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BRANDING OF CULTURAL TOURISM OBJECTS OF THE UNITED TERRITORIAL COMMUNITIES OF THE SOUTHERN MEGAREGION OF UKRAINE

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Abstract: The process of decentralization of power and governance, which takes place in Ukraine through the voluntary unification of territorial communities, has laid the foundations for reforming the administrative territorial structure and territorial organization of power. Taking into account the state making nature of these transformations in the context of Ukraine's European integration efforts, the article substantiates theoretical and applied fundamentals of branding of cultural tourism objects of the united territorial communities (UTC), reveals his role in constructing local identity of these social and spatial formations. The methodology of the study covers three main thematic blocks: legal and political foundations of the creation of a UTC; features of UTC branding; conceptualization and classification of brand projects of cultural tourism objects of the UTC. The factors that inhibit the branding process of cultural tourism objects of these communities were identified, conclusions were drawn, and perspective directions for further scientific exploration were outlined.

Key words: brand, branding, cultural tourism objects, identity, united territorial communities

1. Introduction

The formation of the settlement system as of way of development and use of geophysical space and a form of organization of social life is carried out both through natural evolution and artificially through the implementation of reforms. These indicated directions give the greatest effect as a result of their complementarity for the dominance of evolutionary transformations.

The region under study, which before forming a sovereign Ukrainian state for a long time was part of the Russian Empire and then the Soviet Union, has undergone several stages of transformation of the settlement system, beginning with Stolypin's agrarian reform of the early twentieth century and up to modern reforms. All of them, in one way or another, reflect the contradictory nature of public processes related to deep social and economic

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transformations, the struggle of the old and the new, the antagonism between industrial and agrarian development, urban and rural lifestyles.

These contradictions have become more acute during the state-building transformations of the era of sovereign Ukraine, which inherited from its predecessor several old problems and faced a number of challenges in forming its own state. One such challenge concerns the territorial organization of power. From the very beginning of the process of state building, the Ukrainian authorities somewhat simplistically approached this political and administrative problem, focusing solely on the destruction of the administrative and command system of government and did not take into account the multi ethnic structure of the Ukrainian people, united into a unitary state. Besides, the authorities have not been able to formulate a national idea that would consolidate around them representatives of different ethnic communities. In the conditions of deepening social differentiation of Ukrainian society and growing the difference in the level of social and economic development of the towns and villages at the end of 2013, centrifugal processes that took place in the Crimean Peninsula and in the Donbass started.

In such a situation, the Ukrainian authorities had to move to reform the system of local self-government and territorial organization of power. The first step in this direction was the decentralization of power and administration, which is done in the form of voluntary integration of territorial communities.

Implementation of the public model of decentralization of power and governance in the practice of public administration aims at democratization of the territorial organization of power, change of the existing administrative and territorial structure of the country, powers of local self-government bodies, according to European traditions of functioning of public authorities.

Implementation of the reforms undertaken requires the expansion of the power of the UTC by improving their infrastructure, expanding the resource base for development, and using such a marketing tool and management function as branding of these social and spatial formations.

The purpose of the research is to brand the objects of cultural tourism of the UTC of the Southern megaregion of Ukraine and to develop their brand projects as an intangible asset and social capital.

The hypothesis of the study is based on the assumption of the double social significance of branding of cultural tourism objects, first, as factor of identification of a new local space, and secondly, as a means of individual identity of UTC residents who associate themselves with tangible and intangible objects of the space. In such circumstances, the brand as a product of branding is based on certain geographical, historical, social and cultural things, which belong to the natural and cultural and historical heritage of the space of the UTC.

Therefore, branding of cultural tourism objects appears as a primary factor and catalyst for the social and economic development of communities. The brand of these objects shapes the marketing potential of UTC as their added value in the minds of internal and external (tourists, investors, new residents) consumers.

In this regard, the UTC of the Southern megaregion have common features, which are determined by the presence on their territory of unique cultural monuments and sustainable traditions of their promotion among domestic and foreign tourists.

2. Political and theoretical background

2.1 Legal support and political importance of the process of creation of an UTC

The process of voluntary association of territorial communities is carried out according to the principles set out in the Conception of Local Government Reform and Territorial Organization of Government in Ukraine (2014). The basic conditions for voluntary association of territorial communities are defined by the Law of Ukraine "On voluntary association of territorial communities" (2015). These are the following conditions: within the united territorial community, there can be no other territorial community which has its representative body of local self-government; the territory of the united territorial community must be inseparable; the united

territorial community must be located within the territory of one region; decisions on voluntary integration of territorial communities shall take into account historical, natural, ethnic, cultural and other factors affecting the social and economic development of the united territorial community; the quality and accessibility of the public services provided in the united territorial community may not be lower than before the association; association of territorial communities is carried out in accordance with the prospective plans of formation of territories of communities of the region.

Over time, the legal basis of this process has been subject to appropriate changes and additions to the current legislation aimed at accelerating it and creating favorable conditions for the formation of self-sufficient communities. Among these conditions: community pooling is mostly around towns of regional significance in a simplified procedure; creation of UTC based on the perspective plans of the regions, which are discussed by representatives of the regional state administrations, local self-government bodies, public organizations and associations. After consultations, these plans are being finalized by regional state administrations and approved by the Government, whereupon acquire the status of directive documents. This means the completion of the stage of voluntary community association. Such approach, which is in fact contrary to the principles of voluntary association of territorial communities, is explained by the need to dismantle the administrative and territorial structure, and of holding local elections in the fall of 2020. According to government data, in January 2020, more than 90% of the country's territory was covered by prospective plans for the formation of territorial communities.

The process of creating an UTC has not only proper legal support, but also great political significance for the future of Ukrainian society. First of all, it is about creating and maintaining a favorable living environment for Ukrainian citizens, regardless of their place of residence, providing them with high quality public services and establishing institutions of direct democracy.

To this end, the Ministry development of Communities and Territories of Ukraine was established and of the relevant Council as advisory body at the President of Ukraine (2019).

Considering that out of the total number of UTC created in Ukraine as of January 1, 2020, 58.6% are rural, and in virtually every urban and settlement communities, there is a significant percentage of rural population, it can be concluded about focusing attention on the rural aspects of their development. At the same time, the smart, sustainable and inclusive development of UTC is linked to the presence in this space of cities as "points of growth" and the generation of progress.

The presence in the social space of the rural and urban population will promote the harmonization of rural and urban relationships and the functioning of communities as social and spatial entities of continuum type.

2.2 UTC as branding object

In recent years, in Ukraine, to scientific discourse and management practice has introduced the branding of such social and spatial formations as UTC with emphasis on their cultural component.

On the one hand, branding of the UTC of Southern megaregion has common traits with territorial branding, that characterize it as a marketing tool and brand management function, the object of which is social and spatial formations which is represented by a local community. Of course, this community forms certain organizational and economic structures that produce certain products or services. Therefore, in the spatial boundaries of the UTC, there are cases of creation of corporate and goods brands.

On the other hand, the UTC emerges as its place of disposition of natural, historical and cultural monuments, which are positioned not only as a heritage but also as objects of cultural tourism. Finally, the features of UTC branding are driven by certain characteristics of the region. Not without reason in the legal acts governing the process of creating an UTC, it is emphasized that communities can unite exclusively within the borders of one region.

Therefore, the main element of branding of UTC is the unique features of cultural tourism objects located in the Southern megaregion of Ukraine, which includes Mykolaiv, Odesa and Kherson regions (fig. 1).

Fig 1. Map of Ukraine[4].

The location of these regions on the map of Ukraine indicates that all of them are coastal territories. The Mykolaiv region is an internal region as borders except the southern ones, on the central (Kirovograd) and eastern (Dnipropetrovsk) regions. Odessa region has external borders with Moldova and Romania (across the Danube river), Kherson region – borders with the Crimean Peninsula, which is currently under the jurisdiction of the Russian Federation. Despite the constancy of interregional borders with their geographical and historical basis, in some scientific publications, unjustified attempts appear to revise the geographical principles associated with the presentation of the "New South" in the format of its three subregions: Bessarabia, Prichernomoria and Priazovia (Ukrainian South…, 2014). Argumentation of the "new" approach is a radical change in the situation on the southern borders of Ukraine and is being made, which is related to the actual loss of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol. In this regard, there are questions, first, of the appropriateness of the artificial, by the very nature of extended identification of the geographical South of Ukraine by incorporating into him territorial boundaries the sub-region of Donbass against the background of a significant decrease in population of Ukraine, and second, of misinterpretation of the term Bessarabia (the name of the southern part of the Odesa region) as a separate component of the "New South", and narrow interpretation of the term "Prichernomoria" and "Priazovia".

The peculiarity, uniqueness and advantage of the location UTC of the Southern megaregion are determined by their status of seaside territories, some of which have access to the Black and Azov seas. The south of the Odesa region by its geographical location belongs to the border territories (borders with Moldova and Romania). Due to the direct access of the Southern megaregion to the seas, there is the possibility of moving through the Bosphorus, Dardanelles

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[4] In addition to the Mykolaiv, Odesa and Kherson regions, are sometimes referred to the Southern megaregion the Crimean Peninsula (now currently under the jurisdiction of the Russian Federation), Zaporizhzhya and Dnipropetrovsk regions (in fact, are eastern regions).

and Gibraltar to the Atlantic. The Dnieper, Dniester, Southern Bug and Danube rivers converge within the territories of megaregion. In addition to the aforementioned shipping channels to seaports network, they are approached by rail and motorways, which together with pipelines and air transport allow to maintain connections with Romania, Bulgaria and other European countries.

Specific features are also inherent and the process of the creation of UTC in the Southern megaregion (tab 1).

Tab 1. General characteristics of UTC of the Southern megaregion of Ukraine as of January 1, 2020.

Region	Number UTC	UTC type			Number councils that are part of UTC	Area [km^2] UTC	Population [persons] UTC
		urban	settle-ment	rural			
Mykolaiv	43	5	8	30	147	12,461.94	321,680
Odesa	37	4	11	22	158	11,396.06	364,765
Kherson	36	3	9	24	121	10,974.12	292,185
By the three regions together	116	12	28	76	426	34,832.12	978,630
Ukraine	1,031	162	265	604	4,655	242,327.57	11,381,170

The ethnic composition of population gives a certain color to the UTC of the Southern megaregion. Ethnoses, on the one hand, carry the genetic code of the landscape in which they are formed, and on the other – acquire in the process of socialization of certain traits and properties that distinguish them from each other. This allows you to define them as certain ethnic territorial communities, united of a single ethnic origin, compact settlement pattern, overall livelihood and self-development capacity. According to Dnistriansky (2001), Odessa region has the highest mosaic ethnicity index in Ukraine (0.64), within which Bulgarians, Gagauzians, Moldovans, concentrating in southern districts, are compactly placed.

The Southern megaregion is typical both in terms of the number of UTC created in it, and in terms of their population and area relative to the absolute value of these indicators, which do not go beyond the average of their value throughout the country. However, in the Southern megaregion, the number of urban UTC is the lowest (12). At the same time, among the cities – administrative centers of communities, only one – is average (66 thousand people), two – with population more than 20 thousand people. This has a significant impact on the overall population of the UTC: only 42.1% of them have a population that exceeds exceeds 10 thousand people, which is considered to be minimally received (to create social infrastructure and ensure the efficient functioning of financial institutions). Only 5.3% of UTC have a balanced composition of rural and urban populations. Thus, according to the social and demographic indicators, the UTC of the Southern megaregion have a rural orientation of development within the social and spatial formations of the continuum type.

In the process of creating an UTC in the Southern megaregion, only one of the trends specific to the country as a whole, namely the unification of territorial communities around large cities, without the participation of these cities, was confirmed. This is explained by the fact that in the region, only three cities (centers of regions) have the status of big cities. At the same time, other trends take place here. First, it is a large proportion of suburban UTC (28.4%), two thirds of which – are rural. The second trend is a large proportion of seaside UTC. The third tendency is a small proportion of UTC in the south of the Odessa region where Bulgarian, Moldovan and Gagauz national minorities are compactly inhabited in large villages, which have retained their historical and cultural identity.

Such empirical observations are confirmed by the results of sociological research. In a community, identity is manifested as a property of the individual to feel he or she belonging to

a certain social group. Uniting communities changes not only their boundaries, but also individual and group identity. In such a situation, it is important that the feeling of unity among the members of the new community does not occur formally, in the organizational and legal sense, but in the social and psychological. It is only under this condition that there is a sense of responsibility for the common affairs of the community.Therefore, changing the boundaries of the community does not lead to an immediate change in identity. The identity that is formed in the rural community is primordial, that is, it is inherited (Nagorna, 2008). But in unified territorial communities, a new identity is constructed on the basis of formal rules, based not on tradition, but by administrative and territorial subordination. Survey of the population confirm that the residents of the administrative center of the UTC are more positively attuned to perception peripheral settlements and their residents than these residents perceive the new center for themselves (Zelenkevich, 2019).

Thus, to be successful, UTC need to be presented not only as a new administrative territorial unit, but as a social and spatial formation in which the social community is a bearer of rural and urban identity. Formation of such local identity is possible only on cultural basis. On the other hand, in the presence within the UTC of cultural objects, one of the most effective tools of their development is branding, and the way of communication of cultural heritage with the consumer is tourism, which simultaneously acts as a branch of economic activity and a channel of supply of financial resources to the community budget.

Hence, the increasing role of branding not only in the formation of local identity of UTC, but also in ensuring their self sufficiency.

And this, in turn, needs the importance of branding theory to be amplified, which is a prerequisite for creating brands, promoting them in a market environment, and implementation in social practice. But, the theory of branding is still in its initial stage of development (Towards Effective Place…, 2010).

The first publications by western marketers, who were not about to brand but marketing of places, appeared in the 1990s (Kotler at el., 1993; Kotler at el., 1999), which outlines the experience of European countries of using marketing technologies to attract investment, tourism in the development of cities, regions, states.

In the early 2000s, the terms "place branding", "national branding", "competitive identity" first appeared in scientific discourse. Determining the brand index of countries and cities, it is now made on the basis of factors such as culture and heritage, power, level of exports, immigration and investment, tourism, of human development assessment by such indicators as education, openness, friendliness, tolerance (Anholt-GfK Nation Brands Index, 2017; Anholt-GfK City Brands IndexSM, 2015).

Considering that territorial branding is at the stage of formation, technologies that are used to justify commercial strategies are used in developing brand concepts. Analyzing the worldwide positive experience of territorial branding, western marketers (City Branding, 2011) explain such practices from a purely pragmatic standpoint, emphasizing that cities use tourism, investment and talented people solely to maintain their competitiveness.

Over time, participation in the development of models of brands of cities, regions and countries of representatives of different scientific disciplines has positively affected the development of branding theory, which has manifested itself in the formation of certain disciplinary directions of branding. One such influential scientific directions is geographical, which reflects the priority role of geography as a spatial science.

Separately on the spatial orientation of the territorial brand draws attention to Pike (2009). He notes that although branding ideas are increasingly covering territories, certain prerequisites are needed for the branding – historical, cultural, natural and other original characteristics of the territory. Ogilvy (2007) emphasizes: "a brand is a mosaic portrait, consisting of many factors, the most important of which is the nature of the product itself". That is, the nature of the product should be understood as the structural components of the territory, that determine her essence. One of such socialized components of the territory is the UTC with their cultural heritage.

The objects of culture occupy a prominent position in the structure of the territory, which facilitated the intensification of scientific explorations within the cultural (humanitarian) geography. From the point of view of cultural geography, territory, administrative district with historical and cultural sites, can be transformed into media images and presented as geocultural brands.That was the reason for Kavaratzis and Ashworth (2010) to highlight cultural and entertainment events into a separate direction branding.

Significant contribution to substantiation of conceptual bases of geocultural branding of territories was made by Zamyatin (2013). He is the author of the development:

– of fundamental concepts of geocultural branding of territories (image, geoculture, geocultural space);

– of key operational concepts of geocultural branding of territories (geographical image, figurative-geographical map, image resources of the territory);

– of typical products of geocultural branding of territories (image passport of the territory, map of landmarks of the territory, figurative formula of the territory, textual "image" of the territory, meaningful characteristics of the territory, meaningful strategies for creating the territory image, the model of presentation of the territory's image, branding of the territory in a certain segment).

In the context of a geocultural approach, the territory itself, taken in its ontological and phenomenological dimensions, is a certain culture, a kind of "territorial existence", and geocultural branding appears "as a purposeful ontological combination of a particular cultural space with itself, the territorial boundaries taken in their physical, political and legal aspect, act here as a direct expression of a particular geoculture – ad hoc" (Zamyatin, 2015).

In this sense, the UTC of the Southern megaregion can be considered as a component of the Ukrainian Prychernomoria, which in the above definition, do not replace the specific geography of southern Ukraine.

Another, the psychological, direction of branding theory, which largely reveals the essence of UTC as a center of culture, by representation of an "emotional branding", provides effective interaction of the brand with consumers by influencing their feelings, emotions and experiences.

The term "emotional branding" was introduced into scientific circulation by Gobe (2001). At the thought of the whole author, emotional branding is based on emotions, subconscious feelings that are inherent in every person. Hence, one of the goals of the brand is to create interactive contact with people to generate emotions. Gobe has put forward ten commandments of emotional branding that clearly demonstrate the difference between traditional concepts of brand awareness and the emotional dimension that should reflect a brand in order to become more consumer friendly: from consumers → to people; from product → to experience; from honesty → to trust; from quality → to excellence; from popularity → to aspiration; from identity → to features; from function → to feeling; from everyday life → to emotional presence; from communication → to dialogue; from service → to relationships.

The psychological direction of branding theory also includes the theory of images, which contains many modifications and is related to the procedure of positioning the brand UTC. In the context of this theory, the image of the community emerges as a product of human consciousness and activity.

Thus, the statement of generalized provisions on the theoretical foundations of branding of UTC testifies to its interdisciplinary nature. Nevertheless, the branding of UTC has not yet become an independent subject of scientific research and is considered in the context of territorial branding. As far as modern concepts of cultural tourism are concerned, they are positioned in the scientific literature as components of the branding of tourist destinations. Therefore, the goal of research of this kind is to try not to break this chain, but to combine different research streams into a single cognitive paradigm.

3. Research methodology

To identify the branding of cultural tourism objects of the UTC as a marketing tool and management function, and to reveal its role in constructing the local identity of these social and spatial formations, we used an interdisciplinary research paradigm in its theoretical and empirical dimension, which is based on the scientific achievements of foreign and domestic economists, geographers, psychologists, sociologists, specialists in marketing, communication and management technologies.

Considering the interdisciplinary nature of the research to achieve its purpose, system, territorial and sectoral approaches, general scientific, philosophical and special methods were applied: of PEST analysis and SWOT analysis to determine the external and internal branding environment; methods of analysis and synthesis, deduction and induction, comparison, statistical and economic to identify the material and spiritual basics of branding and the correspondence of the brand to its physical shell – objects of cultural tourism, which are located within the spatial boundaries of UTC; survey methods and "focus groups" to obtain reliable information about value installations of consumer behavior; intent analysis method to identify the degree of consumer loyalty to the brand; phenomenological method, when forming the idea of a brand and assessing its perception of the target audience; cartographic method, when determining brand identity.

The empirical dimension of the cognitive paradigm of branding cultural tourism objects UTC, as an instrument of marketing and of management function, consists of the stages of creating a brand, promoting it in a market environment and introducing into social practice.

The information base of the research is the legislative and regulatory acts of Ukraine and the European Union, data of the State Statistics Service of Ukraine, local governments, research results of scientists, analytical information from the Internet, periodicals, own observations.

The authors processed a large array of data contained in publications and reports of central and regional statistical authorities, regional executive bodies, territorial communities, conducted field research in the south of Odessa region, surveys among local student youth, participated in organizational activities related to the creation of some UTC and territorial brands "Frumushika Nova" and "SHABO".

The study covers the local space of the UTC of the Southern megaregion (Mykolaiv, Odesa, Kherson regions), within which 116 communities were created during 2015–2019, including 12 urban, 28 settlements, 76 rural. The proportion of the population and area of these communities is 23.9% and 41.1% of their absolute value, respectively, reflecting the proportions of these indicators across the country as a whole.

4. Research results

4.1 Cultural tourism objects and their role in constructing the local identity of the UTC

The main features of UTC, as a single social and spatial entity, are not so much administrative affiliation and subordination, but rather common interests based on spatial local identity, which is formed on the basis of natural, geographical, historical, social and cultural values.

Identity has a double interpretation: geographical, which is associated with real boundaries, and symbolic. Symbolic boundaries, accordingly divide the world into "our" and "their" domains and organize social space, defining patterns of intergroup interaction (Mach, 1993).

In this regard, identity acts as the conscious self-identification of an individual resident or a community of UTC with a certain behavior that is formed on the basis of a sustainable value system derived from existing cultural heritage.

Cultural heritage is classified by three categories: "monuments (works of architecture, monumental sculpture and painting, elements and structures of archaeological character, inscriptions, caves and groups of elements that have outstanding universal value in terms of

history, art or science); ensembles (groups of isolated or united buildings, architecture, which are of outstanding universal value in terms of history, art or science); attractions(works of man or common works of man and nature, as well as sites, including archeological sites of universal value in terms of history, aesthetics, ethnology or anthropology") (Convention on the Protection …, 1972). In this case, we are dealing with complexes of tangible cultural heritage, which are concentrated mainly in large cities. However, cultural and natural heritage of national and local significance is sufficient within the territorial boundaries of the UTC of the Southern megaregion of Ukraine.

In the early 2000s, international law enshrined the concept of "intangible cultural heritage", which means customs, representations and expressions, knowledge and skills, associated with them instruments, objects, artifacts and cultural spaces recognized by the communities, groups and in some cases by individuals as part of their cultural heritage (International Convention to Safeguard …, 2003).

Intangible cultural heritage is manifested, particularly, in the following spheres: language as a carrier of intangible cultural heritage, oral traditions; performing arts; customs, rituals, holidays; knowledge and customs of nature and the Universe; knowledge and skills related to traditional crafts (International Convention to Safeguard …, 2003).

The Council of Europe documents recognize the cultural heritage as "a set of resources that are inherited from a past. She encompasses all aspects of the environment that have emerged as a result of interaction between people and the Universe in the course of historical development" (Council of Europe Framework…, 2005).

The content of the definitions of cultural heritage, given in the mentioned international legal documents, testifies to the growing role of elements of intangible cultural heritage and environment as a space, its interactions with people in the process of historical evolution of society.

In this sense, rural people have certain advantages over residents of large cities, primarily because of their direct relation to the natural environment, which forms the appropriate type of mentality. Because of this, the province (small towns and villages) lives be heart, unlike the big cities where reason prevails, in other words rationality and pragmatism. This very often kills the personality as a whole, at least she falls behind from the prevailing objective culture (Simmel, 2002).

UTC are precisely provincial social and spatial formations where there are more manifestations of the soul and relationships based on feelings (irrationality). In this sense, territorial communities appear as a natural and social environment conducive to interaction between people and space, as well as between people and objects of tangible and intangible cultural heritage.

Thus, in the framework of the UTC, there are basic prerequisites for the development of cultural tourism, which, in addition to performing the function of constructing the identity of these social and spatial formations, when appropriate infrastructure is in place, is capable of being a catalyst for their wise, sustainable and inclusive development. An impulse for development in the local space of the UTC cultural component of the tourism industry is the activity of creating promotion in a market environment and introducing into the social practice the brand of these social and spatial formations.

Cultural tourism is a relatively new branch of tourism. For the first time, the concept of cultural tourism was formally used in international instruments in the early 1980s (World Conference…, 1982).

Cultural tourism, as a symbiosis of economy and culture, plays an important role not only in the matter of capitalization of heritage, but also has communication, cognitive and value opportunities to influence tourists (Parfimenko, 2013). Due to these characteristics, it has many features in common with branding, forming not only a loyal attitude to the space of disposition of cultural objects, but also constructing the local identity of members of the UTC.

Today, cultural tourism is represented by such varieties as event, to folk crafts and arts tourism, wine (gastronomic), historical and cultural, green tourism. Western researchers pay special attention to cultural tourism, which includes acquaintance with natural, historical and cultural attractions and ethnic traditions, prominent cultural monuments (Hall and Page, 2006).

One of the most promising varieties of cultural tourism considered are event tourism, which include festivals, carnivals, forums, educational events, concerts, theatrical performances, festivities, exhibitions, fairs, marketing events (Getz, 2008).

Within the boundaries of the UTC of the Southern megaregion and around them, there is a significant number of cultural tourism objects, some of which are used in this sphere of activity.

The development of cultural tourism in the UTC is facilitated by the popularization of family estates that combine organic production of agricultural produce, a healthy lifestyle, and the use of renewable energy. The idea of a "family estate" is to exercise the right of every citizen to get one hectare of land free of charge for the purpose of arranging a family estate with the possibility of its transfer only by inheritance. About 100 settlements of this type have already been established in Ukraine (Plotnikova and Prisyajnyuk, 2017). Particularly, in the Kherson region, there are 20 farmsteads of family type rural (green) tourism.

In order to make effective use of cultural tourism facilities for the benefit of UTC residents, the Ministry of Culture of Ukraine in 2018 has decided to introduce pilot cultural startups related to cultural heritage within the framework of the project "Small cities – great impressions". Among the eight project participants was the Vylkovo UTC of the Odesa region (the project "Gastronomic festival"). Each project participant was provided with financial support of more than UAH 500000 for its implementation, methodological assistance in developing an exclusive idea and startup concept.

The creation of an UTC is accompanied, preparation of tourism development programs with the participation of public organizations – "Center for research of local self-government and community development", All Ukrainian association of village and town councils, Ukrainian confederation of journalists, "Association for promoting population self-organization".

To provide cultural tourism with not only commercial but also semantic identity, branding is used.

4.2 Conceptualization and classification of brand projects of cultural tourism objects

The success of the branding of cultural tourism objects is determined by both objective and subjective circumstances. The first are related to the brand's cultural and historical background, to the unique qualities of the branding object, the presence at his socially significant characteristics, and the second with their convincing artistic expression. The latter circumstance is a derivative of the object of branding – the sphere of culture, and is intended to carry out a transfer to consumers of certain values of cultural heritage. Thanks to this, a competitive identity strategy is implemented. A source of brand identity according to Hall (1999) is a set of ideas, values, characteristics of culture, images, that, in the aggregate, create in the minds of the target audience certain associations with the object of branding.

Undoubtedly, the brand appears as a psychological mental construction, a figurative thinking that is the result of a certain psychological process and as a psychological matter that shapes consumers' decisions. Mentality has its own internal structure (fig 2).

According to the data of figure 2, in the formation of the mentality are involved subconsciousness, consciousness, and spirituality in the form of certain images that define a person's behavior and actions.
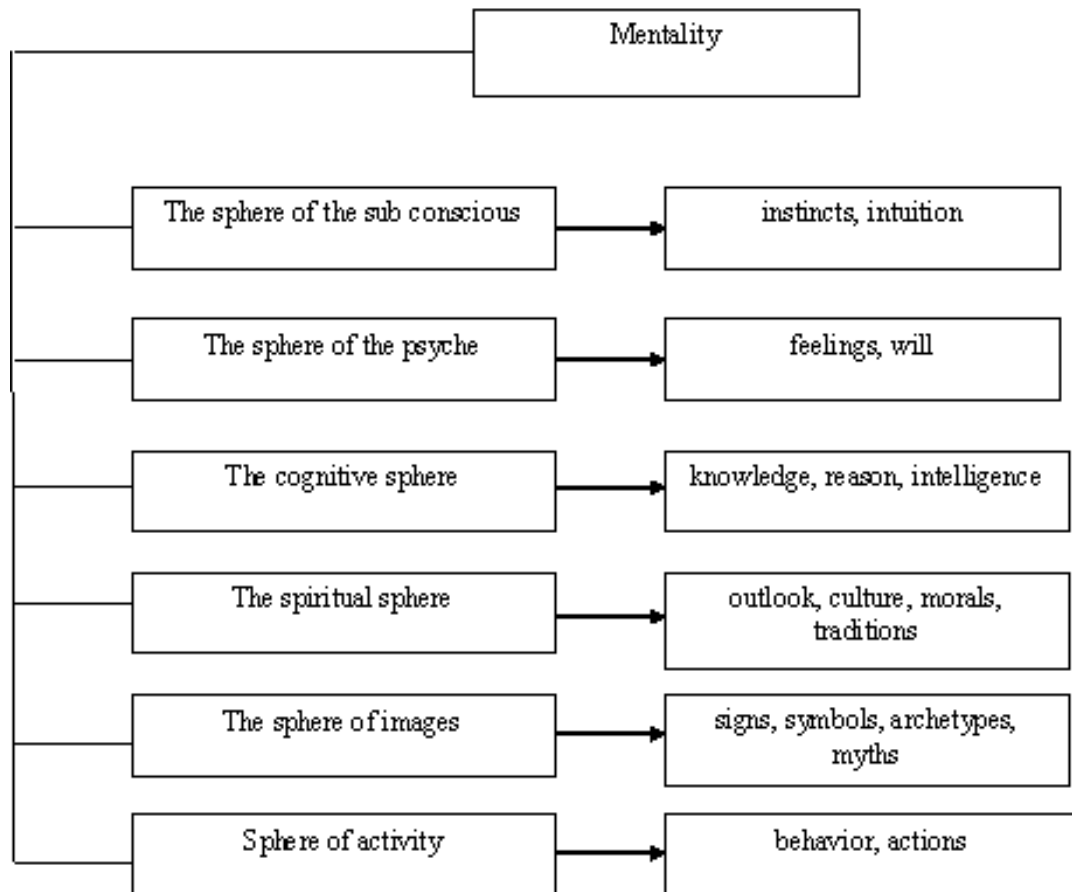
Fig 2. The structure of mentality.

When designing the idea and objectives of the branding of cultural tourism objects, it is necessary to take into account the figurative reflection of these objects in the minds of consumers. Based on the positioning of UTC image (tab 2), the characteristics of the mentality of the subjects of their identification are determined.

Tab 2. System positioning of the UTC image of the Southern megaregion.

The subject of identification	Image type	Characteristic of the type of image
Rural population	Of small homeland	A place to live by birth, not by choice
Business entities	Of consumer	Place to invest and make a profit
Urban population	Neutral	Nostalgic places of small homeland, of cottages and country estates
Public authorities	Interested	A place where agricultural produce are grown
Public organization	Positive	A place of recreation

An analysis of the subjects of identification represented in tab 2 indicates a negativ image of UTC among consumers. Given this, the overriding task of branding is to change the image of UTC from predominantly negative to positive.

In order to differentiate the brand elements of the tourist destination, analyze its individuality proposes to consider it as a tourist product, lifestyle, "personality", symbol. When creating

a brand, it is important to take into account all aspects of the brand, and to use only those that are relevant to the consciousness of customer.

Some UTC have, on their own initiative, joined the branding process yet at the initial stage of their own history. In the summer of 2018, Prysivask UTC (Kherson region) presented its own logo that she characterizes its tourist potential: the southern sun in the blue sky, Lemuriiske pink lake, medicinal clay and healing salt. Activity on this matter is also demonstrated by the representatives of the peripheral villages of UTC, to which Trykraty belongs (Oleksandriisk UTC of the Mykolaiv region). The peculiarity of this historic settlement is the picturesque "Labyrinth" park and Trykratsk forest, created in the 19th century earl V. Skarzhynsky as well as the beauty of Aktivsk and Petropavlivsk canyons of the National nature park "Buzky Hard". The presence of such iconic tourist objects has pushed the local public, including the participants of the 2013 Student Youth Festival to create the tourist brand "Trykraty: village that inspires".

However, branding objects of cultural tourism of the Southern megaregion requires not only a certain generalization of this process, but also a theoretical and methodological support. Tab 3 presents the brand projects of cultural tourism objects of the UTC, which are indicators of perspective directions of their development.

Tab 3. Typology of brand projects of cultural tourism objects of the UTC of Southern megaregion.

Types of brand projects	Typical locations of brand projects localization by regions		
	Mykolaiv	Odesa	Kherson
Recreatal	UTC, which are located on the sea coast and in the picturesque strip of rivers and estuaries	UTC, which are located on the sea coast and in the picturesque strip of rivers and estuaries	UTC, which are located on the sea coast and in the picturesque river strip
Agritourismal	All UTC of the region	All UTC of the region	All UTC of the region
Wine and gastronomical	Koblevo UTC of Berezansk district	Shabo UTC of Belgorod Dnestrovsk district and Tairovo UTC of Ovidiopol district	Vesele settlement of Novokakhovsk UTC
Historical and cultural	The Krymka village of Kamianomostivsk UTC of Pervomaisk district and the Parutino village of Kutsurub UTC of Ochakov district	Shabo, Marazlievsk, Mologivsk, Starocossack UTC of Berezansk district; Vylkovo UTC of Kiliia district	Kozatsk settlement of Novokakhovsk UTC
Ethnical	UTC, in which a significant proportion of national minorities live	UTC southern districts, where a large proportion of bulgarians, moldovans, and gagauzes live	UTC, in which a significant proportion of national minorities live
Sporting	Mygia UTC Pervomaisk district	UTC, which are located in the Black Sea coastal area, estuaries and rivers	UTC, which are located in the seaside and river coastal zones

The wellness and recreational brand projects specific to the UTC, who are in the coastal strip of the Black and Azov seas as well as along rivers and estuaries.

The wine tourism brand projects is characteristic of the Koblevo UTC (Mykolaiv region) and wine districts and, above all, Belgorod Dnestrovsk (Odesa region), where the company "Shabo" operates, and the Tairovo UTC of the same region.

Close to this, as well as to the agritourism brand projects, is an ethnic tourism brand projects involving the Vylkovo, Tuzl and Lyman UTC (Odesa region), much of the population of which consisting of Bulgarians, who position themselves as ethnic groups characterized by specific cuisine and gastronomy.

Sport tourism brand projects need to be developed across a large number of communities located in river basins. Particularly noteworthy in this respect are the Kamianomostivsk UTC of

the Pervomaisk district, the Blahodatnensk UTC of the Arbuzynsk district, and some of the UTC of the Voznesensk and Domanivsk districts of the Mykolaiv region, located in the vicinity of the picturesque and stormy water river of the Southern Bug near the village of Mygia of the Pervomaisk district.

Historical and cultural tourism brand project should be formed around famous historical monuments and events (Bilhorod Dnistrovska fortress, Vylkovo "Venice" – Odesa region); historical chateau "Winery the prince P.M. Trubetskoy" (Kherson region) and of well known historical figures that are in each of the regions.

Of course, these brand projects include those that have their own background and those that need more attention, considerable effort and funds to promote certain places as branding objects. In any case, we are talking about newly created communities and their brands as communicative psychological phenomena that should reflect in the public consciousness the real state of these communities, and most importantly, project their future.

One of the examples of creating a territorial brand is the brand of wine, cultural and recreational tourism of Shabska UTC, which was formed by expanding the corporate brand of LLC "Industrial and Commercial Company SHABO", with the inclusion in him of the "Shabo Wine Culture Center", Wine Museum, Museum Complex "Belgorod Dniester Fortress", recreational resources of the Black Sea coast and historical figures – of the founder of the village of Shabo Louis Vincent Tardan and the great poet Alexander Pushkin, who once visited this area.

Another origin has the territorial brand "Frumushika Nova", which was formed around the eponymous agro-ecological recreational cluster, which include LLC "Borodino A" (the main enterprise of the created Borodino UTC), the Center of Ethnographic, Rural Green Tourism and Recreation "Frumushika Nova", farms of the villages of Starosel'e and Veselaya Dolina and Odessa National Academy of Food Technologies.This cluster became one of the founders of the Public Union "Road of Wine and Taste of Ukrainian Bessarabia", which united gastronomic and cultural-ethnographic tourism in the south of the Odesa region, where a large part of the national minorities of Ukraine live.

The UTC branding of the Southern megaregion is an effective marketing tool and management function to shape the image of these social and spatial formations among internal and external consumers as attractive and competitive.

5. Conclusions and discussion

The historical context of the study, which is related to the process of decentralization of power and governance in the format of model UTC It testifies to the ambiguity of her perception by the domestic scientific community.

This is primarily due to the inconsistency of the very process of transferring authority from the center to places, from public authorities to self-governing institutions. Indeed, as a result of the symbiosis of rural, settlement and urban communities in the process of forming an UTC, the latter in reality assume the functions of a public authorities and local self-government bodies at the district level. This tendency has consequences for the institute of self-government. Here, it is difficult to disagree with the opinion expressed by Batanov (2014), which emphasizes, "… that the model of decentralization and deconcentration of public power in Ukraine, which is being proposed today, is characterized by the actual implantation of local self-government to the fabric of public administration...".

However, in the scientific environment, there is also the opposite point of view on this problem, whose representatives express concern precisely by the accumulation of a considerable amount of managerial powers and material resources by the communities, which is accompanied by administrative threats to state unity, related to the transformation of these communities into enclaves in terms of strengthening their financial capacity and weakening control for the decisions they make (Decentralization of power…, 2019). These statements could have been left without comment, if not for them belonging to the analytical report of the National Institute for Strategic Studies, which expresses the interests of the state

institutions. This institution is quite sensitive to the changing situation around current reforms in Ukraine. For political analysts, from the very beginning of decentralization, its pragmatic goals were understood, namely, the prevention of federalization and the shift of responsibility for centrifugal processes to local government. When after five years, such a threat ceased to be real, arose the issue to restart reform due to the transition to communities of the significant amount of authority and resources. The answer to this challenge was the creation in 2019 of the Ministry of Development of Communities and Territories of Ukraine.

In our opinion, a real threat to the functioning of not only the UTC, but also of all public authority in Ukraine is land reform, initiated by modern Ukrainian reformers. Her implementation in the proposed format may deprive communities of a major source of funding and economic power per se.

The process of creating an UTC has fostered a new kind of branding that emphasizes not the territorial but the social component of these new formations, linked to the local identity of communities. It is associated with the natural, geographical, historical and cultural heritage of UTC.

An analysis of the social and demographic characteristics of the UTC of the Southern megaregion shows the rural orientation of these communities and the lack of large cities as their centers. These communities are not a brand by their original meaning. However, this does not justify the position of those researchers who claim: "if nature or history do not care about the uniqueness and attractiveness of the territory, then its inhabitants must find or create them..." (Branding of cities …, 2011).

The research has shown that creating an attractive image of an UTC in the public consciousness as a living space, place for business and tourist destination is possible only if the use of real objects of cultural tourism with their unique properties and traits as a branding object. The success of branding of cultural tourism facilities depends to a large extent on the effective use of marketing technologies and brand management tools.

In this sense, as Gutsalov (2018) notes, it is about branding cultural phenomena, the purpose of which is to identify the maximum wealth of meanings, ideas, values, inspired energy that make up the content of a particular phenomenon of cultural heritage. However, it is difficult to agree with this author's statement that cultural branding is a non-marketing procedure for branding. First, branding is a marketing tool, and second, branding is about creating a brand of a particular object.

Another thing is that there is an objective issue along the way that prevents from creating a quality brand product. Of the more than 130,000 cultural heritage monuments which are publicly registered in Ukraine, almost 70% are in an unsatisfactory state, and one in ten sites is in a state of emergency (Kuzmuk, 2007). Another problem is the meager number of employees of cultural institutions of UTC. According to a sociological survey conducted in March 2019, among the inhabitants of 900 settlements with a total population of over 847,000 people, only 0.34% or 2892 people were employed in the cultural field.

The novelty of our research is not only to substantiate the conceptual bases of branding of cultural tourism objects of the UTC as a newly created social and spatial formations, but also in the extension of branding process due to the stage of the introduction of the brand into social practice. This is precisely the brand's socially significant mission, which lies in the field of ensuring a positive UTC reputation. This mission requires the definition and consolidation of the brand concept as an intangible asset at the legislative level. At present, in the Ukrainian legislation, among the objects and property rights of intangible assets, the brand is not even mentioned, which means that it is not formally an intangible asset. However, the resolution of the Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine "On Approval of the Rules of Application of the Law of Ukraine "On Corporate Income Taxation" mentions related to the concepts: logo, trade mark, reputation, image, etc.

The future of UTC of the Southern megaregion will depend, among other things, on the effectiveness of use of the branding of cultural tourism objects. Against this background, let us emphasize the prospects for further scientific exploration of the following issues in such

areas as analysis: of strategic effectiveness (formalized goals that the community administration wants to achieve); of efficiency communication (dynamics of brand awareness, attitude towards target consumers, knowledge of competitive advantages of the researched local space); of current economic efficiency (branding costs, project revenues); of dynamics of symbolic brand equity (comparing that capital with that of other communities); of regulatory performance metrics (determined and adjusted based on benchmarking studies of branding effectiveness of similar communities).

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