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**Tourism image analysis.  
Tourism „spatial images” from Southern Transdanubia**

PhD Thesis Abstract

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## 1. Introduction

Tourism highlights some locations in space, as well as their projections in maps. Due to globalized economics and increasing competition, one of the main aims of the tourism regions is to become part of this map, for varied reasons. On the one hand, they would like to be represented in that regional, national or even international tourism map that is edited and promoted by marketing experts towards the guests. On the other hand – and maybe most importantly – they would like to be present with the largest and most prominent sign in that mental map that is created by the (potential) guests, when they systemize their eventual target areas. *The two maps are identical in their basis being represented by the experienced geographical space; they are directly or indirectly made out of the endowments, possibilities and measurable characteristics of the places.* Nevertheless, while the former marks these with objective distances, directions and coordinates based on the cartographic elements of the place's geometrization, the latter *summarizes these in a subjective, mental image. The aim of the thesis is to analyse this mental tourism "spatial image". The term tourism "spatial image" involves the tourism destination image, the Hungarian translation of this terminology expressing destination as 'tourism space', and the image as picture.*

The scientific literature of tourism and marketing represents an attitude according to which the preliminary recognition and perception motivates the consumers to act in a larger extent than reality, thus the tourism image of a destination is one of the most important factors of making the travel decision. Consequently, *the tourism image received an outstanding prominence both in tourism marketing and scientific researches* during the last decades, but its intensive practical utilization still maintains the accusation of not being theoretical. Related to this topic, an increasing number of studies appear on national and international level, their ratio revealing the dominance of image analysis focussing on marketing aims, while the scientific interests play a minor role, especially among the national publications. Therefore, this thesis aims at the creation of a *comprehensive, synthesizing theoretical framework.*

The most frequently occurring practical utilization – i.e. the attraction of guests to the destination – implies the tourism image analyses' characteristics, that the majority of them *focuses on that image created about the destination, which is present in the (potential) guests' consciousness.* According to the authors' opinion, during the image analysis an equal emphasis should be put on the *survey of the local inhabitants' tourism self-image as well,* since the local community is one of the key factors in the successful operation of tourism.

*The research has got principally theoretical-methodological characteristics:* it introduces the process of image creation based on the publications about tourism image, and produces an analytical aspect system that focuses on the correlations between the local inhabitants' tourism self-image, the guests' image about the region, and the tourism image communicated by the actors responsible for tourism marketing. This analysis is accompanied with the research methods chosen from the evaluated scientific publications, complemented by the instance of a concrete research carried out abroad. The hypotheses are validated through regional inspections and case studies.

This complex interpretation of image analysis can help not only with the planning of marketing activities, but can be the basis of such a conscious tourism planning and development that is able to ensure a framework to the processes starting from the bottom, from the local communities.

## 2. Aims

This thesis aims at the contribution to the theoretical manifestation of a region-based tourism image analysis, and the enhancement of the possible practical methods. The targets are defined in the following:

- To reveal the approach methods of the disciplines dealing with the field of tourism image, and to *position the authors' research topic in the system of sciences*. Within the frameworks of tourism geography – as an interdisciplinary science – the aim was to rely on the results and methods of several sciences when constructing the aspect system of image analysis.
- *To interpret the term of tourism image on a wide scale, but with the preference of geographical relations*; thereby to avoid the accusation of not being theoretical (since the image analyses mainly focus on practice /marketing/), and to solve the indisposition against subjective issues still present in geography science.
- According to the theoretical basis of the authors' research relying on the scientific publications, research precedents and results, to *define the term of tourism image and an applicable model/analytical aspect system that is able to provide a framework for the investigation of the correlations between the local inhabitants' tourism self-image, the guests' image about the destination, and the officially communicated tourism image*.
- In order to utilize the model and reflecting the aspects of the international research methods as well as a certain instance, the tourism image analysis of Tegernsee, starting from the authors' theoretical principles, *to define the methods of tourism image analysis, and the research methods applied in the case studies*.
- To examine the issue of the politically shaped, “truncated” (i.e. ignoring the region of Lake Balaton from the planning-statistical region) *Southern Transdanubian tourism region's extent of contribution to the frameworks of image analysis*. To reveal the attempts and processes characteristic of the formation of the regional tourism image, and their implementation to the development of regional tourism. To introduce the role of Pécs's tourism and image played in this process.
- To complete the tourism image analysis of the Western Mecsek and Villány *in the form of case studies, to examine the practical applicability of the authors' theoretical principles and chosen methods*.

## 3. Research methods

In order to theoretically and methodologically manifest, and to apply the tourism image analysis, it was necessary to collect information from the widest range of sources. Consequently – based on the theory of triangulation (BABBIE, E. 1996) – several, primary and secondary methods have been applied at the same time.

### 3.1. Secondary sources

First the secondary sources, i.e. primarily *the scientific literatures of the research topic have been elaborated*, in order to define the analytical aspect system. The investigation of the tourism image basically relied on geographical aspects, though the topic required a complex approach, and the involvement of the results of the related sciences. In the case of tourism researches, *open-mindedness and the interdisciplinary approach* are indispensable. The working out of the theoretical background and the methodology significantly relies on

international sources, especially on the *English and German scientific literature*. The reason for this is that – as far as the authors have information about it – there have been only few complex and professionally reliable tourism image analyses in Hungary. The investigation of the related international scientific publications and the English speaking scientific periodicals (e.g. *Tourism Management, Journal of Travel Research, Annals of Tourism Research*) provided a wide ranging view about the topic, and a rich, detailed content. The German scientific literature has been involved, because the author spent nearly one and a half year within the frameworks of a PhD scholarship with active research carried out in Germany. She was able to get an insight into the Munich social geographic activities, with Prof. Heinritz, G.'s professional guidance, and joined the image analysis of the tourism region Tegernsee, Bavaria, under Prof. Zwerenz, K.'s coordination.

The secondary research also involves the analysis of the *data provided by the collections of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (KSH) and by the Hungarian Tourism Board (MT Zrt.)* that contributed to the introduction of the guest flow characteristic for the Southern Transdanubian tourism region and its destinations. The assessment of the region's tourism development was supported by *the database of the National Development Agency (NFÜ)* about the tourism applications and application results. The research also included the assessment of the regional *tourism developmental documents, strategies and marketing plans*.

### 3.2. Primary research

During the primary research, the authors have tried to apply the qualitative and quantitative methods collaterally. The quantitative research based on *questionnaire survey carried out among local inhabitants and guests*. The qualitative investigation included the *open-ended questions of the survey, the accompanying personal interviews, as well as the field examinations and trips*. The *content analysis* of each destination's homepage and publications was carried out because of the examination of mediated images. The processing of the questionnaire data was accomplished by computer-based statistical programmes (*Microsoft Office Excel 2000, SPSS 17.0*).

As the first phase of the primary research, the locations of the empirical investigation (Western Mecsek and Villány as chosen destinations) and the research aspects have been determined, based on the processed scientific literature and strategic documents. Thereafter, the questions of the survey have been selected, tested and eventually modified. The survey took place at several locations, at several times, applying various methods (*Table 1.*), which was due to the different characteristics of the tourism of the given destinations, as well as to the financial and temporal limits. *In the Western Mecsek region* the settlements of Bakonya (n=35), Boda (n=32), Cserkút (n=31), Kővágószőlős (n=103) and Kővágótöttös (n=23) were involved in a *representative survey among the local inhabitants* in 2008, while at *the village guest houses, the guests were asked* with the help of the owners (n=46) in the summer season. The investigation of the images of destinations linked to wine tourism was supported by the annually organized famous events, *the vintage festivals, where the questionnaires could be filled out both by the local inhabitants and the tourist*. *The survey in Villány was repeated in 3 subsequent years, with the questioning of 428 guests and local inhabitants, thus it was possible to control the former results*. *The temporal control was complemented by regional control as well; in 2008 (n=61) and 2009 (n=142), the Vintage Festival in Szekszárd* another survey took place. During the examination of the tourism of the Southern Transdanubian tourism region, the analysis of the image of the regional tourism centre (Pécs) was also carried out. In September 2009, an attempt was made to survey *the visitors' opinion at the Heritage Festival in Pécs* (n=671). The survey samples' division according to sex, age and degree are displayed in *Table 2*.

**Table 1. The locations and dates of the survey, the size of sample. Ed. by SPIEGLER, P.**

Location	Size of the sample	Date of the survey	Event
Szekszárd	61	20 September 2008	Vintage Festival
	130	17-20 September 2009	Vintage Festival
Pécs	93	28-29 September 2008	Festival of the Grape and Wine – questions regarding Villány
	671	17-27 October 2009	Heritage Festival
Villány	145	4-5 October 2008	Red Wine Festival
	40	2-4 October 2009	Red Wine Festival
	150	1-3 October 2010	Red Wine Festival
Western Mecsek	270	June-September 2008	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>1560</b>	<b>September 2008 – October 2010</b>	

**Table 2. The data about the structure of the sample. Ed. by SPIEGLER, P.**

	Local inhabitants	Guests			
		Total	Women (%)	Mean age	Higher education degree (%)
Szekszárd	116	75	60	33	36
Western Mecsek	224	46	69	43	38
Pécs	486	185	51	35	40
Villány region	95	240	51	37	50
Pécs (regarding Villány)	-	93	57	39	58
<b>Total</b>	<b>921</b>	<b>639</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>41</b>

## 4. Results

### 4.1. The place of the term 'tourism image' in the system of sciences

The national and international literature of disciplines dealing with issues related to the research topic is wide ranging and plentiful, though there are few comprehensive, complex studies, and there is no cohesive theoretical and methodological framework. In the last couple of years, tourism image – thanks to its practical utilization – became a popular research field, but the aim, content and applied methods of the analyses are quite varied. Its complex investigation requires an interdisciplinary approach.

The review of image-related approaches of each disciplines (*Table 3.*), five groups can be differentiated, according to the targets of the researches. *The theoretical and methodological studies* frequently return to the roots of image theory, to the field of psychology, communication, linguistics or philosophy. The social sciences – especially the critical direction – typically *analyse tourism image within the frameworks of a social-cultural relationship system*. Within economics, image analysis is traditionally related to marketing (brand, brand image, product image), and *primarily tourism market oriented studies are published*. The regional sciences, as well as the studies dealing with regional and rural development interpret *the application of image analysis within the system of territory-based planning and development*.

**Table 3. The relation between the tourism image analysis and economics, the disciplines of social sciences and geography. Source: based on the applied scientific literature ed. by SPIGLER, P.**

Field of science	Examples for the related research fields	Examples for the related publications
<b>Economics</b>	brand, image analysis, marketing, management, destination management	CROMPTON, J. L. 1979, GALLARZA, M. G. et al. 2002, SÜLYÖK J. 2006, TÖRÖCSIK M. – SOMOGYI Z. 2009, WOHLMANN, R. 1998, ZWERENZ, K. et al. 2007
<b>Regional and rural development</b>	development strategies, regional marketing, regional cooperation	AUBERT A. – MÉSZÁROS B. 2008, PUCZKÓ L. – RÁTZ T. 2005, ROYO-VELA, M. 2008
<b>Sociology</b>	regional interaction, regional attachment, social groups, environmental theory, culture theory	COHEN, E. 1972, HRADIL, S. 2000, KOVÁCH I. 2007, URRY, J. 1990, WÖHLER, K. 1998
<b>Critical culture research</b>	interrelation of culture-power-identity	MORGAN, N. – PRITCHARD, A. 1999
<b>Cultural anthropology and ethnography</b>	anthropological roots, representations of culture, culture as text	ANDRÁSFALVY B. 1980, CANTAUW, C. 1995, KÖSTLIN, K. 1996, SELWYN, T. 1996, FEJŐS Z. 1998
<b>Communication</b>	models of communication, marketing communication, social communication, medial images	GRIFFIN, E. 2001, GÜNTHER, A. – MITTEL, B. 2007, SZIJÁRTÓ Zs. – FEJŐS Z. 2000, SÁNDOR I. 1997, KÖVÁGÓ Gy. 2009, HORÁNYI Ö. 2006
<b>Linguistics</b>	sociolinguistics, dialects, semiotics	BARTHES, R. 1983, BOSSONG, G. 1994, MACCANELL, D. 1989
<b>Psychology</b>	cognitive and environmental psychology, behaviourism, identity research, motivation research, examinations of attitude and stereotypes	MASLOW, A. H. 2003, BERNÁTH L. – RÉVÉSZ Gy. 1997
<b>History</b>	historical development of regional entities, historical reconstruction of regional attachments, history of mentality, cultural memory	ASSMANN, A. 1999, ASSMANN, J. 2007, GLEBER, P. 1994, SOLYMÁR I. 2003
<b>Philosophy</b>	genius, discourse, heterotopy	HAMVAS B. 1988, FOUCAULT, M. 2000
<b>Political science</b>	national consciousness, political communication	ANDERSON, B. 2006
<b>Regional disciplines</b>	formation of regions, regional identity, regional marketing	ENYEDI Gy. 1996, MURÁNYI I. – SZOBOSZLAI Zs. 2000, PISKÓTI I. et al. 2002, RECHNITZER J. 1995, SOMLYÓDYNÉ P. E. 2007
<b>Geography</b>	geographical imagination, genius loci, destination image, urban image, landscape aesthetics, regional and settlement marketing, mental mapping, regional identity, survey of tourism hosting, region, destination management, tourism environment	ASHWORTH, G. J. - VOOGD, H. 1997, AUBERT A. 2007, BAJMÓCY P. – KISS J. 1996, DÖVÉNYI Z. 2008, GREGORY, D. 1978, HANUSZ Á. 2010, HEINRITZ, G. 1992, JANKÓ F. 2002, KARANCSI Z. 2004, KOZMA G. 2002, MARTONNÉ E. K. - SZILÁGYI Zs. 2003, MICHALKÓ G. 2005, RUPPERT, K. 1962, SOMOGYI S. 1987, SZABÓ G. 2006, TINER T. 1996. TÓTH J. 2003, WEICHHART, P. et al. 2006

#### 4.2. The interpretation of the term 'tourism image' with the accentuation of geographical relations

The acceptance of *spatial image*, as a scientifically examinable field within geography science was quite strenuous. These investigations are primarily *related to perception geography*. The method of *mental mapping* is already accepted in geography, and is basically applied in researches of urban geography. Tourism geography discovered this field only in the last

couple of years. Tourism image analyses show a close connection in the field of *applied tourism geography* to the management and marketing-focussed studies. One of the principal issues of the geographically based tourism image analyses is the „*genius loci*”, i.e. the spirit, radiance, attractive image of the location, which carries the uniqueness of the destination in itself (SZABÓ G. 2006). The tourism image analyses follow the *social geographical researches*, they apply the approved methods of the assessment of receiving areas and hosting, and try to present a given region’s ‘interior image’, i.e. the attachment of the local inhabitants as well as their attitude towards tourism and tourists. The human ecological aspect gives a new research direction of modern tourism geography, where the investigation of the *tourism environment* (MICHALKÓ G. 2005) is closely linked to the tourism image analysis. Within the frameworks of tourism geography, and besides the spatial interpretation of tourism image the authors had the opportunity to examine it as part of the interrelationship of the cultural-social, economic, infrastructural and natural sphere.

The interpretation of the term and dimensions of tourism image enabled the exploration of the main factors influencing the image formation. *The basis of image formation is represented by the perception process*, which is influenced by several interior and exterior factors, thus the tourism image has got a subjective character. The tourism image is based on the destination’s real, objective endowments, but is not equal with them, since it is a result of complex psychological and social processes. Through tourism imagination, the geographical space becomes the bearer of symbolic meanings. The symbolic spatial interpretation makes it possible to perceive the image not only locally, that is why it is well applicable in marketing; at the same time it can also become the means of power and political processes – on which the critical sciences put an emphasis. The image formation is a *dynamic, constructive process*, since it is shaped by communicational, interactive relations, and it makes sense within the context of formation-transmission-perception. Therefore, in the context of tourism, *the local inhabitants’ identity and tourism reception in the destination is the basis of image formation*. The spatial identity and the elements of tourism image overlap each other, which could lead to possible conflicts.

#### 4.3. The tourism image: definition and model

According to the authors’ definition, the tourism image is „*the abstracted, subjective, typically idealized representation of the destination’s actual, existent capabilities, and is constantly forming in the interactive interrelationship between the tourists, the local inhabitants and the actors of the tourism branch*”. This definition is displayed in the dynamic, interrelationship-based system of the „*image triangle*” model (Figure 1.).

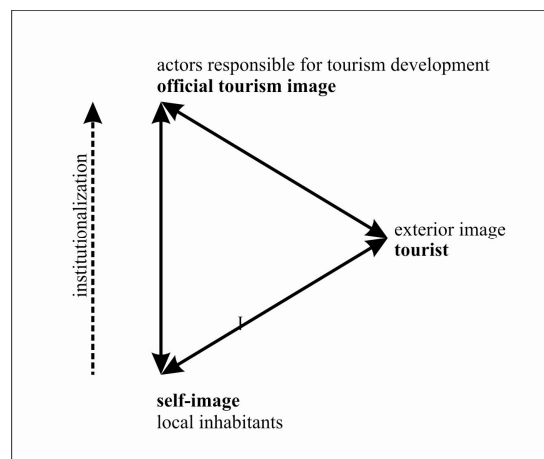


Figure 1. The tourism image triangle model. Ed. by SPIEGLER, P.



The image triangle highlights the fact that the tourism image analyses is many-sided, and it is necessary to investigate the officially transmitted tourism image, the image perceived by the tourists and the tourism self-image of the local inhabitants at the same time. The tourism mapping (“spatial-imaging”) was interpreted in the case studies in this triple examination dimension, where all the three tips of the „tourism image triangle” have been examined with the methods related to each topic.

#### 4.4. The determination of the methods of tourism image analysis

The methodological assessment of the international scientific literature, as well as the consideration of their advantages and disadvantages (Table 4.) lead to the conclusion that there is a need for an *empirical research applying complex, both qualitative and quantitative techniques*, which were utilized also in the case of the image analysis of the foreign sample, the Tegernsee tourism region.

**Table 4. Research methods applied during the tourism image analysis. Sources: based on ECHTNER, C. M. – RITCHIE, B. (1993) and O.H. JENKINS (1999) ed. by SPIEGLER, P.**

	<b>Structured methods</b>	<b>Semi-structured and unstructured methods</b>
<b>Characteristics</b>	Closed. The image elements and variables are preliminary chosen, and can be measured by standardized tools, the respondent evaluates them on a given scale, and creates the image profile of the destination.	Opened. The respondent is free to write down his/her impressions and visions about the destination. The dimensions of tourism image can be revealed by the selection and categorization of responses.
<b>Typical measuring method</b>	semantic differentiation, Likert scale	open ended questions, content analysis, focus group, deep interview, visual analysis
<b>Typical assessment, method of data analysis</b>	descriptive or multivariable statistical analysis	content analysis, discourse analysis
<b>Advantage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- easily manageable data</li> <li>- easily to encode</li> <li>- comparability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- capable to represent the image as a complex entity (overall impression)</li> <li>- shows the less generalized mental images only valid for the examined destination</li> <li>- it is less possible that the important, substantive aspects of the image are missed</li> <li>- able to reveal the visual elements</li> </ul>
<b>Disadvantage</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- focuses on the separate image elements, thus cannot interpret the complex image – some elements, aspects can be missed</li> <li>- concentrates on verbal elements with the suppression of visual elements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- limited statistical assessment</li> <li>- limited comparability</li> <li>- subjective interpretational framework</li> <li>- depends on the inclination, abilities and knowledge of the respondent</li> </ul>

The applied methods of the case studies were defined according to the assessment of the foreign scientific literature and the analysis aspects marked by the image triangle. First – utilizing the starting point of tourism geographical examinations – *the tourism endowments and characteristics of the investigated destination were revealed with descriptive analysis*, emphasizing the frameworks and activity range of the organization responsible for the development and marketing of the region’s tourism. This descriptive analysis represented the basis of the following questionnaire surveys. The official tourism image was highlighted by the *content analysis of the examined destinations’ tourism homepages and publications*. These were compared with the results of the questionnaires, which focussed on the *subjective perception of the guests and the local inhabitants*.

Two important methods of the questionnaire surveys should be emphasized, that rely on psychology. *The aim was to examine the images and descriptions being the foundation of the interior representation*, when the authors investigated the image forming pictures,

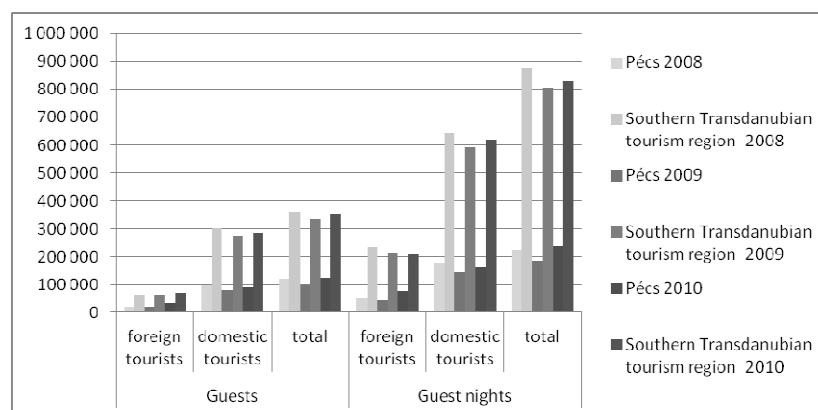
symbolic and atmospheric elements with open questions and *free association technique* on the one hand; as well as the attributes connected to the destination with the methods of *semantic differentiation and factor analysis*. The chosen attributes were applicable in every examined destination and opinion group (thus they are comparable), and can show both their cognitive and affective relations.

The descriptive statistical analysis of the *characteristics and habits of the guests* (i.e. used information sources, length of stay, frequency of visits, travel motivation, satisfaction, inclination to make references and to return etc.) enabled the identification of the examined destination's target groups. The focus of the case study analysing the tourism image of Villány was *the regional image created by the tourists*, which was compared with the tourism self-image of the local inhabitants and the official tourism image, within the analytical frameworks of the image triangle. The empirical research was carried out in several years and in many locations, and enabled the authors to not only assess the travel habits and imaginations of tourists visiting Villány, but also to examine the Villány-related preliminary motivations and expectations, even involving the analysis of the control area of Szekszárd.

The case study about the Western Mecsek put emphasis on the investigation of the interior image, the tourism self-image and tourism consciousness of the local inhabitants, on the applied methods; these were later compared with the other two dimensions of the image triangle. Based on the investigation dimensions and results of the international and national researches, the tourism consciousness of the local inhabitants was examined depending on such factors as *the attitude towards tourists, the assessment of the settlement's preparedness and hosting of tourism, as well as the extent of commitment to tourism development in the given settlement*. With the help of *cluster analysis*, the opinions of the local inhabitants were also investigated in relation to the extent of local attachment. The method of *multidimensional scaling* was applied in order to map the local inhabitants' estimation of the role of Western Mecsek played in the tourism of the region.

#### 4.5. The tourism image mapping of the Southern Transdanubian tourism region

Regarding the guest flow statistical data, the Southern Transdanubian tourism region shows the characteristics of a lagging area (*Figure 2.*). Although the region's tourism infrastructure and service supply has shown a progress in the last decade, the realized developments and the Pécs ECC 2010 project were unable to obtain a breakthrough in regional tourism. The region's and its destinations' estimation among the guests is more favourable than one would assume based on statistical data.



**Figure 2. Guest flow in the Southern Transdanubian region and Pécs 2008-2010. Source: KSH**

Consequently, the tourism and image of the tourism centre Pécs – being traditionally an attractive target – fundamentally influences the regional image. The majority of the region’s destinations is still immature, the spatial diffusion of the attractive tourism products is also significant, which factors even strengthen the determinant role of the centre. This situation is reflected in the coordination of messages communicated about the city and the region. In the case of Pécs, the notoriety of messages and the effectiveness of communication were measured by numerous national researches. Compared to these, the thesis investigates the *notoriety and acceptance of the messages communicated about the city itself*, which revealed the city’s complex, though less definite image profile (Table 5.).

**Table 5. The notoriety and acceptance of the communicated messages about Pécs. Source: based on the listed scientific literature and the author’s own research, ed. by SPIEGLER, P.**

	<b>TÖRÖCSIK M. 2006</b>	<b>RÁTZ T. 2008</b>	<b>SPIEGLER P. 2009</b>
1	The cosy city	ECC 2010	University city
2	The 2000 year old city	Lively student city	Historical city
3	The city of students	The city of Mediterranean impressions	Regional centre
4	The city of cultural heritage and cultural innovation	The second cultural centre of Hungary after Budapest	The city of arts and culture
5	The city of the youth	A loveable city good to live in	World Heritage city
6	The main rural basis of cultural values	A city bearing the recent European cultural values	The city of tourism and festivals
7	The multicultural city	The city of cultural heritage and cultural innovation	The city of gastronomy and wine
8	The venue of the specific Central Eastern European cultural experiences	The city of wines	The city of Mediterranean impressions
9	The city of Mediterranean impressions	The city of classical arts	City of the bishop
10	Gateway to the Balkans	Cultural centre with an impact on Europe	The borderless city
11	The city of regionalism	The city of the monuments	Miner city
12	The borderless city	The city of lively piazzas	

The examination highlighted the fact that the options for creating a regional tourism image are quite limited, since the Southern Transdanubian tourism region, as a legally regulated operational area does not form a geographical, tourism, historical or cultural unit. In the last period, the strategic attempts and adequate activities specifically focussing on the creation of a regional identity and tourism image were missing. During the analysis of the concepts and marketing activities, the *regional tourism image turned out to be developing spontaneously and accidentally*.

The relevance of the Southern Transdanubian tourism region, as a distinct, independent spatial unit can be questioned from the aspect of the market marketing, which is confirmed by the lack of a unified image and by the figures of the guest flow data. *The proposed “image triangle”, being an analysis aspect system was not applicable in the case of this tourism region due to the above-mentioned reasons*. The frameworks of the case studies were provided by the region’s traditional regional brands and destinations.

#### 4.6. Case studies: Western Mecsek and Villány

*The method of tourism spatial image mapping was introduced in the case studies*. During the investigation of the characteristics of the given destinations’ tourism endowments and tourism features, the *Western Mecsek showed the possibilities of village tourism and ecotourism*, since the closure of the mines, the structural changes as well as the suburbanization altered the local society. The activity of the *Association of the Western Mecsek Village Hosts* proves the fact that many of the citizens moving to the rural areas tend to revitalise the region’s traditions and

redefine the image created about rural landscapes for themselves and for tourism alike. In the case of Villány, both the endowments and characteristics of *wine tourism based on the reputation of Villány wines*, and the stimulating role of the *Villány-Siklós Wine Route Association* played in the forming and development process were analysed. The content analysis of the tourism homepages and publications of the examined destinations highlighted the fact that *the official tourism image represents the area based on schematic elements, in an idealized way* (the case of Villány is shown in Table 6.).

**Table 6. The thematic and regional focus points of the publication of the Villány-Siklós Wine Route (2001). Ed. by SPIEGLER, P. 2009**

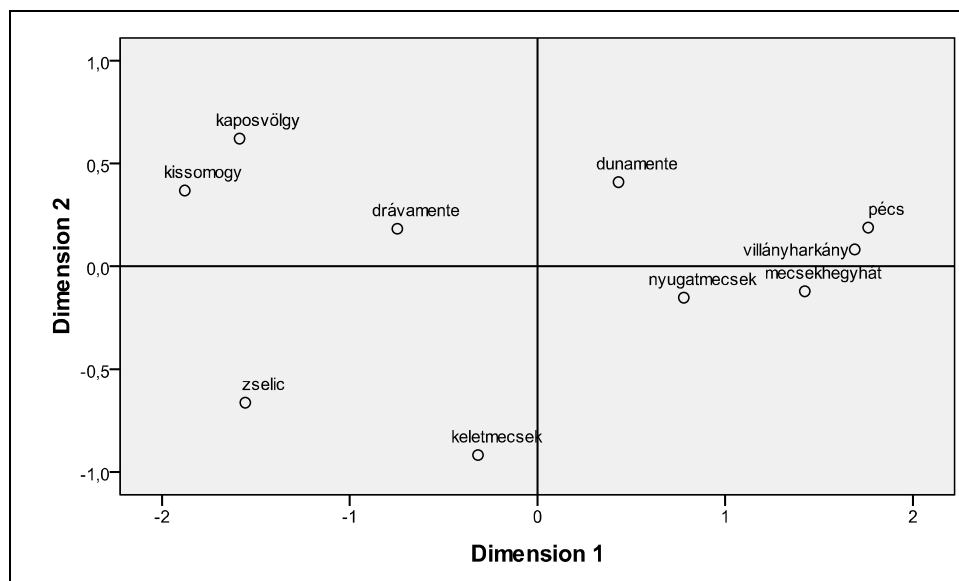
Thematic focus points			
VILLÁNY-SIKLÓS WINE ROUTE	WINE	CULTURE	NATURE
	wine product	towns, villages	wine growing region, habitat
	grape	gastronomy	landscape
	cellar, cellar line	arts, exhibition	unique natural values
	wine owner	ethnicity, village house	
		tradition	climate (Mediterranean characteristics)
		festival	
	wine museum	religion, church	
	viticulture-winery	history	medical water
	<b>VILLÁNY</b>	<b>SIKLÓS</b>	<b>HARKÁNY</b>
Regional focus points			

Within a destination, the tourism self-image of the local inhabitants gives the content and image stock, on which the external tourism image can be built. In the Western Mecsek region, the research focussing on the *tourism self-image and tourism consciousness of the local inhabitants* – in accordance with the international and national scientific literature – revealed the fact, that *the local attachment and the personal participation in tourism positively influences the attitude towards tourists, the assessment of the settlement's preparedness and hosting of tourism, as well as the commitment to local tourism development*. It was also detected that the people employed in tourism are characterized by strong local attachment. In the region of the Western Mecsek, the representative sampling enabled not only the *exploration of the common characteristics of the area, but also the detection of the differences occurring between each analysed settlement*. The attributes according to the destination life-cycle model were also noticed: the settlements of Cserkút and Kővágószőlős lead in tourism development, but are still in the initial phase; in the settlements of Boda, Bakonya and Kővágótöttös the proper conditions are still missing, they need to be explored and constructed. In Cserkút, both the proportion of strongly attached people, and the inhabitants' openness, commitment to tourism is higher.

**Table 7. The correlations revealed by the factor analysis of the attributes associated with the Western Mecsek region. Ed. by SPIEGLER, P.**

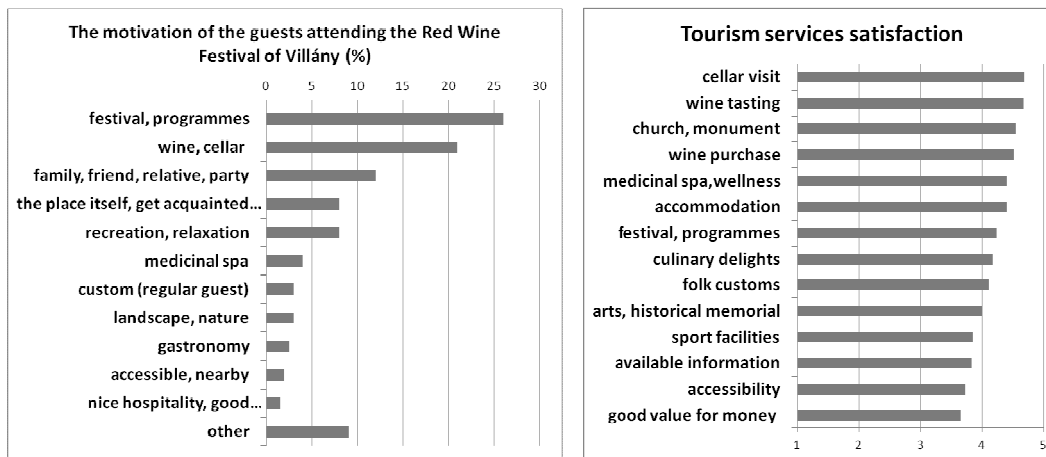
	Attributes forming the factor	Names of the factors
1.	quiet-well-kept-transparent-calm-friendly-spacious + highly appreciated, attractive, liveable, active, homely	Rural environment
2.	highly appreciated, developed, attractive, rich, liveable, safe + lively	Appreciated region
3.	traditional, hospitable, cooperative, cultivated, good value for money + well-kept, homely	Rural community
4.	homely, cheerful, lively, juvenile + hospitable, attractive, friendly, safe, accessible	Homelike/receptive
5.	exceptional, varied, close to nature + friendly	Exceptional, diversified natural environment
6.	crowded + vivid, active, lively	Lively, energetic
7.	accessible, materialistic + dangerous, monotone	„Dangers”

The tourism self-image of the local inhabitants was examined with *factor analysis along the attributes connected to their location* (Table 7.). According to this, the people living in the Western Mecsek region regard themselves as an appreciated, hospitable, lively, real rural community, living in an exceptional, varied natural environment. At the same time, there is a negative image component as well (materialistic, danger of monotony). Furthermore, the research also examined the way in which *the inhabitants define their region's tourism position among the destinations of the Southern Transdanubia*. Figure 3. displays the fact that the inhabitants link the Western Mecsek's characteristics to the Mecsek and the Zselic (mountainous-hilly area, village tourism); regarding its importance, they compare it to Pécs, the Villány-Siklós-Harkány region and the Mecsek-Hegyhát (Orfű). Consequently, the inhabitants are aware of their roles and their tourism position within the region, both in terms of guest flow and appeal. Apparently, their way of thinking is rather focussed on Baranya County.



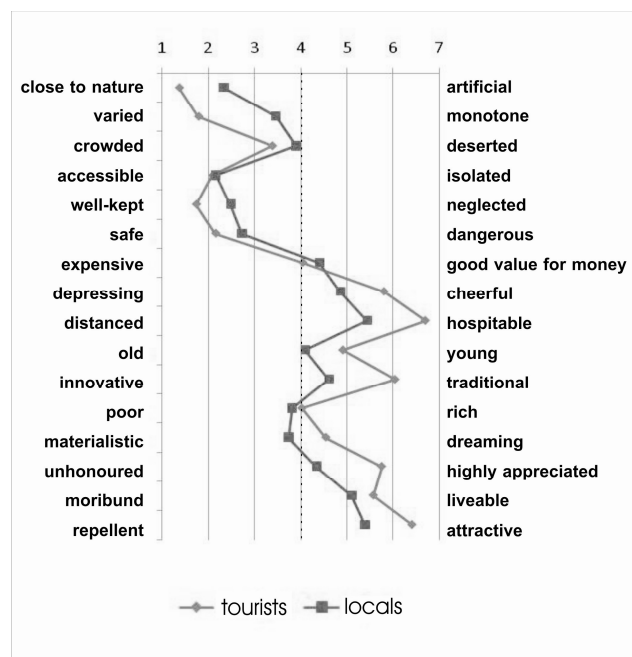
**Figure 3.** The map about the destinations in the Southern Transdanubian region in the consciousness of the inhabitants of the Western Mecsek, resulting from the multidimensional scale. Ed. by SPIGLER,P.(SPSS 17.0 program)

The survey of guests showed that the area of the Western Mecsek is chosen by the tourists preferring village tourism, since they long for rural recreation and relaxation. The nature, the active recreation (hiking), the good value for money products, the cultural values and sights, as well as the local inhabitants and traditions attract the visitors, who stay here for a relatively longer period of time (4-7 days). On the contrary, the survey in Villány showed that tourists stay there primarily for a short time, with a *motivation for wine tourism* (wine, wine events, gastronomy). The guests of festivals are very *satisfied with Villány wines and with the related services*, though they feel deficiency in terms of such basic infrastructural elements like accessibility and orientation (Figure 4.). *One of the critical point in the Villány area is the reasonable price*, which fact was highlighted both by the guest satisfaction indicator, and the semantic differentiation (Figure 6.). The results of national, representative surveys about the consumers of Villány wines were reflected in the characteristics of the festival guests. According to the researches, the *main target group* primarily involves medium-aged, trained, cultivated, intellectually many-sided, consciously living, value-oriented, quality and exclusivity focussed people; secondly consists of adventurous young adults searching for knowledge.



**Figure 4.** The motivation (proportion of mention in %) and tourism services satisfaction (mean values of grades 1-5) of the guests attending the Red Wine Festival of Villány (2009). *Ed. by SPIEGLER, P.*

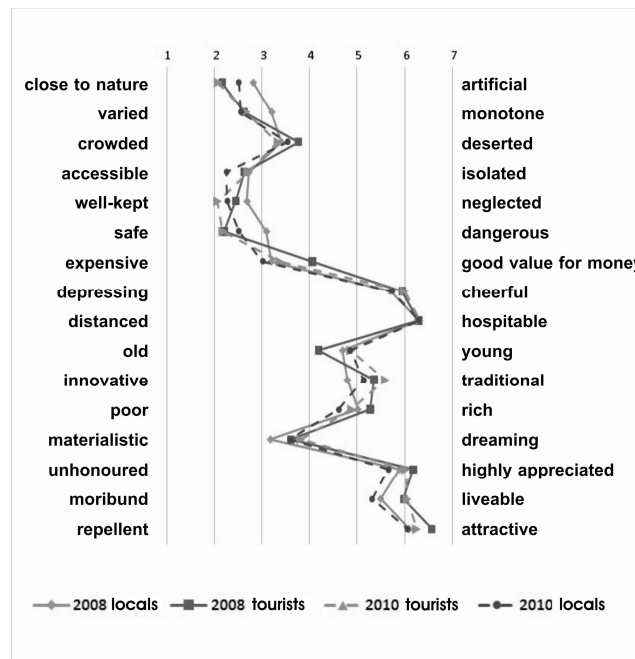
During the analyses of the local inhabitants' and the guests' opinion, the applied methods enabled *the definition of the constituents of the image, and the comparison of the perception of the different opinion groups (local inhabitants and guests)*. Regarding the examined destinations, *the method of semantic differentiation reveals the similarities and differences between the perception of image elements by the inhabitants and the guests*. In the case of the Western Mecsek, as the consequence of the officially communicated and *transmitted idyllic rural landscape, the guests perceive the positive features of the region more intensively, and tend to create an idealized image (Figure 5).*



**Figure 5.** The characteristics of Western Mecsek according to the local inhabitants and the guests (1;7=very characteristic, 2;6=quite characteristic, 3;5=rather this characteristic, than the other, 4=neither-nor) *Ed. by SPIEGLER, P.*

The empirical research allowed the investigation of the *dynamic and differentiating feature of the image constituents*. As exemplified by Villány, *the assessment of each image element seems to be relatively constant and stable*, though a couple of elements showed some changes due to such factors as e.g. the increasing price sensitivity, the realized M6 highway and the ordered settlement environment (Figure 6.). Comparing the assessment of each

destination – as utilized in the comparison of the features of Villány and Szekszárd – the *characteristics and advantages* of the locations were highlighted. Thus, the advantage of Villány was its high appreciation, innovative character and richness, while Szekszárd took advantage of its traditional feature and the more reasonable prices.



**Figure 6.** The semantic differentiation of Villány region among the tourists and the local inhabitants, in 2008 and 2010 (1;7=very characteristic, 2;6=quite characteristic, 3;5=rather this, than the contrary attribute, 4=both, neither-nor). *Ed. by SPIEGLER, P.*

The analysis of the picture elements of the image was appropriate to mark the outstanding *tourism spatial objects and well-known attractions* of the destinations. In Villány, the local inhabitants identify the region with the symbolic elements (e.g. Szársomlyó, saffron) – also used by marketing – to a larger extent, than the guests do.

According to the accomplished analyses, Villány is an acknowledged destination with a positive image and mature tourism, where development is based on historical roots, and evolves from inside out. The tourism image links Villány primarily to wine and the related cultural and natural values. The positive image of the region is accompanied with acknowledgement, high appreciation and vitality. Since the majority of the local inhabitants are strongly attached to the location, the Western Mecsek shows a picture of an open-minded, receptive, hospitable region. The image of the rural, village idyll is reflected in the self-image of the local inhabitants, and the guests also know about this, and appreciate these aptitudes (representing the main motivation of guests). The region is characterized by such a social, communal basis that can stimulate the decision makers to involve the local inhabitants in the development processes, and to strengthen the evolving, shaping tourism consciousness.

Consequently, the main results of the research are the following: it highlighted a method of *synthesizing* analysis of tourism image mapping, which emphasizes *the image created by the tourists' consciousness about the destination*, the so-far neglected or distinctively treated *interior perspective, the tourism self-image of the local inhabitants*; all these are interrelated with the *actual aptitudes of the destination* as well as with the definite developmental and *marketing activity* of the actors determining the destination's tourism.

## 5. The applicability of the results and the further directions of research

This thesis contributes with a new perspective to the tourism geographical researches, since the investigation of the geographical space is enhanced with the analysis aspects of tourism spatial images created about it, and with the related research methods. The interdisciplinary aspect and complex viewpoint that characterize both the working out of theory and methodology further improves the horizon of tourism geographical examinations, and helps to release the indisposition against the analysis of the subjective and symbolic dimensions of geographical space. Geography science can benefit from the practical utilization in terms of its methodology, and can promote the higher educational trainings focussing on practical issues, projects and case studies.

This research can be a guideline in the foundation of the activities of conscious image management at tourism destinations. The results of image analysis can be applied in order to reach and persuade the target consumers. The interior perspective of the research, the analysis of the tourism self-image of the local inhabitants could help with finding and strengthening the “image stock” that makes a destination liveable and competitive. The opinions, assessments, images resulting from the study not only support the marketing activity of the destination, but also represent a basis for the tourism improvements, and confirm the initiations directed toward the changing and developing of products and services. Thus, the image analysis is not only the starting point of these plans and activities, but – being the necessary tool of monitoring – can be continuously used to reveal the changes occurring in the perception of the guests and the local inhabitants. The authors emphasize that in the optimization of the destination management activity and the adoption of the proper strategic development direction one should try to find the co-ordination of the peaks of the image triangle, as well as to prevent the transmitted tourism image from alienation of the real aptitudes of the destination.

The further directions of the research can be grouped around the following issues:

- *The fining of analysis aspects and the parallel development of methodology*  
The working out of the accurate indicators of relations and impacts, as well as the demonstration of the relationship between geographical space and tourism image needs further analyses, which also mean the fining of methods.
- *The spatial expansion of investigations*  
The expansion of image analysis to the other destinations of the Southern Transdanubian tourism region, and to the control area outside the region.
- *The temporal control of the investigations*  
The carrying on of questionnaire survey already applied in the case of the so-far examined destinations, to be able to follow the dynamics and changes of image creation and to reveal the long-term processes.
- *From the image analysis to image management*  
Within the frameworks of a case study, to represent the process of image management based on image analysis, as well as to define the measurability of a successful image management, and its quantitative and qualitative aspects.
- *To enhance the aspects of image analysis with an autonomous, independent (organic) image*  
The image triangle consciously ignored the impacts of the non-controllable, unmeant images, which could be worth including in the future examinations.
- *The working out of methodology of the applied image analyses*  
The working out of methods for the sake of tourism development policy, focussing on the image forming activities of the particular regions.



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