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## **Tourism in Multicultural Regions (on the Example of the Ukrainian Danube)**

**Vyacheslav Todorov<sup>1</sup>, Victor Khomutov<sup>2</sup>**

**Abstract:** The Ukrainian Danube region is characterized by a high level of self-regulation of interethnic issues. In the two hundred years since the last colonization of the region, there have been no ethnic conflicts. The conflicts that did take place were purely domestic in nature. Socio-cultural boundary of the region, which is caused by centuries-old historical and geographical processes in the Northern Black Sea region, is a direct catalyst for modern geopolitical and geoeconomic changes. The relations between Ukraine and Romania have the greatest influence on these processes. With the beginning of the intensive phase of Russian aggression, the geopolitical position of the Ukrainian Danube region has changed significantly. This region became the main center of export-import operations of our state. After the end of the war, a flow of goods and people will go through the Ukrainian Danube region to restore public life. In such a situation, it is necessary to develop comprehensive plans for sustainable development of the region, which will take into account all its competitive advantages. It is of particular importance to use the multiculturalism of the region for the development of tourism and obtaining working capital for economic entities and territorial communities. The main attention should be paid to the ethnic tourism oriented to the citizens of the countries that have their diasporas in the south-western part of the Odessa region.

**Keywords:** geopolitics; tourism; cross-border cooperation; Ukrainian Danube; ethnic tourism

### **1. Introduction**

The modern stage of development of economic complexes in many countries of the world is determined by the advanced development of tourism and recreation. The state of the territorial organization of life activity of the population of Ukraine and the need for its structural reforms actualize the issue of increasing the role of tourism

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<sup>1</sup> PhD, Izmail State Liberal Arts University, Ukraine, Address: 12 Repin St., Izmail, Ukraine, Tel.: +0631646921, Corresponding author: [todorov\\_sl@ukr.net](mailto:todorov_sl@ukr.net).

<sup>2</sup> Izmail State Liberal Arts University, Ukraine, Address: Str. Repin 12, Izmail, 68600 Odessa Oblast, Ukraine.

and recreation sphere of our country's economy as one of the possible factors of stabilization of the socio-economic situation and its transition to sustainable development.

Some regions of Ukraine (primarily Odessa and Transcarpathian regions and the ARC) have unique resources for the development of ethnic and related types of tourism activities, which is due to the high level of ethnic diversity of the population and the presence of areas of compact settlement of various ethno-national groups. However, for the effective development of this direction of tourism activity it is necessary to develop theoretical and methodological aspects of ethnic tourism research.

The recreational economy consists of various types of recreation and a set of auxiliary and service activities. The lack of a single generally accepted systematics and classification by functional types and spatial scales is a key methodological problem of recreational geography (Topchiev, 2009). This is largely due to the relative youth of recreational geography as an independent geographical discipline and the variability of recreational activities.

In the generally accepted classifications of recreational and tourist resources there is no such component as ethnic (ethnographic) resources. In most of the developed systematics of tourist activities familiarization of people with the peculiarities of elements of material and spiritual culture of ethnic communities are attributed to cognitive, nostalgic, cognitive-cultural or other types of tourism (Orlova, 2009, p. 7). There is no unified approach to the definition of the concept of "ethnic tourism".

Ethnic tourism is a specific direction of the ethnic sphere of life activity of the population and recreational economy. When conducting research in this sphere of social life, it is necessary to take into account some methodological problems. In particular, there is a discrepancy between the key factor that determines the belonging of a person to an ethnic community and the factors of their social development, which can arouse the interest of potential tourists.

Ethnic self-consciousness of people is manifested through the awareness of their ethnicity and counterpositions according to the scheme "us - them", "our own - foreign". Self-consciousness includes the idea not only of one's own community, but also of other ethnic groups. The peculiarities of ethnic processes in the environment of individual ethnationals are conditioned by the course of socio-economic and cultural development of society.

Ethno-national groups are more stable than social communities. However, they are also subject to dynamics. Changes in the various components of an ethnos are conditioned by the general course of its socio-economic and socio-political history. This is expressed by the peculiarities of their own existence and interaction with other ethnoses.

In practice, ethnic self-consciousness manifests itself in people's self-identification with a certain ethno-national group through recognizing its ethnonym as their own. Ethnic identity is formed in the process of socialization. It is known that ethnyonyms can exist in several variants and at different taxonomic levels. For example, the majority of Bulgarians in the Ukrainian Danube region self-identify with ethnyonyms of two levels. On the one hand, they realize themselves as members of the Bulgarian ethnos ("Bulgarians"), and on the other hand, they identify themselves as residents of a particular locality ("Kubeytsy", "Vaisaltsy", "Pandakliytsy", etc.). The migration of Bulgarians to urban settlements does not affect this variant of self-identification for the descendants of the first generation. Let us consider the impact of modern socio-economic processes on the preservation of ethnic identity by Bulgarians of the Ukrainian Danube region and the prospects for sustainable development of settlements of their compact settlement. After the rural residents of the USSR received passports, the level of interethnic contacts increased significantly. This led to a decrease in the role of endogamy in the social life of the descendants of the Transdanubian settlers. The share of children born in mixed marriages increased. Accordingly, the share of children who had phylogenetically stable ethnic consciousness decreased. Intensive migration caused an increase in the number of Bulgarians and Gagauz outside the area of their settlement.

The commonality of territory is not an obligatory factor in the reproduction of ethnicity. However, it acts as one of the determining factors in preserving the material and spiritual culture of ethnic communities. It is a question of living on the same territory, as well as natural conditions.

Modern socio-economic processes have a much greater impact on the self-identification of the population. Spontaneous labor migration has led to a decrease in the number of available populations in various rural settlements by 30-50%. In the case of Bulgarians, it is mainly men who go to work. Women stay at home with their children. This somewhat alleviates the problem of child rearing. Such intensive labor migration has a negative impact on the prospect of revival of traditional elements of material culture. The culture of an ethnos is a reflection of the historical path traveled

by the community. Further development of modern socio-economic processes may lead to qualitative changes in ethnic traditions.

There is a substitution of spiritual culture, which is the result of the historical development of ethnic groups and may differ from one social group to another. Taking into account that people mainly learn auxiliary working professions while earning money, such replacement cannot be called a progressive development of ethnic culture.

In the following we will turn to the peculiarities of resources for the development of ethnic tourism in the Ukrainian Danube region. It is one of the most multi-ethnic regions of the country. Compact settlement of the main ethno-national groups in large settlements, employment of the absolute majority of the population in agricultural production, predominantly mono-ethnic marriages contributed to the preservation of traditional material and spiritual culture of communities. Along with this, the region has quite wide transitional ethnic zones. However, nowadays such a factor of tourism development as ethnic diversity of the region with all the diversity of cultural elements of its inhabitants is practically not used.

Geographical location, diverse ethnic structure of the population, deterioration of living conditions and peculiarities of the legal and regulatory framework of the state in the ethno-national sphere largely determine the current ethno-cultural and ethno-political situation in the Ukrainian Danube region. The historical and geographical peculiarities of the development of the interfluvium have also determined the significant influence of external factors on the ethno-national situation. The ethnic homelands of the main diasporas are the states that have land (Moldova, Romania) and water (Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania) borders with the region.

The Ukrainian Danube region is characterized by traditions of multicultural and multi-ethnic diversity. Peaceful forms of interethnic communication have been developed. The model of ethno-cultural pluralism prevails in the region, where different types of ethno-national identity are regarded as equally valuable components of the general cultural process. Assimilation processes are minimized here.

The socio-political process in the interfluvium of the Danube and Dniester, the features of which are given, indicates the presence of internal and external factors for the development of ethnic tourism here. On the one hand, a significant part of representatives of ethno-national groups in the region have preserved traditional elements of material and spiritual culture, and on the other hand, the historical

homeland of the main diasporas is the neighboring countries. All this should stimulate the transformation of ethnic tourism into an attractive type of economic activity.

The Ukrainian Danube region is well provided with resources for the development of ethnic tourism. Five mono-ethnic types (Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Russian, Moldovan and Gagauz) of elementary ethnogeographical systems (EGS) are concentrated here (Todorov, 2017, pp. 107-113). The types of multi-ethnic EGS are determined by the ratio of these communities. Only the elementary system of Karakurt village of Bolgrad district is classified as Albanian-Bulgarian. This settlement has the largest share of Albanians in the population structure in Ukraine (54.8% as of 1.01.2001). The formation and territorial localization of multi-ethnic elementary UGS is conditioned by historical and geographical peculiarities of settlement of the Ukrainian Danube region. They are concentrated mainly in the central part of the region, which was emptied after the migration of Germans in 1944-1946. The current picture of settlement of the main ethno-national groups of the region is shown in Figure 1.



The development of ethnic tourism in the Danube-Dniester interfluvium will not only bring a significant economic effect, but will also stimulate the revival of certain elements of material and spiritual culture of the local population. We are talking, in particular, about traditional crafts, the revival of which as objects of presentation for tourists is a positive moment. Authenticity of various types of resources is significantly reduced by the action of various negative socio-economic and socio-

political factors. Let us give the following example. The accession of the Danube-Dniester interfluvium to the USSR and collectivization led to the actual loss of the Bulgarians of the region such elements of material culture as tannery, traditional system of agricultural production, which in its essence was equalization and redistribution and was based on the cultivation of their own land by each family. The change in social relations in the countryside had a negative impact also on demographic processes in the ethno-national group of Bulgarians. Collective farming on the land did not require as many laborers as individual (family) farming.



**Figure 1. Current ethno-national composition of the population of the Ukrainian Danube (Todorov & Madzar , 2013, p. 172).**

The resources of ethnic tourism development, which have undergone transformation, have received new properties, which from the point of view of contemporaries, most likely, increase their quality, but from the point of view of historically acquired experience of many generations there is a loss of traditional material and spiritual culture. Elements of culture act as an integral component of a person's ethnic identity.

The interconnectedness of elements of material and spiritual culture of the population makes it difficult to classify the resources of ethnic tourism development. The connection between religious affiliation and folk festivals is not in doubt. So far, the only solution to this complex methodological problem is to analyze the most significant characteristics of ethnic communities. It should also be noted that the intensive process of globalization leads to the loss of some elements of material and spiritual culture of the population of a clear ethnicity and contributes to their transformation into a common cultural heritage. Spring wheat-arnautka was brought to the Northern Black Sea region by representatives of a special ethnographic group of Albanians - arnauts. Later it became an integral part of the material culture of other groups of Transdanubian colonists.

In the Ukrainian Danube region, we can distinguish several groups of resources for the development of ethnic tourism:

- sacral objects - monasteries and churches of Orthodox Christians and Old Believers, German kirchas;
- spiritual culture - language, legends, songs, dances, etc;
- material culture - urban and rural neighborhoods, traditional buildings, everyday objects, traditional clothes, etc;
- places associated with the life activities of famous representatives of ethnic communities (Todorov, 2015, pp. 52 - 57).

The foundations of the complex socio-cultural system of life of the population are largely laid by the peculiarities of religion. Here, along with Christian churches and monasteries no less beautiful in their architecture and interesting due to the historical peculiarities of creation, Old Believers' temples, Catholic kirchas and other factors. In some of them unique phenomena are observed, stimulating their transformation into centers of religious tourism.

Ukrainian Danube region has a significant potential for the development of ethnic tourism. The population has preserved the main elements of traditional material and spiritual culture of their communities. Potential tourists may be interested in religious sites, historical and cultural monuments, places associated with the life of prominent people and other. They can familiarize themselves with the process of development of ethno-national communities in the area of their settlement.

In the Danube-Dniester interfluvium are concentrated areas of compact settlement of communities whose ethnic homelands are neighboring states. This peculiarity should become a catalyst for the development of ethnic tourism and its transformation into a profitable sphere of economic activity.

Ethno-national groups of the region have well preserved authentic elements of spiritual culture. Their revival is determined by the functioning of a sufficient number of amateur musical and choreographic groups with the status of folk. Negative processes in the system of material culture are largely due to the frequent transformation of the conditions of social life in the region.

The center of ethnic tourism development in the region should be the town of Bolgrad. In this administrative center of Transdanubian colonists of the mid-19th

century, a sufficient number of historical and cultural monuments of Bulgarians, Gagauz and Albanians have been preserved.

The high level of ethnic self-identification of the population of the Ukrainian Danube region combined with unique resources creates prerequisites for long-term effective development of ethnic tourism in this region. The population that has moved to big cities, but retains ethnic self-identification can provide advertising of ethnic tourism in the southwestern part of the Odessa region.

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