



Ethnographic tourism - promoter of the identity of an area

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To cite this article: Cazacu, M. D., Iașu, C. (2015). Ethnographic tourism - promoter of the identity of an area. *Lucrările Seminarului Geografic Dimitrie Cantemir*, Vol. 39, pp. 139-152. DOI: 10.15551/lsgdc.v39i0.14

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15551/lsgdc.v39i0.14>





ETHNOGRAPHIC TOURISM - PROMOTER OF THE IDENTITY OF AN AREA

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Abstract. The present study aims to use the concept of identity as a tool for investigating the ability of ethnographic tourism to capitalize on the cultural heritage elements of a tourist area. Through identity one tries to discover the specificity of an area. A very important role in determining the identity of an area is played by the territory itself, which is both physical support and carrier of cultural information. The geographical location becomes a social reference point, transmitting information about the culture, nationality and attitudes of the resident community. We can also observe the connections and influences that have existed over time between the community and the other groups with which it has come into contact. Besides its role in the transmission of information, the place also gains an affective value, giving individuals feelings of belonging, "the feeling of home", of a place in which they can encounter other individuals who share their value systems and experiences. These elements represent the main components of identity, which over time find concrete expression in tourist heritage items (for example, cultural, historical and religious sites, traditions and crafts) and become very important in creating the tourist appeal of an area.

Keywords: ethnographic tourism, identity, heritage, crafts, Neamț County.

Introduction

Nowadays, concepts such as traditional, sustainable, culture and identity are frequently used with reference to community from a socio-economic and also an ecological perspective. Because of its complexity, tourism interacts in a variety of ways with the environment and also with society and its economic development. It can have an important role in maintaining the identity of an area, in its economic development, and in preserving the community and the environment.

Ethnographic tourism is directed towards discovering traditional culture and promoting it in a sustainable manner, bearing in mind not only the location and its resources but also the local community. Maintaining a balance between exploiting, protecting and preserving the natural and cultural heritage can have an effect on the economic development of the local community and can increase the tourist appeal of the area.

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In this paper we will chart the relationship between tourism, identity and location from an ethnographic perspective. We will approach our research by moving from general to particular. Thus we will first attempt to define ethnographic tourism by using concepts such as culture and heritage and next look at the role of identity in a tourist area. After that we will apply and customize these concepts for the Neamț County area.

As a final result of the study we will present the effect that ethnographic tourism, through its material and non-material heritage elements, has on making an area stand out in the tourist market.

The paper is made up of three parts. The first focuses on the relationship between ethnographic tourism and aspects of cultural heritage, the second looks at cultural and place identity, and in the third part we will give examples of identity referents in Neamț County. We will conclude by presenting a short summary of the results and the main conclusions of our study.

1. Ethnographic tourism and cultural heritage

Ethnographic tourism is a form of cultural tourism that uses ethnographic elements/resources for tourist purposes. It capitalizes on elements of traditional culture as a way of promoting tourism in an area with an ethnographic heritage.

Ethnography is defined as the process of discovering and describing a culture (McCurdy *et al.*, 2005:9). During this process many identity- related characteristics of the group come to light.

According to Tylor (1871:1), “culture or civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society.” McCurdy *et al.* say that Tylor uses the term “culture” for the whole system of knowledge, behaviour and material goods associated with a group. In essence, he says that human groups are different and unique mainly because they have created different ways of learning and sharing knowledge. This way of characterizing culture is called “**omnibus definition**”, due to the simple fact that it includes everything that you think of when you differentiate between two groups (McCurdy *et al.*, 2005:5).

McCurdy, Spradley and Shandy (2005:5) define culture as “knowledge that is learned and shared and that people use to generate behavior and interpret experiences”.

According to S. Mehedinți, culture and civilization are not the same. The first is defined as “the sum of all spiritual creations (intellectual, ethical and aesthetic) that facilitate adaptation to the social environment” (1986:144-145) and the second as “the sum of all technical discoveries that facilitated the adaptation to the physical environment” (1986:97).

Damian preserves the same kind of division by saying that culture represents the interaction between nature and man as individuality. Nature, or the geographical location, has a very powerful influence in creating and developing a culture, especially in its early stages of development. Humanity is seen as a product and aspect of culture, and *vice versa*. Civilization is seen as the result of society-human interactions, man being perceived as a sociality (Damian, 2011:20).

Culture can be considered an individual creation while civilization is a collective one. From this we can understand the twofold role played by an individual as both creator and receptor of values. Local/regional cultures (traditional ones) are formed as entities through images and symbols and are structured as archetypal forms (Damian, 2011:21).

Heritage elements, as a subsection of cultural elements, differ from one area to another. Before listing the heritage elements that are of interest to ethnography, we first need to

introduce the concept of “heritage”. This concept has evolved over time (Littler and Naidoo, 2004), so there are a large number of different definitions.

According to UNESCO, the cultural heritage is made up of three main categories: the tangible and intangible cultural heritage, the natural heritage, and the heritage in the event of armed conflict.

Tangible cultural heritage can be movable (paintings, sculptures, coins, manuscripts), immovable (monuments, archaeological sites, and so on) or underwater (shipwrecks, underwater ruins and cities). Intangible cultural heritage includes oral traditions, performing arts, rituals etc. (UNESCO, 2015).

The strategy developed for the protection of Romania’s National Cultural Heritage is based on the principle that heritage is a fundamental factor in preserving identity, traditions and national culture, in sustainable development, and in the promotion of cohesion and social inclusion; and that this is even more important now that Romania is a member state of the European Union (Pantea and Bălătescu, 2012:30).

Cultural heritage is composed of an ensemble of resources identified by people as being the expression of the values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions of their community. It includes all the environmental aspects that have appeared over time as a result of interaction between individuals and the place they occupy. It is important to mention that not all aspects inherited from the past form part of cultural heritage, that not all the past is heritage, and that neither is the culture in its entirety, but only those elements in it that are of significance (Graham and Howard 2008:2).

These significant elements are constantly changing from culture to culture and from one period to another (Hall, 1997:61). Their meaning is given by identity and they are produced and modified by a range of social interactions and are also defined by consumption. In a society, only the people who compose it can decide, from a cultural point of view, the significance of things. This ‘cultural heritage’ comprehends only those heritage elements that add value to our existence. In tourism we can only capitalize on a small part of this heritage. Romania’s tourist heritage is defined by the Tourism Law (Art. 3) as “the totality of tourist resources and structures constructed with the purpose of their being used for tourist activities”.

Heritage, ethnography and identity are concepts that are constantly interacting, evolving and influencing each other. They focus on the culture of a society. Ethnography is in principle the bearer of identity of a group and also includes the identity of the place occupied by that group. The identity of a society is defined, *inter alia*, through the principal symbols recognized and accepted by its members, through its beliefs and traditions, and through rules that give meaning to their existence and help them stand out in a sea of individuals who share a common destiny (CIMEC, 2009: 4).

2. The concepts of place and cultural identity

The concept of identity

The concept of identity has been approached differently at various periods and in a variety of research areas, though it has been discussed chiefly in socio-human sciences such as psychology, sociology and philosophy.

The term identity stems from the Latin roots “*idem*” (the same) and “*identitas*” (which means similarity and continuity, or in everyday language, the same, belonging to) (Iluț, 1999:9). In the Oxford English Dictionary, “identity” is given two definitions: the first refers to similarity between two objects and the second to consistency or continuity over time, which is fundamental to establishing and understanding what defines and differentiates an entity.

According to Jenkins (1996), identity is not applicable only to humans; it is only social identity that is characteristic only of humans as social beings. Social identity is defined, according to one Dictionary of Sociology (Gadrey, 1998:85), as the ensemble of circumstances that make a person who he is. In concrete terms, what we are is determined socially and the circumstances in which we live make us who we are and define our identity (Scârneci, 2009:9).

Through identity, individuals and collectivities are differentiated in their relations with other individuals and collectivities (Jenkins, 1996:18). Identity, according to the Gale Psychology Encyclopaedia (Strickland, 2001), includes a personal continuity aspect and also a uniqueness vis-à-vis others. In other words, people acquire a social identity in virtue of being a member of a group: family, ethnic, occupational etc. These group identities (collective) satisfy the need to belong. On the other hand, people also build a personal identity which satisfies their need for uniqueness (Scârneci, 2009:14). If this is built, it means that identity can change and evolve over time. In the Penguin Dictionary of Sociology, identity is defined as “sense of self, of its person, of being who he is. It is the mental representation of a person about himself/herself” (Strickland, 2001). Identity is not just who you are, it is also how you want to appear to others and how others perceive you (Jenkins 1996:5). Thus, identity is much more than a name or an enumeration of qualities; it is a construction, like a story, a succession of words, a sum of intonations or facial expressions and gestures etc. Identity is not merely built, it is presented and expressed through symbols (Scârneci, 2009:15).

In sociology, identity means an assigning of categories (variable, depending on the historical, social and economic context). The identification of persons with groups or social categories is made on the basis of collective history and personal life. Regarding the making of these identifications, Dubar (2003) mentions two different ways: identifications made by others and identifications made by oneself. The first way has to do with an objective identity based on assigning labels and the second refers to subjective identity resulting from the feeling of affiliation to a category.

During the life of an individual we find a constant structuring, de-structuring and re-structuring of identity due to differences in viewpoint between self and others. We can thus observe differences between personal identity and social/group identity.

In the classical sociological perspective, social identity was defined in terms of affiliation to socio-professional categories. Thus, personal identity consisted in what people inherited, what shaped their conduct without their being aware of it. The relationship between individual and group identity was approached through the concept of “*habitus*”. This concept was intended to unite the objective with the subjective and to integrate individual practices with collective ones, while viewpoints such as that of Mead have the potential to form a bridge between classical and postmodern outlooks. Mead (*apud* Hund and Benford, 2003) states that there is a dialectical relationship between self and society: pre-existing social structures, meanings and contexts condition the development of the self, and the self then, in interaction with others, shapes emerging social structures, meanings and contexts.

The concept of identity entails a multi-dimensional classification, or a mapping of the world and of man and his position in it, as with individuals and their membership of a collectivity (cf. Ashton *et al.* 2004).

Place identity (territorial identity)

In looking at identity from a geographical perspective we need to discuss environment (*habitus*) and especially place/territory, and for the rest of this section we will talk about place identity. We will trace the relationship between “individuals, community and the environment

in which they live, be it neighbourhood, city, county, region or country” (GEA Strategy&Consulting, 2013:7).

Place influences the local specific via the presence of objective physical characteristics such as landforms, vegetation etc. These characteristics can be present in more than one community, leading to the appearance of shared elements of territorial identity. The difference is brought about, in this case, by the individuals themselves through their capitalization of resources connected with other inherited characteristics such as religion, tradition, collective memory, and political, economic and ideological factors etc.

Through place, identity becomes locally anchored in a specific region and at the same time “has and is a universal value” (Matei, 2004:242), represented by the “package” of identity values whose boundary must be maintained as clearly as possible in order to avert the development of cultural homogeneity between areas (Matei, 2004).

Communities modify and appropriate a place, giving it the quality of territory. Over time it gains an identity which is transmitted to future generations through culture and civilization.

The concept of relationship between identity and place has been studied by many researchers from a variety of angles, which is why the terms local identity, spatial identity and territorial identity are all used to refer to it (Ashworth and Voogd, 1900; Dematteis, 1994; Anholt, 2007, 2010; Kavaratzis, 2004, 2007).

According to Matei (2004), the notion of local identity implies the willingness of the collectivity to commit to the cultural characteristics and to assume them in a creative way. The tradition is seen here as the inspiration for a cultural gesture.

Even today, when national borders are far more permeable and cultural interchange is a constant phenomenon, territory still has a prominent role in shaping identity. Immigrants keep their native identity (Graham and Howard, 2008) and generally behave according to their own moral principles. Their homeland is still felt as a place of origin, as evidenced by their keeping of customs and traditions regardless of current geographical co-ordinates; they have what can be called “*mental co-ordinates*” which guide their behaviour even in foreign places. This behaviour can be accounted by cultural identity.

Cultural identity is defined by Mocan (2013:11) as “the sense of self” of an individual, derived from his formal or informal affiliation to groups that give him and share with him knowledge, opinions, attitudes, values and traditions.

The term local identity can be replaced by “local image”, thus becoming qualifiable by adjectives such as good or bad (/negative, /underdeveloped) (Skinner, 2008); or, as in our case, it can be associated with a local culture.

The importance of identity in an area is emphasized by Kunzmann (2004:387), who says that “during globalization, the identity of a place has become a key concern and arts are, leaving aside the landscape features, the only local resource differentiating between regions (...); the cultural content remains the last bastion of local identity” (Kunzmann, 2004:387). Identity is considered, by contrast with image, to be an “objective reality” (Kalandides, 2011:29).

Places also have identity, regarded as something objective, since it represents the place as it really is, as opposed to identity conceived as the image of a place, which shows how that place is perceived externally. Obviously, the image of a place can be strongly influenced by its objective identity, and image-makers may seek to structure the perceptions of others but cannot finally control them (Barke and Harrop, 1994:214).

This fact underlies the disjunction between a place’s image and its identity. In certain cases, the identity of a place is exploited in conjunction with tradition. Deffner and Metaxas

claim that “A city’s identity relates to its historical background and to the particularities that traditionally characterized that city; place identity concerns those distinctive characteristics that historically more or less provide the place with a character” (Deffner and Metaxas, 2010:52).

Discussions regarding the identity and image of a place are very important in marketing/branding. These two terms are not well conceptualized, and there remain many important unanswered questions about the way in which different places interact in the context of globalization, about a place losing its identity as a consequence of development, etc. (Kalandides and Kavaratzis, 2009).

3. Case study: Neamț county – identity referents and ethnographic tourism

Identity awareness appears only when the culture is present, i.e. in the moment of creation (Matei, 2004). Culture is passed on from one generation to another, in a continual transformation, generating fluxes of information. Part of this inheritance is transmitted through elements of ethnographic heritage. The appearance of these elements is facilitated by the cultural identity of an area. Cultural identity is created by the whole community. A large number of traditional practices and areas of knowledge, preserved in this way, are today regarded as aspects of non-material culture.

After an analysis of the components of identity (cognitive, affective and evaluative), Jurcan says that “to identify someone means to categorize a piece of information available from a decoding grid, a system of identity referents through which individuals and groups can define themselves or others” (2005:71). He takes from Muchielli three classes of identity referents that are valid for individuals. These referents are material identity, self-identity (origins, past, birth, self- history, systems of values and specific behaviour etc.), and social identity (the perception of identity in relation to others: stereotypes, the opinions of others regarding the subject, known affiliations and memberships, symbols and external signs - everything that means something in the social hierarchy). Figure 1 shows the identity referents for groups as divided into six categories by Jurcan (2005:72).

The importance of identity referents flows from the self-image of a place or from the image of it created by the perception of an individual/group. In our case, this group is represented by tourists, who create a particular image through the use of identity referents about an area. “Identity referents are categories of ordering and classifying information about a specific object” (Jurcan, 2005:72).

Identity referents can be included among traditional culture elements. In Figure 2 we present the elements of traditional culture important for the further development of ethnographic tourism in Neamț.

In Neamț County, the elements of traditional culture are exploited through various events supported and organized entirely by the local authorities, through participation in Romanian and international tourism fairs, and via online advertising (websites). Non-material culture is preserved and promoted through cultural events that take place throughout the year.

Traditions and customs are now continued and increasingly promoted by young people through festivals and fairs. One example would be the Festival of New Year Customs and Traditions which takes place in Târgu Neamț on the second of January every year. In 2015 the third official festival of this kind brought together over 20 groups from three Romanian counties: Suceava, Botoșani and Neamț. (We should mention that this festival had also been held unofficially on many occasions prior to 2013.)

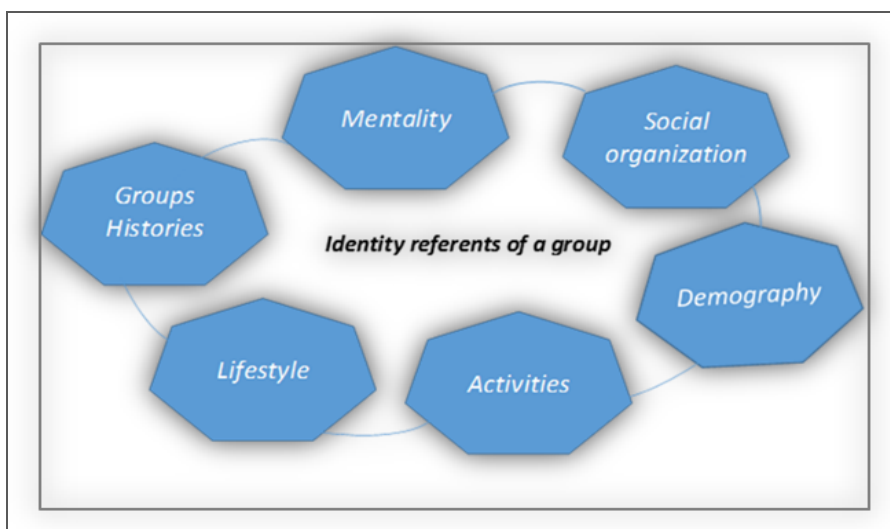


Figure 1: Identity referents of a group (adapted after Jurcan, 2005)

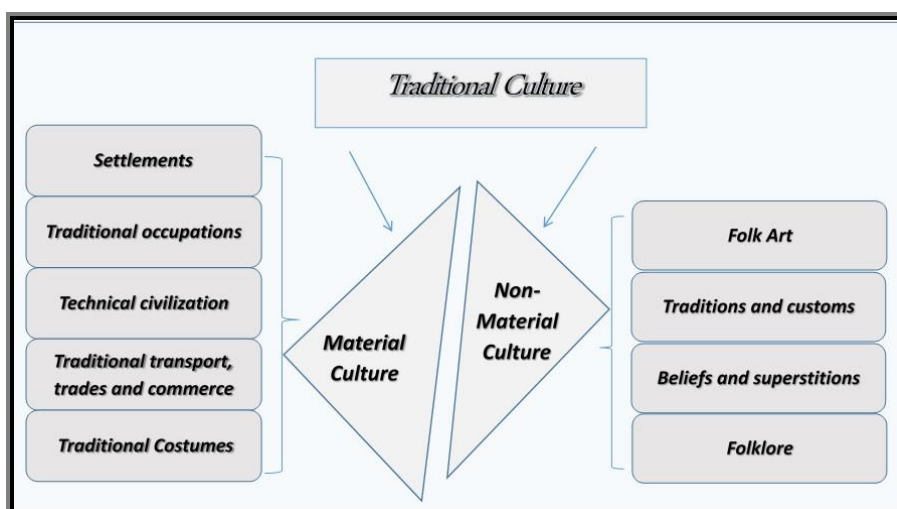


Figure 2: Components of traditional culture, adapted after Praoveanu, 2001

The *Lada cu zestre* (Dower Chest) Folklore Art Festival takes place in Piatra Neamț every May, lasts three days, and in 2014 was held for the ninth time. The purpose of the event is to preserve and promote popular traditions. In 2014 60 popular artists were invited, representing almost all the ethnographic areas of the country and also the Republic of Moldova. This festival is the result of collaboration between Neamț County Council, Piatra Neamț County Hall and Local Council, the Neamț County Museum Complex, the Moldova Association of Craftsmen and the Neamț County Local Artisans' Association.

Among exhibits for sale we may mention textiles (woven fabrics, popular costumes), ceramics, traditional masks, painted eggs, icons, ornaments etc. Those who participate in the festival also compete for two awards given by Neamț County Council, one for creation in folk art and the other for the promotion of folk art, and an award given by the Neamț County Museum Complex – the Niculai Popa prize, named in honour of a local Târpești artisan

Another well-known Neamţ County festival is the Ceahlăul International Folklore Festival, held for the seventeenth time in 2014. This takes place every August in the main localities in Neamţ and lasts a week. In 2014 the Ceahlăul was held in three localities: Piatra Neamţ (August 1 and 7), Târgu Neamţ (August 2) and the resort of Durău (August 3). The festival opened with a parade involving all the folk groups and continued with concerts by each of them. There were not only Romanian folk groups but also some from abroad (the Klek group from Ogulin, Croatia; the Bañdurka & Trambłanka popular song and dance group from Opoczno, Poland; the Municipal Dance Group from Fuengirola, Spain; and the Toporivceanca dance group from Cernăuţi, Ukraine).

Romanian participants included the Floricică de la Munte (Little Flower of the Mountain) Folklore Group (representing the Carmen Saeculare Centre for Culture and the Arts, Piatra Neamţ, the Căluşarii from Stolnici, Argeş County, the Rapsodia Bucovinei Artistic Ensemble from Suceava, the Rapsodia Someşană Folklore Group from Cluj-Napoca and the Semenec Folklore Group from Reşiţa, Caraş-Severin County).

Among events promoting aspects of traditional culture we might also mention the Ceahlău Mountain Festival, the Popular Artisans' Fair, the Festival of Berries, Christmas festivals, the Neamţ Fortress Days of Celebration, the Medieval Art Festival, and so on.

Material culture being well represented in Neamţ, we may mention ethnographic heritage sites including ethnographic museums (Neamţ County Museum Complex, the Ethnographic Museum, Cucuteni Eneolithic Art Museum, the Piatra Neamţ Art Museum, the Târgu Neamţ History and Ethnography Museum, the Iulia Hălăucescu Art Museum, the Niculai Popa Museum in Târpeşti, the Vasile Găman Museum in Vânători-Neamţ, the Borca Ethnography Museum, the Vânători-Neamţ Museum Collection, the Ioan Luca Ethnographic Museum in Fărcaşa), memorial houses (the Ion Creangă Memorial House in Humuleşti, the Mihail Sadoveanu Memorial House in Vânători-Neamţ, the Aristide Caradja Museum in Grumăzeşti), museum complexes within monasteries (Agapia, Bistriţa, Durău, Horaiţa, Neamţ, Secu, Văratec), and ethnographic collections in the municipalities of Ceahlău and Agapia.

In Neamţ County there are numerous ethno-folklore centres in which local artisans practise a variety of crafts. These traditional activities capture and display the skills and knowledge of craftsmen and also the natural resources involved in creating particular products (see Table 1).

Table 1: Traditional crafts and local artisans in Neamţ County

<i>Localities:</i> Commune (village) / Town	<i>Traditional crafts</i>	<i>Local artisans</i>
Agapia (Văratec, Agapia convent)	Artisan handicrafts – Women (fabrics, carpets, rugs); Traditional cooking (fruit syrups, jam)	Ana Neculai; Agapia convent
Bahna	Artisan handicrafts – Men (carpentry, small items of rustic furniture)	Ion Căprioară, Grigore Căprioară
Bălăteşti (Valea Seacă, Bălăteşti, Bălăteşti, Bălăteşti, Bălăteşti, Bălăteşti)	Artisan handicrafts – Women (fabrics, woven carpets, traditional small bags, tapestries, rugs and large carpets), woodworking (wood carving), Artisan handicrafts – Men (fur processing)	Maria Manolache, Maria Mihalachi, Iulian Mihalachi, Angela Iliescu, Ioan Iliescu, Vasile Cozma
Bicazu Ardelean	Artisan handicrafts – Men (woodworking), Artisan handicrafts – Women (traditional fabrics);	Alexandru Catrinioi, Elena Cioancă

Borca	Artisan handicrafts – Men (wood carving, blacksmithing, barrel making, fur processing, Artisan handicrafts – Women (traditional fabrics, knitting, hand spinning);	Gheorghe Bondar, Eduard Lute, Neculai Gherman, Ana Cojocaru, Floarea Șpiț, Elena Tănase
Botești (Botești, Botești, Barticești)	Artisan handicrafts – Women (weaving fabrics, sewing), Artisan handicrafts – Men (weaving: withy weaving, basket weaving; carpentry);	Marcel Oprea, Ion Trefaș, Ionuț Damian
Brusturi-Drăgănești	Artisan handicrafts – Men (blacksmithing, posts, gates, wrought iron, rustic furniture, joinery);	Vasile Obreja
Ceahlău	Artisan handicrafts – Women (traditional woven articles and fabrics, rugs, cross-stitch), traditional garments; Artisan handicrafts – Men (wood carving, carpentry, barrel making);	Maria Brânzucă, Elena Stelea, Ludovica Băltog, Pavel Popa
Dâmuc	Artisan handicrafts – Men (fur processing), woodworking, painting and icons (naive painting), traditional musical instruments (horn);	Alexandru Găină
Farcașa (Bușmei)	Traditional musical instruments	Mihai Lupuleasa
Ghindăoani (Saivane)	Artisan handicrafts – Women (traditional woven articles and fabrics)	Elena Zaharia
Grumăzești (Suseni, Suseni)	Artisan handicrafts – Men (fur processing: traditional hats, tanning of lambskins), traditional garments (hats made from animal skins and furs, collars and traditional breastplates), Artisan handicrafts – Women (traditional woven articles and fabrics)	Vasile Dudanu, Anișoara Dudan
Horia	Artisan handicrafts – Men (weaving: withy weaving)	Constantin Nastur, Ion Lupan
Ion Creangă	Painting and icons (traditional wooden icons, whittling	Valerică Aaniței
Pângărați (Oanțu, Pângăricior, Pângărați)	Artisan handicrafts – Women (traditional woven articles and fabrics), traditional musical instruments (Pan pipes)	Ruxanda Popovici, Elena Lăzăru, Gavril Borșuc
Petricani (Țolici, Rotunda)	Artisan handicrafts – Men (rustic furniture, wood carving, carpentry, joinery), woodworking (carved wooden objects: carved spoons, ladles, walking sticks, keepsake chests, barrels, carved mugs), traditional masks, painting and icons (naive painting).	Păscălina Mihai, Pascu Petru, Ion Cotoi, Maria Ambrosă Lateș, Ana Pușcașu
Piatra Neamț	Painting and icons (naive icons on glass, naive painting), traditional masks, Artisan handicrafts – Women (tapestries, woven fabrics - rugs), traditional garments;	Cecilia Hăisan, Elena Niță Ibrian, Gica Popa, Maria Petrican, Ciprian Istrate, Mădălina Măriuțac
Piatra Șoimului	Traditional musical instruments	Simion Drăgușanu, Gheorghe Drăgușanu
Pipirig (Boboiești, Pipirig, Pipirig, Pipirig, Pipirig)	Artisan handicrafts – Women (traditional woven articles and fabrics, rugs, tapestries, carpets), traditional garments (small bags, shirts, belts and jerkins), Artisan handicrafts – Men (fur processing, traditional masks, woodworking (small items of rustic furniture, wooden decorations);	Rodica Ciocărtău, Maria Todici, Varvara Todici, Mihai Marin, Nicolae Dolhescu, Georgeta Arsenescu, Gheorghe Chirilă
Răucești (Răucești, Răucești, Oglinzi)	Artisan handicrafts – Women (traditional woven articles and fabrics), traditional garments (embroidered blouses, traditional shirts), traditional masks;	Paraschiva Ciorsac, Ileana Apostoae, Maria Ciorsac, Adrian Ifțimi-Iacob
Roman	Traditional jewellery and finery, Artisan handicrafts – Women (rope making), painting and icons (icons);	Doina Solomon, Olga Blidirișanu, Elena Iacoban, Vasile

		Ciocioiu, Gheorghe Mihăilă
Săbăoani	Artisan handicrafts – Women (traditional woven articles and fabrics, tapestries), traditional garments (small bags), traditional masks;	Maria Robu, Cristina Miron
Săvinești	Painting and icons (icons)	Gabriel Bulgărea
Ștefan cel Mare	Traditional masks, Artisan handicrafts – Women (rope making)	Vasile Ciocârlan, Elena Ciocârlan
<i>Târgu Neamț</i> (Târgu Neamț, Târgu Neamț, Humulești, Humulești, Târgu Neamț)	Traditional jewellery and finery (crocheted items: earrings, bracelets, necklaces, hair ribbons), woodworking (traditional wood furniture and everyday objects: spoons, decorated wooden dishes and small items of furniture for indoor use, bats and sticks decorated in tin foil or sculpted), traditional masks, Artisan handicrafts – Women (traditional woven articles and fabrics); Artisan handicrafts – Men (wood carving), clay modelling and tapestry, traditional garments;	Maria Vasiliu, Ștefan Grigoriu, Ionela Lungu, Constantin Lungu, Nemțeanca Handicraftsmen Association
Tazlău	Artisan handicrafts – Women (traditional woven articles and fabrics, hand spinning)	Eugenia Culbece, Mariana Lazăr
Timișești	Traditional Masks	Ion Albu
Vânători Neamț (Lunca, Nemțșor, Vânători-Neamț, Vânători-Neamț)	Artisan handicrafts – Men (wood carving, carpentry, joinery, garden accessories), woodworking (items used in the interior of churches: iconostases, crosses, chapels; indoor furniture: dishes, chairs, gates, doors and window frames), traditional masks, Artisan handicrafts – Women (weaving, sewing)	Vasile Gaman, Vasile Neamțu, Ion Coșofreț, Doruța Teodorescu

Data sources: the Carmen Saeculare Centre for Culture and the Arts, Piatra Neamț, and the Neamț County Local Artisans' Association

Neamț County is renowned for its traditional masks and woodworking, crafts practised with pride and handed down from one generation to another. Besides these, a major role is also played by domestic crafts involved in the making of traditional products to be sold at fairs and festivals.

Traditional crafts are practised throughout the county (Figure 3), which means that tourist promotion via the Internet is well developed. Local artisans in Neamț have formed associations through which a better promotion of traditional ethnographic products and ethnographic tourism can be achieved, especially online.

Online promotion is favoured by local agents due to its low cost and greater effectiveness for the transmission and updating of information.

In the Ministry for Culture and National Heritage's 2010 list of historic monuments in Romania, Neamț County can be seen to possess a wealth of tourist potential; it has 537 historic monuments, among them 35 archaeological sites, three fortified settlements, nine fortresses, 80 historic houses, mansions and traditional inns, seven fortified walls, two historic urban centres (in Roman and Târgu Neamț), 41 other historic buildings and 54 monasteries and hermitages (Neamț County Development Strategy 2014-2023:148).

Involved in promoting traditional culture in Neamț we find institutions such as the Carmen Saeculare Centre for Culture and the Arts in Piatra Neamț (an institution overseen by Neamț County Council), the Neamț Cultural Directorate, Neamț County Council, the G. T. Kirileanu County Library, the Neamț County Museum Complex, the various town halls, the Culture Houses (for example the Ion Creangă Culture House in Târgu Neamț), etc.



Figure 3: Traditional craft distribution map of Neamț County showing active online tourist-oriented promotion, 2015 (Data source: Carmen Saeculare Centre for Culture and the Arts, Piatra Neamț)

We might also add such other associations as ANTREC Neamț, the Neamț Association for the Development and Promotion of Tourism, the Nemțeanca Handicraftsmen's Association in Târgu Neamț, the Eco-Hangu Association, the Neamț County Local Artisans' Association, and so on.

Conclusions

Ethnographic tourism focuses on the use of ethnographic potential and identity in preserving and promoting the cultural heritage of a community situated in a tourist area. Ethnography is used as a way of acquiring cultural knowledge about a group of people with the purpose of making it available to a wider audience. The culture of a group is defined by the sum of all the knowledge used in interpreting experiences and generating a distinctive socio-cultural behaviour. To understand territorial identity as “the feeling of home”, we must consider the interactions between a place and its community.

The identity of a place is an active process and any attempt at defining it is made difficult by the constant and ongoing interaction between individuals, their groups and their cultural and place identity.

Cultural identity is concerned with the transmission of information and knowledge over time and space within a community. The place influences, conditions and transforms the cultural identity of a group. It influences it through the natural resources available to the respective group, conditions it through relief factors, in the sense that they transmit information to or keep it from reaching the group, and transforms it through its affective

value, inspiring in individuals the “feeling of belonging” to the group, to its culture and to the associated place.

The science of ethnography, through the use of the concept of identity, is well suited to describe and explain the mentality and behaviour of a community. Additionally, if we understand these aspects, we can research, safeguard and promote customs and traditions unique to an area.

Neamț County benefits on the one hand from a rich and diverse cultural heritage with tourist potential and on the other hand from the involvement of many social agents in activities related to preserving, protecting and promoting its cultural heritage. The features of its ethnographic heritage are very well marketed to tourists through a variety of public performances and events, like the fairs and festivals mentioned in the text.

The development of ethnographic tourism, due to its component of authenticity, can lead in the future to the creation of new ways of promoting tourism that are more appropriate to the local mentality and to the expectations of tourists, investors and the general population, thus, giving the region a unique image as a tourist destination in the tourism marketplace.

Acknowledgments

**This work was supported by strategic grant POSDRU/159/1.5/S/133652, co-financed by the European Social Fund within the Development of Human Resources Sectorial Operational Program 2007 – 2013.*

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