

Territorial Identity of the Population as an aspect of Public Administration of Tourism Territories Development

Alexandra Vladislavovna Afanasyeva^{1*}

1. Higher School of Tourism and Hospitality, Russian State University of Tourism and Service, Moscow, Russia.

*Corresponding Author. Email: afanasyeva.al.v@gmail.com

ABSTRACT: The article is devoted to the development of the methodology for studying the territorial identity of the population of regions and post-Soviet countries as an object of public administration in the sphere of tourism. The population and its features are an important resource, particularly for tourism. However, one can observe that even the most successful destinations experience difficulties in developing tourism due to emerging hotbeds of tension and armed clashes related to conflicts between certain population groups. The analysis of territorial identity allows one to reveal the existence and strength of mental links of a person with the territory of their living, priorities in choosing the place of study, work, living, recreation, etc., i.e. answers the question of the attractiveness of a region for its inhabitants, as well as the causes and factors of migration processes (labour, educational, recreational). It allows one to determine the trends of centripetal forces in society (formation of the so-called "centrisms"), to analyze the relationship between territorial identity and the statehood, and to identify mental images of different territories. It has great importance for sociological research, branding, and marketing of territories, for the improvement of the image of individual districts, etc. The article proposes a complex methodology for studying the territorial identity of the population for the sphere of public administration of regional tourism development, which can be verified in the conditions of different territories and regions. The author considers its provisions and mechanisms, in particular, the analysis of the experience of territorial identity research, including for frontier and border regions, concepts and approaches to comprehension and research of territorial identity components, subjective atlases as a form of information presentation and the study of the features of compilation and analysis of mental maps.

Keywords: territorial identity, post-Soviet countries, public administration in the sphere of tour.

INTRODUCTION

The modern development of tourist destinations is characterized by complex and contradictory processes, which require consideration, control, and regulation, particularly by the state. At the same time, the population of tourist destinations is the most valuable tourism resource. Today we can observe that even the most successful destinations experience difficulties in developing tourism due to emerging hotbeds of tension and armed clashes related to conflicts between certain population groups of the destinations. An important role in these processes is played by the territorial identity

(TI) of the population – understanding and awareness of a person as a part of their place of living, their environment – local or global.

It is particularly important to study the TI of the population of ethnically complex regions, post-socialist and post-Soviet countries, where due to historical and political reasons, there are special trends in national identity. The development of certain regions and countries in today's globalized world determines the internal transformations of all components of their internal structure, in particular, in the sphere of territorial organization of the society based on a person's perception, comprehension, and evaluation of their place of living.

Today, not only social and political pillars are changing but also the territorial forms of population placement and priorities in choosing certain places to live, work, and rest. Typical for post-socialist countries, the administrative territorial approach to social and geographical research should be revised today. European science has already formed a fundamentally new perceptual approach based on the human perception of the environment as a place of their life and inclusion of its features in their existential strategies.

New forms of geographical space – vernacular regions, created based on the unity of human communities and their TI – are based on perception and identification of oneself with a certain territory and human community. Nowadays any state, besides administrative division, has its own network of vernacular regions of different ranks, but they are ignored by modern scientists. Yet, without considering such mental and territorial formations, no administrative territorial reform or political and spatial transformation and improvement is possible. They are actively used in the study of tourist flows, analysis of the location of places of tourist interest, and so on.

The "man-nature" correlation issue is traditional for the geography area, but in the modern anthropocentric world, it shifts from the sphere of material relations to the system of mental connections. People's awareness of the place of their being, its evaluation and interpretation determine the social and spatial behaviour and, consequently, the specific features of the society's territorial organization. The question of correlation between mental and real space is important today for all spheres of social and economic activity.

The analysis of TI allows one to reveal the existence and strength of mental links of a person with the territory of their living, priorities in choosing the place of study, work, living, recreation, etc., i.e., answers to the question of the attractiveness of a region for its inhabitants. Moreover, it allows one to reveal the causes and factors of migration processes (labour, educational, recreational), to determine the trends of centripetal forces in society (formation of the so-called "centrisms"), to analyze the relationship between TI and the statehood, and to identify mental images of different territories. It has great importance for sociological research, branding, and marketing of territories, for the improvement of the image of individual districts, etc.

The features of self-identification of the population have a direct impact on the formation of territorial communities living in a particular territory and connected by various relationships and form their mental boundaries of space, which differ from the well-known boundaries of settlements. The TI study provides answers to questions that are important for every nation, ethnic group, and person: "Who are we (who am I)?", "What does the Homeland mean to me?", "To what nation do I belong?". The answers to these questions consolidate, unite people around their territory, and strengthen the sense of historical memory in them.

The grounds for TI research have been laid down long ago. F. Ratzel (Sinitskii, 1899) noted that the level of cultural development is determined by the level of a person's spiritual connection with a certain territory. However, today, the problem of TI is still methodologically and practically undeveloped, despite their extreme geopolitical urgency and the juncture position in the system of scientific knowledge. In foreign scientific literature, TI research is carried out in various scientific disciplines (Geren-Pas, 2005; Gnatyuk, 2012; Hale, 1971; Huntington, 2004; Melnychuk, Gnatyuk, Rastvorova, 2011; Tuan, 1974; Wright, 1947; Zamyatin, Zamyatina, Mitin, 2008; Zelinsky, 1992). For example, the American geographer Fu Tuan justified the theoretical provisions of human perception of the place of their life and introduced into scientific circulation the concept of topophilia and topophobia (feeling of friendship or fear, dislike to a certain place) (Tuan, 1974).

Russian science has already developed specific approaches to identifying and evaluating the TI of the population of "problem" territories (transboundary, politically unstable, depressed, and isolated in geocultural terms). The Russian scientist M.P. Krylov made a significant contribution to the development of TI theory and methodology. He justified the concept of regional identity and proposed a complex methodology for identifying and evaluating the TI of the regional level based on the introduced system of identifying indicators (Krylov, 2006; 2010). In particular, M.P. Krylov noted that "regional identity is an aspiration to life and development on a certain territory, the ability to social and cultural, civil and economic activity" (Krylov, 2010).

The works of Russian researchers A.M. Trofimov, M.D. Sharygin, and N.N. Ismagilov, as well as Yu. Turovsky, N.Y. Zamyatina, etc. (Vedenina, Kuleshovoi, 2004; Kuvneva, Manakov, 2003; Manakov, 1997; Tkachenko, 1995; Trofimov, Sharygin, Ismagilov, 2008; Turovskii, 1999; Turovskii, 2003; Zamyatin, Zamyatina, Mitin, 2008), are devoted to the study of the spatial organization of society based on TI. Yet, the diversity of such studies only emphasizes their local significance and the lack of a verified methodology that could be successfully and equally beneficially applied to any region. Perhaps, the diversity of territorial groupings in the world makes it impossible to create such a universal methodology for research on the identity of society.

For example, for regions and countries in the post-Soviet space, which are characterized by multi-ethnicity, complex history of development, and diversity of forms of nature use, there is a perception of weak or non-existent national and TI as such. To refute or confirm this fact is possible only with a comprehensive and complex study of the TI of the inhabitants of such regions. Therefore, the objective of this work is to justify a comprehensive methodology for research of TI of Dnipropetrovsk region residents as a complex political, ethnonational, and socio-economic entity.

The diversity of views on the concept of TI and its interdisciplinary position as an object of research in various sciences has led to methodological inconsistency. In particular, there is no unified view on the understanding of TI and its components. In a narrow sense, TI is an identification of a person (a homogeneous group of people) with a place, society, historical epoch, civilization, etc. In a broader sense, TI is a complex indicator reflecting a certain mental space of each person and society as a whole.

TI includes such components as regional, local identity, identity based on self-identification with the environment, place of living according to the type of settlements, functional purpose, type of nature use, mental space (vernacular regions, "ideal", "cursed" and imaginary places, associative landscapes, etc.), features of perception of the territory, factors and consequences of the formation of geographical and tourist images,

brands, "perceptual" portraits, associative links, manifestations of the identity in toponymy and its perception, images of territories in literature, art, narratives, etc. All these issues are now actively studied, first of all, to solve territorial and public administration issues.

The current realities of the development of post-socialist countries determine the relevance of such research direction of the TI of the population as the study of the so-called signs of Sovietism. Signs of Sovietism is a term introduced by Russian researchers to denote the phenomenon of the population's attraction to the Soviet past, including the identification of oneself with the already non-existent state – the USSR (Zamyatin, Zamyatina, Mitin, 2008). Signs of the Sovietism are manifestations of the Soviet past in the modern space, they are symbols (for example, red stars on bridges, memorable signs, heraldic elements in architecture, etc.), names (toponyms), brands (including territorial ones), objects of the socio-economic and historical and cultural sphere, etc. Signs of the Sovietism, best preserved on the territory of the former USSR republics, are very important tourist attractions, although they have a problematic, controversial position. Signs of Sovietism occupy an important place in the TI of the population of post-Soviet countries, the majority of their population somehow caught the period of the USSR, so the ambiguous attitude to the Soviet past and signs of Sovietism causes a variety of internal political and socio-cultural conflicts and contradictions. Proposals for the elimination of signs of Sovietism (destruction of monuments, buildings, renaming, etc.) cannot even be considered without a detailed study of their rooting in the mental space of the country. Today, we can observe the existing conflict situations around the Soviet heritage on the territory of some post-Soviet countries, which serve as factors constraining the development of tourism.

Therefore, the study of signs of Sovietism and their place in the mental space, their perception and attitude to them, and the power of mental connections of people, territory, and epoch is an important task at the present stage. For example, several settlements in Ukraine, having signs of Sovietism as an important tourism resource, have been set the task of their elimination in the light of the new law on the condemnation of the Soviet and social nationalist regimes. On the other hand, the expression "Soviet reserve", which is perceived by residents of the region and Ukraine in a negative sense, is a kind of brand for foreign tourists and motivates them to visit the region.

The identification of disparities in the TI of the residents of different districts and localities remains an almost unstudied but very acute issue. This includes, in particular, identifying centres of attraction, especially in relation to agglomerations and their satellites (e.g., Moscow and its satellites – Mytishchi, Sergiev Posad, etc.), studying their power and impact on the environment, identifying conflict zones (e.g., "rivalry" between settlements), and studying TI and its power among the population of "depressed", peripheral zones and settlements. An important issue is the study of actually formed TI-based territorial communities of people and the regionalization of the territory on the principles of their unity and hierarchy. The methodology for the identification and evaluation of territorial communities of people is almost not developed today. There are only separate approaches, among which the following are most developed in practice:

- based on the community's common perception of the territory;
- based on existing stereotypes, images, and brands of localities;
- based on statistical accounting of population mobility within the region;

- as a result of the study of literary sources, material and non-material culture, etc. to identify territorial and fundamental differences;

- based on a comprehensive study of toponymy as a manifestation of nonmaterial culture, directly related to the features of the locality and the organization of society.

As for the effectiveness of the complex use of these approaches, there are only proposals and wishes of a purely declarative type in individual publications. The specific form of representation of TI is the so-called "subjective atlases" – a series of cartoids created based on the results of research on the features of perception of the territory, images, and associations, self-identification of the population of regions of the country, including those that are problematic in geopolitical and ethnic terms. Such atlases have already been created for Serbia, Israel, Turkey, Palestine, Spain, and other countries with complex ethnic and confessional structure. To implement TI studies of the residents of any region, the following two groups of problems must be solved (Table 1).

Table 1. The task of developing and implementing the methodology for TI research

Theoretical and methodological tasks	Practical tasks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - development of a comprehensive methodology for identifying TI of the population and analyzing the data obtained; - identification of TI components, its vertical (mental geocultural) and horizontal (territorial) structure; - development of the methodology for the creation of cartoids based on the collected information, processing of individual and group mental maps, and complex subjective atlases as means of visual presentation of information about TI; - definition of the theoretical and methodological basis for the grouping and regionalization of the territory on the TI principle; - definition of hierarchical principles of territorial organization of the population. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - identification and characterization of factors affecting TI and determination of local mechanisms for uniting people; - identification of local and regional images of the territory based on perceptual portraits; - research of correlation of the territory and its images; - identification and analysis of cultural and associative landscapes, vernacular regions, analysis of local toponymy, "legendary" territories and their typology; - analysis of signs of Sovietism in the mental and geographical space of the region; - content analysis of verbal and graphic sources of information for studying specifics and images of certain territories and their influence on the mass consciousness of people; - regional zoning according to the results obtained; - creation of mental maps and their processing, creation of subjective atlases; - development of practical recommendations on the introduction of TI research results into social and administrative spheres.

RESULTS

TI is an important issue of public administration in the sphere of tourism. On the one hand, the population of regions and countries is an important resource, particularly in tourism. On the other hand, as it was said earlier, the issues of identification with a particular environment can act as a restraining factor or source of social and cultural tension and the cause of risks in tourism. Therefore, the study of TI, identification of problem places, and constant monitoring are issues that should be considered and used by public authorities, whose activities are realized in the tourism sector as well.

In this regard, we developed a primary methodology for collecting and processing information on TI of the population of the model region, which can be applied and verified in different territories of the post-Soviet space. To implement the research methodology, it is proposed to create a joint information and analytical centre (JIAC) in the form of an Internet resource that will provide 24-hour access for government agencies, project managers, and users online. The JIAC's work should be based on a database of information on TI of the population of a particular region, which will be updated and presented via the methods and techniques shown in Figure 1.

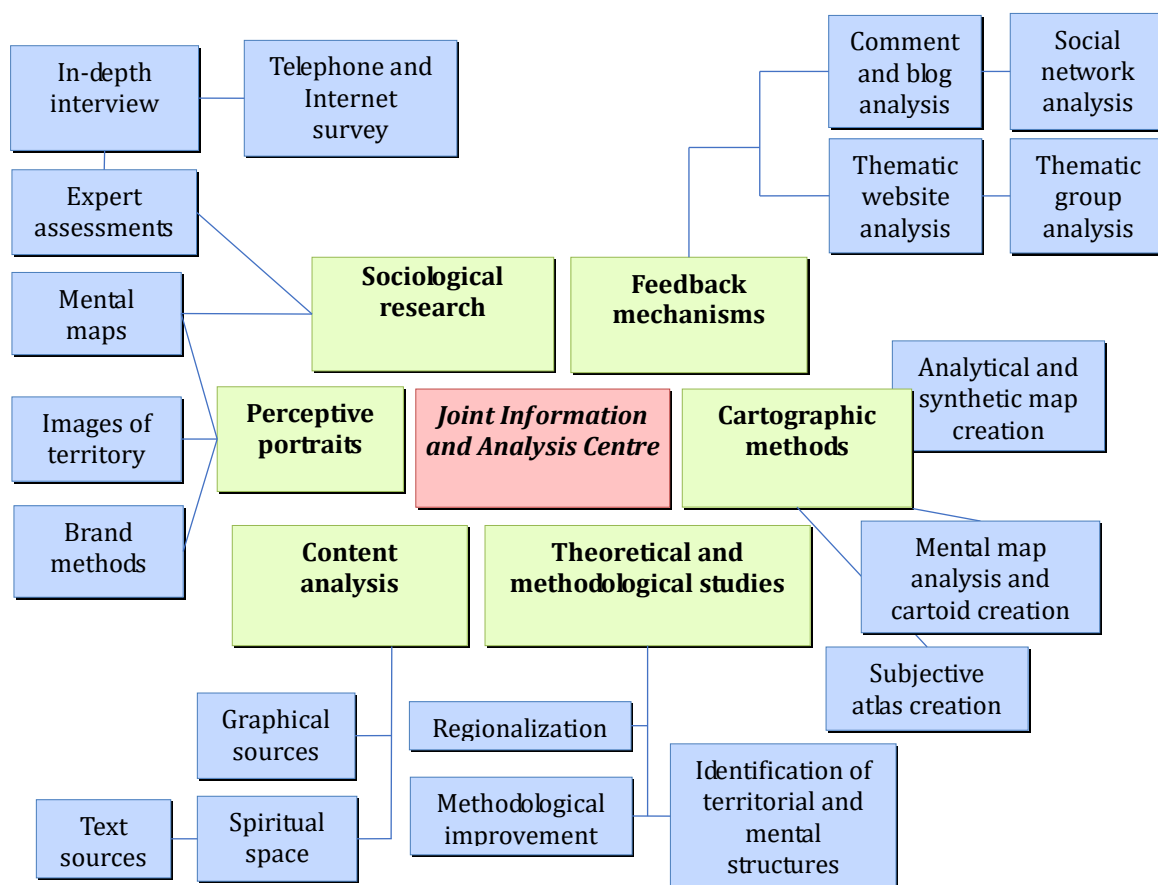


Figure 1. The conceptual scheme of a complex methodology for studying the TI of the residents of the model region

Significant path coefficients related to latent structures in structural equation model are provided in Table 7. According to the results, maximum overall effect on tourist loyalty from among overall direct and indirect effects is related to the path of satisfaction to tourist loyalty. The implementation of the proposed methodology for research on TI of the population has wide scientific and practical results. The main socially significant result is the consideration of the TI of the population as a part of the resource component of the territory and as an object of public administration in the sphere of tourism. The consideration of TI will allow:

- improving the image of individual districts, regions, and countries as a whole and reducing the risk of competition between localities in economic and psychological aspects;

- diversifying the fields of urban attraction in the region, promoting rural lifestyles, and creating a positive perception of rural areas;
- discouraging the outflow of skilled workers from the region, and vice versa, and attracting workers and young students;
- stimulating the manifestation of national consciousness, dignity, and memory and contributing to the consolidation of society around a national and regional idea;
- contributing to the formation of a unified, mentally healthy nation on its territory and the strengthening statehood;
- creating a tourist image of the region and its parts, oriented not only towards foreign visitors but also towards its inhabitants.

Besides, the results of the study can provide an opportunity to assess the nature of perception of the area by its inhabitants and to identify zones of high and low attractiveness, factors and mechanisms of formation of these zones. This will provide an opportunity to improve individual indicators of perception of the territory due to the impact on objective and subjective factors of the formation of images of the territory. All of this will lead to positive changes in the socio-cultural sphere, in particular:

- strengthening of national consciousness and regional dignity;
- understanding of one's own self and one's place in one's state and region, the balance in TI of statehood and "n-centrism" (understanding oneself, first of all, as a representative of a concrete city and second – as a part of the state);
- formation of positive images of individual regions;
- formation of mechanisms to identify and consider the spiritual, aesthetic, and moral values of society;
- elimination of negative perception of some regions because of the lack of knowledge about them and the development of education, culture, and tourism.

CONCLUSION

Thus, the study of TI acquires special importance not only in the conditions of social and economic transformations in general, but also in certain spheres of activity. For example, in the sphere of tourism, the relevance of TI studies is conditioned by the necessity to develop mechanisms and strategies of tourism development of different territories, to improve the system of personnel training in the sphere of tourism and analysis of security issues in tourism, to improve the quality and complexity of resource potential use, etc. As the further directions of studies, we can note the following: the validation of the developed methods and separate methods in separate regions and territorial formations, the study of the TI of the student population of a large megapolis as a personnel potential for tourism, the formation of maps and cartoids, subjective atlases, etc.

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