

THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY THROUGH THE CREATION OF NEW OBJECTIVES TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF BLACK TOURISM IN ROMANIA

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***Abstract:** The attraction for monuments or places associated with suffering, pain or death continues to grow. Visits to such monuments have different motivations, from curiosity to educational purpose. The purpose of this study is to identify monuments and places of this type, generating black tourism, which appeared in the twentieth century. History has contributed through numerous events to create such places that have entered large tourist circuits today. The empirical methodology has monitored the reactions of tourists regarding such monuments, places and events. Equally, there has been followed what could be the level of familiarity of the respondents regarding this type of tourism. The results provide a pretty interesting picture. Many visited such objectives but did not know the term or the notion of "black tourism". Many initiated contact with this term when completing the questionnaire. Instead, they considered the term quite suggestive for this type of tourism, in which the objectives to be visited are very impressive, even marking deeply the consciousness of those who may cross their threshold. There are such studies in literature, but in Romania, it is seen as a form of tourism that deserves to be promoted, so that it is a beginning that can benefit, in time, of improvements and completions.*

***Keywords:** black tourism, holocaust, communism, military destruction, prisons*

INTRODUCTION

Black tourism, also known as "dark tourism" or "macabre tourism", is an exception to the classical definition of tourism as "spending your free time in a pleasant way". The concept of "black tourism" was introduced in literature in 1996 by Malcom Foley and John Lennon; it is a category of

cultural tourism that involves travelling to historical sites associated with death, suffering, mystery, disaster or tragedy, either real or reconstituted. In this context, the word “black” has a metaphorical meaning, representing “a dark chapter in history” (Lennon, 2017; Lennon et al., 2000)

Black tourism is an umbrella term that covers a variety of tourist attractions associated with wars, ex-communist states, the Holocaust, crimes, prisons, areas where natural or nuclear disasters have occurred, places of death or burials of important celebrities or places in which conflicts take place. Thus, the heritage of black tourism is diverse, some activities can be classified as "darker" than others. Thus, several researchers have developed the idea of the spectrum of black tourism, the activities can be considered "darker" or "less dark" depending on the intensity of the moment, its authenticity, its purpose and the motivation of tourists. The ends of this spectrum can be considered diametrically opposed, for example: education/ entertainment; authentic/nonauthentic (Stone, 2006;)

At one end of the spectrum there is "dark tourism", with most extreme and harsh activities, associated with authentic experiences that can deeply affect the tourists emotionally, with an educational, commemorative purpose. These places have the role of educating the tourist about the macabre events that have marked history, exposing them to real, dark events. Tourists have the opportunity to travel to places with a dark historical load and sometimes have the opportunity to talk to people who have been involved in those events. Tourist activities at this end of the spectrum are intended for those who are intensely passionate about dark topics and who want authentic, extreme, impactful experience of black tourism. Although black tourism cannot be considered a pleasant way to spend free time, many tourists enjoy the educational aspect that comes with it. This category may include dark tourist attractions such as the Auschwitz Concentration Camp or the World Trade Center in New York (Sharpley et al., 2009).

At the other end of the spectrum is the "pale tourism", where activities tend to be more commercial in nature with the intention of entertaining the tourist, rather than educating him about a historical event and does not involve an equally deep emotional charge (Teodorescu, 2009). These activities are intended for tourists who do not have a deep interest in this type of tourism and usually involve recreating events in a romantic or comic way. An example of such a tourist attraction is the London Dungeon where various historical and macabre events are recreated in a comic style (Sharpley et al., 2009).

TWENTIETH CENTURY GOALS FOR BLACK TOURISM IN ROMANIA

The twentieth century is the most complex and dramatic period in world history due to the two world wars, the genocide of ethnic minorities led by the totalitarian Nazi regime and the oppressive dictatorships established by communist regimes, these events being starting points for the development of black tourism in Romania (Costachie, 2004).

The first half of the twentieth century was shaped by the bloody context of the two world wars that ruined Europe on all fronts, leading to new borders, thus vanishing empires, destroying villages and towns and diminishing population. Socially, these conflicts have had traumatic effects on the population due to the constant feeling of fear, danger and insecurity (Teodorescu et al., 2004). A well-known tourist attraction is the Commemorative Cross of the Romanian Heroes from the First World War located on the top of Caraiman, Bucegi Mountains, erected at the initiative of King Ferdinand I and Queen Maria in gratitude for the bravery of those who fought (fig. 1a, fig.1b, fig.1c. and fig. 1d.).



Fig. 1. Representative tourist attractions for war tourism



Fig. 1a The Commemorative Cross of the Romanian Heroes from the First World War, source: <https://ziarulumina.ro/educatie-si-cultura/interviu/crucea-eroilor-neamului-de-pe-muntele-caraiman-137104.html>



Fig.1b. Mărăști Mausoleum, source: <http://turistintaramea.blogspot.com/2017/07/mausoleul-de-la-marasti.html>



Figiu. 1c. The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, source: https://ro.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mausoleul_din_Parcul_Carol



Fig.1d. Marasesti Mausoleum, source: <https://primariamarasesti>

Other attractions are the mausoleums in the villages of Mărăști and Mărășești, villages that have remained in history as places of Romanian heroism, the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Carol Park in Bucharest, which was built in honor of those whose bodies had not been found or identified, so relatives could commemorate them properly at the public graves, and finally at the grave of the national heroine, Ecaterina Teodoroiu, located in Târgu Jiu.

The war caused the break-up of many families due to separation and the loss of many people, and the number of widows and orphans increased considerably. During these events, millions of people fell victims to famine, bombings, executions, deportations and epidemics. The number of victims of the First World War in Romania is estimated at 670,000 deaths, more than half of them being civilians, and out of the Second World War II- over 800,000 deaths. At the initiative of local authorities or the descendants of heroes and civilian victims, in order to pay tribute to those who had lost

their lives to fulfill national ideals, numerous commemorative buildings have been placed on the territory of Romania. Of all the events that marked Romania's history, war includes the largest patrimony, as in almost every city of the country there is at least one building dedicated to an important conflict in which Romania has been involved. The heritage of the war tourism consists of homage museums, monuments, statues, commemorative plaques, memorials, mausoleums, crosses and cemeteries of the heroes located in the places where the battles had been carried, or near these areas. Among the multitude of monuments dedicated to the heroes of the war, some of them are of tourist attraction.

War tourism is a good way to discover the past, what war meant, both for those on the front and for civilians as well. Visiting these monuments tells the stories of those who have lost their lives, some of them being too young, all being animated by their purpose of defending own country, freedom or national identity.

The horrors of the first half of the twentieth century include the Second World War Holocaust, orchestrated by the Nazi regime and collaborators, which killed 6,000,000 Jews and other minorities in Europe (according to media sources) (fig. 2).

Raul Hilberg, considered the most valuable specialist in the field of the Holocaust, stated that, apart from Germany, no other country was equally involved in the massacre of Jews on such a scale as Romania (Hilberg, 1997).

Anti-Semitism in Romania manifested itself through multiple practices, starting with robberies, expropriations, confiscation of property, boycotting shops, social, political, economic and professional discrimination, and then moving to harsher practices such as beatings, torture, terror, humiliation, starvation, arrests, deportations to camps and forced labor camps, deportations from rural areas or murders (Ioanid, 2019; Costachie, 2004).

According to the "National Institute for the Study of the Holocaust" in Romania, the number of Jews killed during the Holocaust in Romania is not known precisely, it is estimated that in Romania and in the territories under its control, by following the application of ethnic cleansing policies, there were killed between 280,000 and 380,000 Jews.

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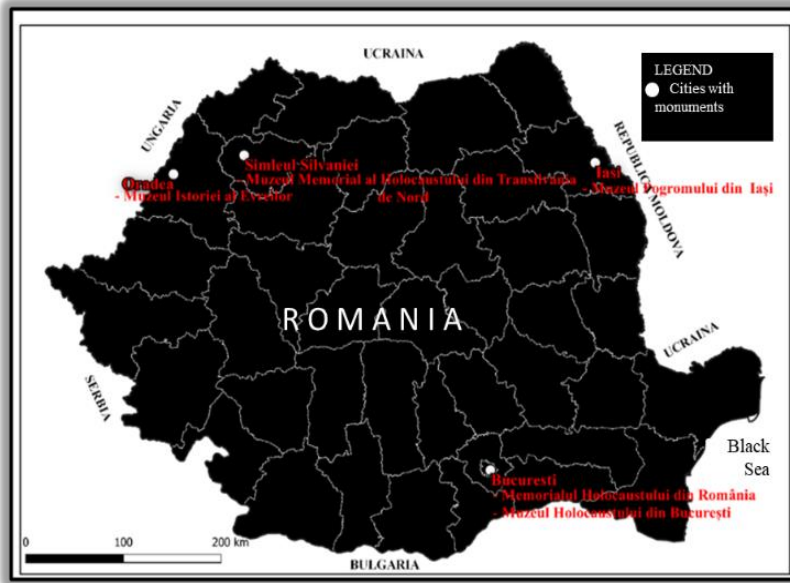


Fig.2. Representative tourist attractions for Holocaust tourism

The tourist heritage of the Romanian Holocaust consists of museums, memorials and monuments, the most important objectives being the Holocaust Museum in Bucharest, the Holocaust Memorial in Bucharest, the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Northern Transylvania in Șimleul Silvaniei, the Museum of Jewish History in Oradea and the Pogrom Museum from Iași (fig. 2a and fig 2b).

The purpose of these places is to recognize the acts of cruelty that took place against the Jewish population, but also of other ethnic minorities, to keep alive the memory of the victims who suffered or were killed and, of course, to act as a warning to future generations on the purpose of preventing such events from occurring ever again.



Fig.2a. Holocaust Memorial in Romania - interior

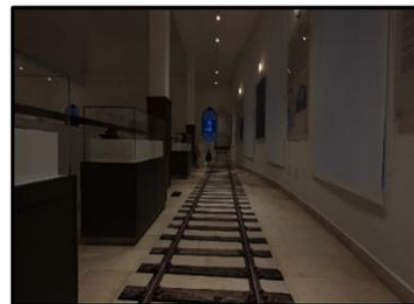


Fig.2b Museum of Jewish History in Oradea - The Train of Death

The second half of the twentieth century marked the communist regimes that were established in the states of Central and Eastern Europe, but also in other states in Asia, Africa and Central America.

Although red tourism is a category of cultural tourism, capitalizing on the communist heritage of former and present communist states, it is also a category of black tourism because the communist regime, through its brutal repression applied throughout its period, has produced countless victims from all perspectives of life, either political or religious points of view, regardless of age or gender of the population. The heritage of red tourism, as part of black tourism, capitalizes on the objectives associated with the dark side of this period, with places of suffering in which there were acts of violence, physical and mental abuses against opponents of certain ideology, such as former places of detention which have later been transformed into museums or memorials, cemeteries of victims of repression, places of abuse or places associated with the revolution (fig. 3).

In its evolution, the communist regime in Romania was divided into two major periods: 1948-1965, a regime led by Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej, and the period 1965-1989, in which Nicolae Ceaușescu was the leader. In the first part of the regime, repressive actions reached horrific proportions, manifesting themselves in arrests and imprisonment in political prisons, camps and forced labor camps where detainees were subjected to inhuman treatment, beatings, torture, unlawful arrests, executions, deportations and the establishment of forced residences, confiscation of property and abusive investigations in which the accused were forced, through physical assault, to confess to acts which they had not committed. If the first part of the communist regime in Romania was based on terror and physical aggression, in the second part the repression was moderate, but just as effective, previous practices being replaced by surveillance, intimidation, hospitalization and psychiatric hospitals, placement at home forcible suspicion and falsification of common law files.

The 1989 revolution in Romania surprised the whole world with the violence it showed, reflected both by the number of victims and by the tragic end of the Ceausescus on Christmas Day. The fall of the communist regime in Romania was the bloodiest and most popularized anti-communist revolution in Central and Eastern Europe, this event arousing the interest of foreign tourists who have visited Romania after 1990, just due to their desire to discover the relics of Ceausescu's regime (Ragalie, 2014)

On the Romanian territory there were arranged tourist objectives associated with repression and revolution, such as: the Memorial to the Victims of Communism and Resistance in Sighetul Marmăției, Gherla Memorial, Calvary Monument in Aiud or Pitești Prison Memorial, the

Barracks in Târgoviște city where Ceaus Victor's wife was killed and the Revolutionary Memorial in Timișoara, the Parliament Palace, the Revolution Square and the University Square in Bucharest, the Anti-Communist Struggle Monument in Bucharest, the tomb of the Ceusescu couple in Ghencea Cemetery and the Revolutionary Heroes Cemetery in Bucharest (fig 3a, fig. 3b, fig 3c and fig 3d).

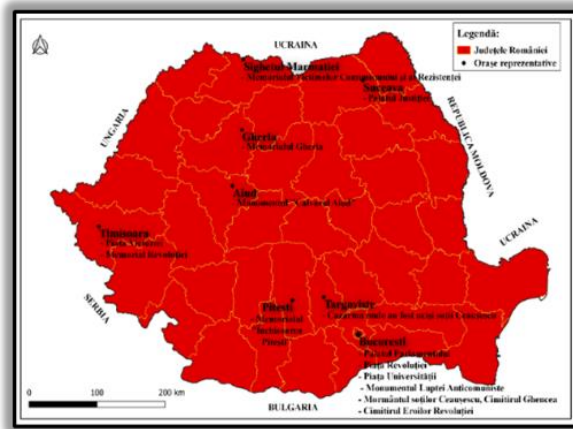


Fig.3 Representative tourist objectives for red tourism



Fig.3a. The Cemetery of the Heroes of the Revolution



Fig.3b. Targoviste military barracks, source: <http://voceadambovitei.ro/2013/09/expozitie-permanenta-dedicata-sotilor-ceausescu-2/>



Fig.3c. Memorial to the Victims of Communism and Resistance - Sacrifice Procession, source: <https://www.memorialsighet.ro/artindex-cortegiul-sacrificatiilor-deaurel-vlad-sau-de-ce-priveste-o>



Fig.3d. "Pitesti Prison" Memorial - interrogation room, source: <https://www.facebook.com/MemorialulInchisoareaPitesti/photos/3353358491442399>

As in the case of the other two categories mentioned, these objectives must be visited in order to preserve the memory of those who suffered during the communist regime because they did not complied with, or obeyed the forcefully imposed ideology.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Given the vast heritage of black tourism in Romania, this questionnaire sought to find out how well-known this form of tourism is among the Romanian population, the respondents' conceptions regarding this field and what would be their preferences in order to elaborate further proposals for the development of black tourism in Romania in order to attract the public to practice it.

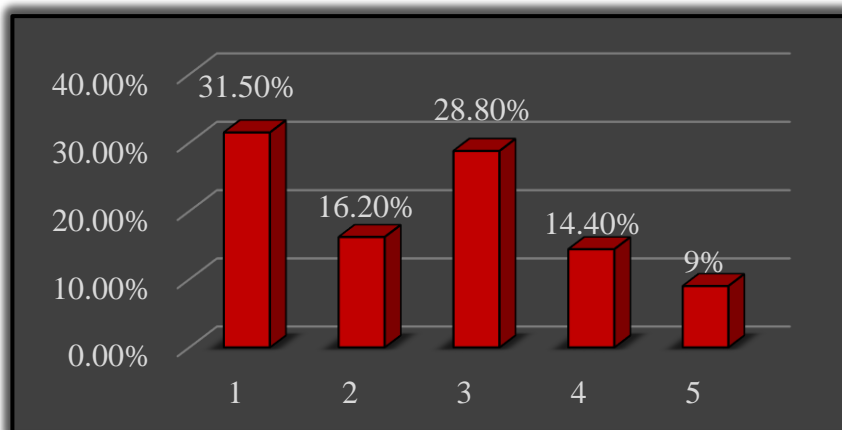


Fig. 4. Familiarity of the respondents with the notion of black tourism

The purpose of this question was to see if respondents know the concept of black tourism. The results of the questionnaire show that black tourism is not a concept known in Romania, most of the respondents, 31.5%, choosing variant 1 answer, that is: "I know nothing about this topic."

As it can be seen in Figure 4, the balance leans towards respondents who do not know or know very little about black tourism, highlighting the fact that this form of tourism is not promoted in Romania.

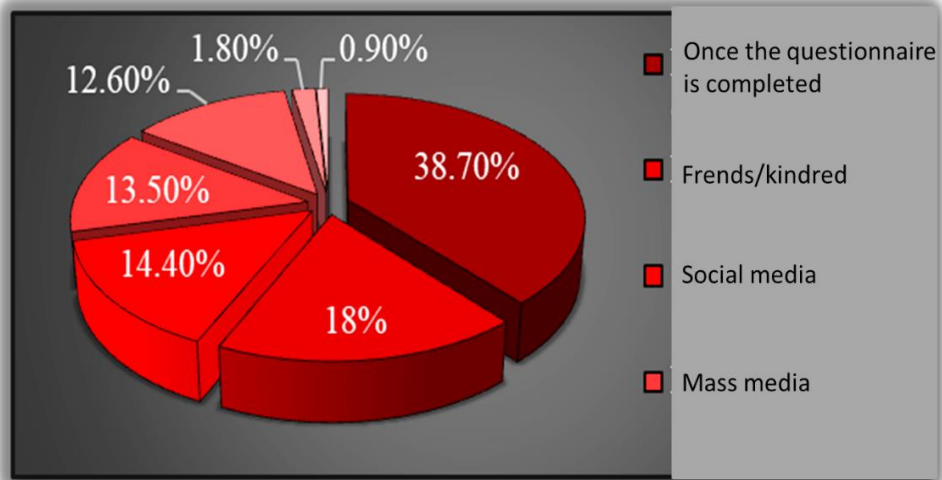


Fig. 5. The source from which the respondent learned about the concept of black tourism

Through this question, we wanted to see how promoted black tourism is in Romania. However, as it can be seen in Figure 5, the majority of respondents, 38.7%, answered that they had learned for the first time about the concept of black tourism "from this questionnaire", and the second option chosen by respondents, in proportion of 18%, was "friends /relatives", this fact revealing that black tourism is not a concept known among the Romanian population.

The third option chosen by respondents, 14.4%, was "social media". The "Dark tourism in Romania" page can be found on the Facebook platform, but it does not offer many details, including a definition of what black tourism entails, photos without descriptions and references to articles on tourist attractions in this category. Also, another 5 pages were identified on the Facebook platform that deals with the topic of black tourism, but at a modal level. Regarding the Instagram platform, 12 pages addressing this topic and over 47,200 posts tagged with dark tourism were identified.

The fourth option chosen, in proportion of 13.5% of the respondents, was "mass-media". Black tourism is promoted on television, for example through the documentary "Dark tourism", presented by journalist David Farrie, which was released on Netflix in 2018 and which includes 8 episodes about the phenomenon of black tourism in several corners of the world, with tours on traces of Pablo Escobar in Medellin or the tour of the assassination of US President John Fitzgerald Kennedy in Dallas, exorcism in Mexico City, reenactments of World War II in Britain, a voodoo festival in Benin

The words "necessary", "useful", "important" and "a way of understanding the past" were also mentioned because black tourism exposes, among them, a part of history that has negatively influenced the whole world, events during which thousands of lives were lost. Black tourism is necessary and important to understand the past, to bring to light the unfortunate events that happened so that more and more people may find out about them so that they do not happen again. Respondents also said that black tourism "awakens consciousness" and "invites introspection", the tourist attractions associated with this form of tourism, such as places related to the communist regime, war or the Holocaust, designed to help raise awareness of the tragic extent that these events really had. Another word used was "memory", the tourist capitalization of this heritage having the role of keeping alive the memory of those who suffered and lost their lives due to conflicts, discrimination and non-adaptation to the imposed totalitarian ideology (Teodorescu et al., 2016). Words that highlighted the dark side of black tourism were used, such as: "scary", "macabre", "desolation", "tragedy", "disaster", "pain", "gloomy", "cold", "anxiety", "Trauma", "strange", "sober", "morbid" and "oppressive".

The words "mysterious", "curious" and "intriguing" were also used in the description of black tourism. By these words, there was indirectly expressed the vivid interest and curiosity of tourists to visit these locations.

Black tourism has also been classified as "selective" and "niche tourism", being practiced by a certain public that prove an interest, higher or lower, in terms of death, scary places, tragedies and disasters. Other words were "atypical", "different", "unusual", differing from other forms of tourism better known and often practiced by the dark character, being an exception to the classical definition of tourism, that of "spending free time in a pleasant way".

Black tourism was also described by respondents as "unpromoted", "unknown", "too little known and promoted" and "something to be hidden", this form of tourism not being promoted in Romania because it is problematic, exposing painful events in history whose effects have not yet been forgotten or elements that do not correspond to the cultural identity of the country. Black tourism is not promoted because it is at odds with the positive cultural and political image that Romania wants to project, leaving the tragic past behind.

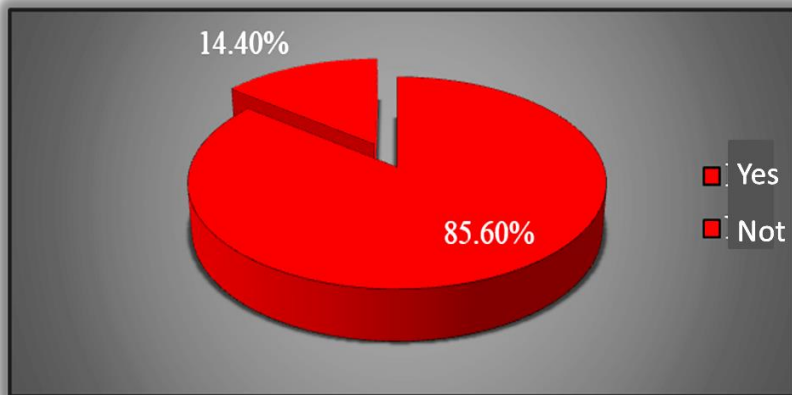


Fig. 7. The respondents' knowledge regarding the tourist objectives associated with black tourism

It has also been described as "controversial" and "voyeuristic", with black tourism being the subject of many debates addressing the question of whether or not it is ethical to capitalize on the use of places associated with death, disaster or tragedy, opinions being divided.

PERSPECTIVES AND CONCLUSIONS

From the beginning of the development of the tourist phenomenon until now, it has evolved and diversified, appearing new destinations and forms of tourism meant to satisfy the needs of the whole society. One of these forms of tourism is black tourism, which contradicts the classic definition of tourism as "spending free time in a pleasant way", which is a special category of cultural tourism, which involves visiting places that have a direct link, or are associated with death, disasters and tragedies, capitalizing cultural interest and memory upon a dark chapter in history.

Although the term "black tourism" was introduced into the literature recently, ore precisely in 1996, by Malcolm Foley and John Lennon, mankind has been attracted by the dark aspects of life, the bloody battles of the Colosseum gladiators, since ancient times. Public events in the Middle Ages involving physical punishment, such as beheading, torture, hanging, or pilgrimages, can be labeled as an early variant of "black tourism."

Romania deserves a special place on the map of black tourism due to the significant cultural-historical heritage acquired over time as a result of recent political events that have had tragic effects on society, but also the richness of myths and legends that surround some mysterious locations.

This vast cultural-historical heritage led to the development of black tourism, which in Romania involves visiting places associated with wars, the Holocaust, the repression applied by Security forces during the communist regime, the Revolution of 1989, visiting important tourist attractions with historical, artistic and architectural value (Teodorescu et al., 2012).

Tourism plays a significant role in understanding and promoting the cultural identity of a state, by hyphenating both the positive and the negative aspects of history (Teodorescu, 2009). In terms of the heritage it capitalizes on, black tourism is an important form of tourism that contributes to awareness, understanding and assumption of the tragic past, preserving the memory of those who have suffered and expressed the culture of the place. However, black tourism is considered a controversial form of tourism, arousing over time a considerable number of debates regarding the ethics of capitalizing on tourism, death, disasters and tragedies.

In Romania, this form of tourism does not benefit from a proper promotion due to the fact that it capitalizes on a painful past, as well as on elements that are at odds with the positive cultural image that is intended to be displayed. By embracing the dark past and promoting it in a sad way, all the cultural peculiarities of the country can be exposed, both the positive ones, much better known, and the negative ones, which do not benefit from capitalization (Teodorescu et al, 2018).

By following the interpretation of the answers received in the applied questionnaire, the following conclusions have been drawn: black tourism is not a well-known concept among the Romanian population; it does not benefit from proper promotion; certain issues involving the categories of black tourism were less well known among respondents. In order to solve the problems resulting from the conclusions of the questionnaire, promotion proposals were developed, aiming at informing the public about the implications of black tourism, raising awareness of the importance of this form of tourism and promoting and increasing the attractiveness of related tourism objectives.

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