that the touristic industry has links with the majority economic sectors, must be maintaining a relational communication between all public institutions and non-governmental institutions involved and interested in tourism. In this regard, in many countries interdepartmental councils were implemented. At the international level, considering the fact that touristic activity cannot be conducted randomly, inter-governmental organizations came into being with general or specialized skills in a specific sector of touristic activity.

Conclusions

Touristic phenomenon is mainly influenced by the public administration and government performance, as well as the adopted political decisions.

Identification and analysing a new *political-administrative* dimension, allows us approaching the touristic phenomenon through the frame of administrative sciences, considering the following:

- tourism has to be a part of governance act (the importance of this part is determined by the country's touristic potential and including this field in the government program),

[‡] O.M.T., *The Changing Role of Governments in Tourism*, 2000, pg.3

- excellence in governance is needed for tourism development (state role is essential in determining tourism development – new touristic zones, infrastructure and necessary facilities, private investments, all these can develop in a trust climate created by the government).

We consider that identification and consecration of a new dimension – *political – administrative dimension* of the touristic phenomenon constitutes a completion of researching this complex phenomenon, unit and original.

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