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Carnival as a tourist product and its place in the local development

Abstract. Fasiangy is a name for Carnival traditions and represent in Slovakia a wide variety of ethnicity-connected events taken place in the end of winter and the beginning of spring terms. Fasiangy are associated with the traditional parades in masks before starting Lent and many other accompanying activities. These traditions, despite the fact that they are attractive, persistent and generally well known, still have not had their legitimate place on the tourist products market and in the travel agencies products. The carnivals often exist in the form of events organized by local municipalities, which contributes to raising the awareness of municipality residents, positive local patriotism and to some extent also to local development. The absence of a product should be solved by its completion, based on creativity and cultural heritage combined with the up-to-date experience. The main aim of the article is to show the tourism potential for local development within active creation of a local municipal policy by example of traditional carnivals. In analytical part of the article we bring the results of realized survey with the focus at carnival as a potential regional development support tool in the context of tourism. 282 respondents were interviewed in 2014 concerning their attitude to cultural tourist products. The survey showed that shaping the tourist product of Fasiangy is possible within professional approach to the cultural product development and promotion.

Keywords: Carnival; Tourist Product; Cultural Tourism; Local Development

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Карнавал як туристичний продукт та його значення в місцевому розвитку

Анотація. Карнавальні традиції представляють у Словаччині різноманітні етнічні звичаї кінця зими й початку весни, зокрема щорічного параду в масках перед початком Великого посту й багатьох інших супутніх заходів. Ці традиції досі не мають свого місця на ринку туристичних продуктів і в пропозиціях туристичних агентств. Основна мета статті – вказати на необхідність і шляхи створення карнавального туристичного продукту в Словаччині в контексті його використання для місцевого розвитку на основі створення дієвої муніципальної політики. В аналітичній частині статті представлено результати опитування 282 респондентів у 2014 році щодо їх ставлення до створення культурних туристичних продуктів. Дослідження засвідчило великий туристичний потенціал карнавалів за умови розробки професійного продукту та його промоушену.

Ключові слова: карнавал; туристичний продукт; культурний туризм; місцевий розвиток.

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Карнавал как туристический продукт и его значение в местном развитии

Аннотация. Карнавальные традиции представляют в Словакии различные этнические обычаи конца зимы и начала весны, в частности ежегодного парада в масках перед началом Великого поста и многих других сопутствующих мероприятий. Эти традиции до сих пор не имеют своего места на рынке туристических продуктов и в предложениях туристических агентств. Основная цель статьи - указать на необходимость и пути создания карнавального туристического продукта в Словакии в контексте его использования для местного развития на основе разработки эффективной муниципальной политики. В аналитической части статьи представлены результаты опроса 282 респондентов в 2014 году относительно их отношения к созданию культурных туристических продуктов. Исследование показало большой туристический потенциал карнавалов при условии разработки профессионального продукта и его промоушена.

Ключевые слова: Карнавал; туристический продукт; культурный туризм; местное развитие.

Introduction. By the meaning of the word «carnival» in our minds even the uninitiated people often recall Brazilian Rio de Janeiro Carnival with its bright colours and samba, or Venice Carnival with its historical costumes and masks, or carnival from childhood memories at school. Carnivals can be celebrated everywhere in the world, but each country, town (city) or village are significantly different in this celebration.

«Masopust» which means «good bye meat» and «Fasiangy» – equivalent of the English Shrove-tide have been celebrated by Slavs in Czech republic and Slovak republic. In many villages carnival parade persisted from the past, elsewhere it is the revitalization of traditions made successfully or unsuccessfully

by the representatives of local government, or civic (resident) association or unorganized citizens – enthusiasts of traditions. Carnival parade is also possible to categorize as «event organized by village (community)» and therefore it is able to be successfully transformed into a tourist product that can support local identity increase, reinforce a positive perception of the work of local government as well as effective use of local historical, demographic and economic potential by the participation of all community members in the local development.

Theoretical concepts review and problem statement

Local development is an integral part of regional development. Although there is no existence of general criteria of regional

development, yet its concept resonates more frequently. Every society and economy is based on different values and traditions. Different dimensions are attributed to different meanings, which are also reflected in the approaches to the formation of economic and social development plans and preferences in local policies.

The principles and values that reflect local development forces and relations between the state, market and civil society are politically determined by regional stakeholders (Pike et al. 2007). To the same extent the same applies to the local level. What we consider as the development is bounded by structural, institutional and historical context (Bucek et al. 2010). These approaches and views are specified by the authors Maier and Todtling (1998); Blazek, Uhlir (2002); Tej (2002, 2003).

The current financial situation of local authority in many smaller communities (but not only their) forces local officials to seek additional resources, which many are found in local specificities and specialties, and use them in tourism promotion. However, there often end their efforts. Quantitative and qualitative aspects of development should be achieved through sustainable development of tourism based on a synergy of economic, social, environmental and cultural criteria. The key to lasting success is promoting diversity, authenticity and quality of tourism. Economic viability, local prosperity, quality of employment, social equality, full of traffic, local control, community wellbeing, cultural richness, physical integrity, biological diversity, efficient use of resources and environmental cleanliness are the requirements that should be taken into account in shaping long-term visions and development strategies [23]. Regarding the preferences of tourist activities in the community, it is needed to reflect on the creation of adequate tourist product. The tourist product is perceived as intrinsically interrelated complex, serious functioning of basic and supplementary services bind for their operators, extendible and applicable to the tourism market, and sold through travel agencies (Hamplova, 2013). Tourists mainly focus on sights that are lacking in their residence or home country (Nagy, 2009). That is the main idea suitable for the current efforts on tourism development of local governments in Slovakia.

Goal and methodology of the research

Cultural potential of regions or individual locations is an important factor of economic development and can significantly contribute through cultural tourism to job opportunities for residents and activities for meaningful leisure of tourists. Cultural potential is mainly composed of cultural heritage, cultural facilities and events of live culture, and professional or artistic manifestations of folk culture.

Actual knowledge and current information available to the municipal sector were used in the research along with survey of 282 respondents in 2014. The goal of research is to outline the importance of creating an attractive tourist product while bringing the experience of historical knowledge and new technologies application.

Carnival as a tourist product

In terms of the history, the carnivals (Fasiangy-Shrovetide) represent celebrations, which are based on pre-Christian pagan traditions when the end of winter was celebrated and the people with the hope for a good harvest looked to the future. From a historical and ethnographic point of view, there is the annual custom, which has a long evolutionary path. People in pre-industrial period of socio-economic formations had been closely linked with nature and made extensive empirical findings about it. Agriculture as a basic livelihood was dependent on a qualitatively new development of annual customs. In the process of industrialization and urbanization of the population these ingrained habits carried over from the village to village and from a rural to urban areas and were brought with the people.

Content of tradition as a base of the product attractiveness

The word «carnival» has a German origin and by D. Fabian (in: Kopcsayova, 2015) evolved from the word «vast-schant», which meant the «last drink» given before fasting. Carnival Shrovetide traditions in Europe have the united essential character, at what specifically include various ethnic and regional elements (Venice Carnival, Carnival in Slovakia etc.). The elements of ancient religious festivities and old-France traditions that have been associated with wearing masks (Horva-

thova, 1986; Slivka, 1990) got in to their character. In terms of the workforce, the carnivals were watershed between silkworm and weaving. At that time, most weddings were naturally performed within the carnival time before the 40 days of fasting. The regional dishes included customary during the Shrovetide are different ceremonial bread and pastry (Kyselica, Kyselicova, 1991; Grulova-Murgova 1989), masks parades are taken place (Slivka, 1990; Bendza, 2013).

In the post-war years it seemed that disappearance of festival habit was definitive, but in the end of the 20th century they have made their way back. Today, the masks carnival and other traditional customs have been introduced to the municipalities or regions where they once were forgotten. The genesis of individual national customs, and namely the carnival meals, in Europe is problematic to single out. Foods and dishes put on the graves of the ancient Slavs during the carnival holidays in the past are served nowadays throughout Slovakia. They are designed greasy and fried pastries which have different names depending on the region. «Who is not in the carnival satiate fed, will be hungry all year» - a popular saying states (Horvathova, 1986). According to Kyselica and Kyselicova (1991), carnival ceremonial bread originated through spring New Year abundance. It is therefore possible that folk ceremonial bread law included the permanent values of the folk artistic expression along with other artistic values that had arisen between people and induced in us aesthetic (today especially culinary) experience.

National carnival traditions have good tourist potential and stimulate various forms of local business activities in order to present the cultural heritage to the newcomers.

The Tourist product «Fasiangy carnival»

Product formation may be applied after a perfect mapping of own strengths and abilities, financial position and other sources. According to Sambronska (2012), an important prerequisite for the cultural potential of the regions usage is the creation of suitable tourist products. In our case, such a product will be **Fasiangy carnival (or Shrovetide)**. We assume that carnivals are exceptional tourist product aimed at attraction attention to the cultural heritage of the country. This determines all other services of such unique tourist product. Carnival attractions can be very different; their type also determines their level of attractiveness that can be viewed locally, regionally, nationally or internationally. The ambition of **Fasiangy carnival (or Shrovetide)** tourist product will be the local level. The tourist product is a factor of regional and local development (Matusikova 2008), and as it will be seen below requires certain amount of creativity and support of media (Ali Taha, 2013). Tourism based on the heritage includes a wide range of attractions and can have several sources. Nuryati (1996, in: Puczko and Racz, 2000), states that it is part of the cultural tradition of the country and its identity. The importance of identity in local development pointed out Tej and Kobol (2002).

Results

In assessing the carnival customs as tourist product we will be based on the several statements concerning the tourism functioning:

- tourist product is based on the economic concepts;
- tourism concept is the meeting of communities and cultures (cultural concept);
- in tourism concept the geographical access should be taken into account (Cuka 2011).

According to our experience, the following concepts should be applied in order to create and operate with the unique tourist product: theory of diffusion of innovation; experience of psychological theories; creation of an active tourism policy (Tej, Matusikova, 2014).

To obtain a professional opinion on Carnival tourist product creation, we have gathered the answers of 282 respondents of a broader survey of tourism perception in 2014 in Slovakia. The relevant survey question concerned the use of specific concepts and theories that would be most suitable for a new cultural event product creation based on the cultural and historical heritage. The choice could be made out of the seven options. The respondents were from two target groups: pupils and students of tourism specialization and market professionals of the tourism industry. The results are recorded in Table 1. Respondents commonly reported to use cultural concept as the most

Tab. 1: Opinions of respondents on the adequacy of the approaches towards the carnival tourist product creation (%) and the rank of each concept's preference

	Active creation of tourism policy	Economic concept	Cultural concept	Theory of innovation diffusion	Theory of psychological experience	Concept of area values	Other approaches
Total amount of supporters	114	23	143	73	29	88	38
Total % of supporters	22,44	4,53	28,15	14,37	5,71	17,32	7,48
The rank of each concept's preference	II	VII	I	VI	VI	III	V

Source: Results of own survey (2014)

suitable for the creation of a new tourist product. This is often due to the Slovak environment and the clash of cultures and communities that had been very common in many areas (antique expansion of Turkish conquests, Valaska colonization, German colonization etc.). This allows us to claim that there is no statistically significant difference between the views of both target groups (preparing for practice in tourism and actively working in tourism) to the most appropriate professional concepts.

The cultural concept of product formation would thus have to address in addition to the local population and foreign tourists who spend winter holidays in Slovakia and want to enjoy the traditions actively or passively.

The second by relevance choice of the respondents was the concept of active policy making, which is based on the educational outcomes of pupils and students, in order to increase active role of the tourism industry workers in the field. In the third place appeared the concept of values of area connected to the objective geographic localization of the tourist product.

Table 2 shows the results that we obtained in determining the basis for tourist product within implementers and providers of services within the local area. We used search engines to study the records of sub-products which can decompose the Carnival tourist product. This includes the following sub-products:

- Carnival parade;
- Shrovetide slaughter;
- bass burying;
- Carnival ceremonial pastry.

Tab. 2: The frequency of Carnival's sub-products records on the Internet

	Parade	Shrovetide slaughter	Bass burying	Ceremonial Pastry
Number of records	69,900	55,500	69,200	1
Time horizon	7 years	6 years	9 years	3 years
Amount of travel agencies	23	10	1	0

Source: Results of own survey (2014)

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The highest frequency of the occurrence was with the traditional carnival masks parade. Records of 69,900 represent the basis of good information about the product. This potential product was offered by 23 travel agencies during the seven years, other records were connected with offers by

the municipal offices or local activists of the events organized by communities. Burying the bass by the frequency of occurrence was 69,200 records within 9 years, presenting the second most advertised product of our research. However, it was offered only by 1 travel agency. Shrovetide slaughter was offered from the 55,500 records within 6 years only by 10 travel agencies. Activities connected to ceremonial pastries were almost absent on the Internet (1 record over 3 last years). Hence, the findings from Table 2 highlighted many provisions formed throughout the process of the tourist product making. We may also reflect on additional promotional narrations of the Carnival sub-products (for example, popularization of the ceremonial pastries, their preparation and presenting as the most favourite product during the advent for the families with children as it has been done in the Shopping centre «Galleria» in Krakow, Poland).

Conclusion

Although nowadays the Fasiangy (or Shrovetide) celebrations are not so strictly respected, nevertheless they contribute much to the entertainment during the end of the winter season. If a tourist wants to taste different sides of the local celebrations and become a part of the Slovak traditional activities, he should have such a tourist opportunity in the different towns, villages and hamlets all over the regions of the country.

The survey showed that shaping the tourist product associated with the Fasiangy is possible by the professional conceptions using, of which the best suitable is the cultural product. Shrovetide represents circumvention opportunity in the list of the travel agencies' offers during the winter season of ski tourism. The product already exists, though it is constructed rather by the municipalities and local enthusiasts, than tourist market professionals. It is necessary to increase its attractiveness and enter into the process creatively, giving it a higher level of cultural originality and uniqueness together with modern publicity.

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