TOURIST ATTRACTION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE IN THE OLTENIA’S SUBCARPATHIANS AND ITS TOURISTIC EXPLOITATION. EFFICIENCY STRATEGIES FOR LOCAL TOURISM

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Abstract: This paper aims to find out if there is an accordance or contrary if there is a gap between touristic value of Oltenia’s Subcarpathians cultural heritage elements and their touristic exploitation. For this purpose they were calculated some touristic flow indicators according to statistical data and they were correlated with the touristic value of each locality. Because the results often shows a discrepancy between touristic value of cultural heritage and its touristic exploitation, this paper would like to give some specific strategies for developing more efficient the tourism based on cultural heritage for a sustainable development of this area.

Rezumat: Această lucrare își propune să identifice dacă există o concordanță sau, din contră, o discrepanță între valoarea turistică a elementelor aparținând patrimoniului cultural al Subcarpaților Olteniei și nivelul exploatarii din punct de vedere turistic. În acest scop au fost calculați anumiti indicatori ai circulației turistice, pe baza datelor statistice, care au fost apoi corelați cu valoarea turistică a localităților. Întrucât rezultatele au arătat adesea o discrepanță între valoarea turistică a patrimoniului cultural și nivelul exploatarii turistice, prin această lucrare se dorește și propunerea unor strategii de dezvoltare eficientă a turismului bazat pe patrimoniu cultural, cu scopul dezvoltării durabile a zonei.

Keywords: cultural attraction, tourist value, tourist flow, local development

Cuvinte cheie: atracție culturală, valoare turistică, circulație turistică, dezvoltare locală

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism indentity of each territory is represented, first by the elements of natural and social environment, which can become tourist attractions and second, by their touristic exploitation. Ideally, there is a perfect line, or almost perfect one between touristic value of each attraction or each area and its exploitation, considering tourism activities. In practice,
this cannot happen always, so many tourist attractions are not enough exploited, while others are over-exploited, which means that it is necessary to find the best solution to valorize them and develop sustainable the area.

In Oltenia’s Subcarpathians there are many tourist attractions, both natural and anthropic, which can be prerequisites for economic development generally, and touristic development particularly, if they are optimal exploited. In this study we will focus on cultural heritage, due to its large territorial spread and also its variety. We can distinguish in Oltenia’s Subcarpathians five categories of attraction belonging to cultural heritage: archeological sites (Women Cave Archeological Site, Paleolithic settlement from Broșteni etc), civic architectural objectives (Urban ensemble from Horezu, Urban ensemble from Târgu Cărbunești, Tudor Vladimirescu High School Building from Târgu Jiu, Iunian Grigore’s House from Târgu Jiu etc), statues and commemoratives monuments (Constantin Brâncuși’s Sculptural Ensemble from Târgu Jiu, Padeș Proclamation Monument, Tudor Vladimirescu’ s Statue from Târgu Jiu etc), museums and memorial houses (Constantin Brâncuși’s Memorial House, Ecaterina Teodoroiu’s Memorial House, Traditional Architecture Museum from Curțișoara, Ethnographic Museums from Leleşti and Arcani etc) and monasteries and churches (Tismana Monastery, Polovragi Monastery, Horezu Monastery, St. Paraschiva wooden Church from Marița Village etc).

Most of these have a great tourist value, but their value is irrelevant for tourism if we do not count their touristic exploitation, for can lay down the board lines of development.

2. METHODOLOGY

Our final purpose was to find some efficiency strategies for develop the local tourism, using cultural heritage attractions. For this end, we divided our study into two parts: first we tied tourist value of localities with touristic flow, second we gave solutions for tourism development in the area. In the first part we evaluated the touristic attractiveness of all localities in Oltenia’s Subcarpathians area using valuation criteria proposed by Ielenicz M. and Comănescu L. (2006), except that, for the final result, we considered the average of cultural heritage values instead summarize them. In this case we used the formula:

$$T_a = T_{va} + I.n + L.acc + I.d + I.f$$

Touristic value average ($T_{va}$) was calculated taking account of each tourist attraction from each locality; the national and international interest objective’s number index ($I.n$) range between 5 and 0 points (5 points for more than 15 national and international interest objectives, 3 points for 10 to 15 national and international interest objectives, 2 points for 5 to 10 objectives, 1 point for less than 5 objectives and 0 for no national and international objectives); accessibility index ($L.acc$) considered the highest
category road for access (5 points for international roads, 3 points for national roads, 2 points for county roads 1 point for local roads); distance to the great cities index \((I.d)\) with more than 100,000 inhabitants (5 points - less than 10 km to the great city, 3 points for 10 to 50 km, 2 points for 50-100 km and 1 point for more than 100 km to great urban areas); tourism facilities quality index \((I.f)\): 5 points for very good services, 3 points for good services, 2 points for medium quality services, 1 point for poor quality and 0 points for the absence of tourism facilities)

Also, we made a point of weight principal touristic flow indices for each locality, based on statistical data (tourism arrivals, tourism overnights and tourism flow density) with touristic value of each locality. The results helped us to range the second part of our study – find some strategies for tourism development in the area of interest.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The great number of tourist attractions from Oltenia’s Subcarpathians, their diversity and their spatial distribution induced us to group them and considering the administrative units for analyses. In Oltenia’s Subcarpathians we identified 51 administrative units which, after valuation were parted into three categories, with low, medium and high attractiveness (fig. 1). For our appreciation we take account of valuation criteria above-mentioned and their sub-criteria. The greatest values were obtained by those

![Fig. 1: Tourism attractiveness of Oltenia’s Subcarpathians localities](Source: Data calculated by author)
localities with a great number of tourist attractions belonging to cultural heritage with a
high touristic value and in the same time which have a good infrastructure (for access, for
touristic facilities). So, the greatest scores, more than 20 points, were obtained by Târgu Jiu,
Horezu, Novaci, Tismana, Polovragi, Măldărești with important national and international
attractions, but also by Târgu Cărbunești, Peștișani, Bumbești Jiu, Baia de Fier, Vaideeni,
Costești, Frâncești, Oteșani și Berbești specially with national interest objectives. At
antipole (less than 10 points) are situated few localities with no tourist attractions or only
few attractions with a small touristic value: Godinești, Câlnic, Dănești, Țicleni, Bălteni,
Bumbești-Pițic, Stroiești. For the most part of localities we obtained a medium value for
touristic attractiveness (10 to 20 points).

They take shapes, in this way, three areas with a high touristic value in Oltenia’s
Subcarpathians: Tismana – Peștișani, Târgu Jiu – Bumbești-Jiu and Novaci – Costești,
which can be introduced in tourist activities, together or separately.

Optimal touristic exploitation in an area, either we talk about natural or anthropic
resources, cannot be performed if it is not sustained by hard infrastructure for
accommodation, food and beverage, entertainment. In Oltenia’s Subcarpathians touristic
infrastructure is not so good all over the surface; so many localities have no
accommodation unit, while some of them have 1 to 15 units. Most of them are in Târgu Jiu,
Novaci, Baia de Fier and Horezu. However, generally, we see a relative increase of units’
number between 1990 and 2010 (fig. 2 a) but a general decrease of beds’ number for the
same period (fig. 2 b); the mainspring for this situation is the closure of big units and the
opening of some units with a little number of beds.

Territorial dissipation of accommodation units in Oltenia’s Subcarpathians has a
great influence in tourism traffic and also in local development, because accommodation
units and food and beverage units are the most important incoming sources from tourism
activities, as long as there is no sight-seeing fee for the most of tourist attractions.
Accommodation units act on touristic flow, at least statistically speaking tourists prefer visit those region/localities where they can relax, eat and most important sleep. Of course, they can’t skirt those localities which have no accommodations, but there, they are not statistically booked. For Oltenia’s Subcarpathians area, only for few localities we have check-in data. Analyzing the situation of tourism arrivals for two years, 2005 and 2010 (fig. 3), we find out three compact areas for touristic flow convergence: Târgu Jiu – Bumbești-Jiu, Novaci – Polovragi and Padeș - Peștișani, between them, Târgu Jiu – Bumbești-Jiu and the last year, Novaci – Polovragi are more requested (more than 1000 arrivals/year/unit). For the last year, Tismana and Baia de Fier consolidated their position on Tourism arrivals map, and also new localities are statistically slowly included in touristic circulation (Runcu, Crasna and Arcani).

**Fig. 3: Tourism arrivals in 2005 and 2010 in Oltenia's Subcarpathians**

*Data source: Gorj and Vâlcea County Statistical Direction*
In the same train of ideas, the overnights map (fig. 4) shows the same three areas for tourism circulation, but the intensity of this activity is different in 2005 and 2010, and even in the same area, especially in 2010. For example in Târgu Jiu – Bumbești-Jiu we observe about 68000 overnights in Târgu Jiu but only 2200 overnights in Bumbești-Jiu in 2010. Services quality, entertainment variety, great number of tourist attractions but also county hierarchy explains this situation. For Sâcelu, the situation is a little different: the great number of overnights is explained by its resort locality status. Secondly, the general overnights’ increase between 2005 and 2010 in some localities is explained by arrivals increasing, due to the accommodation units opening in these localities, during recent years.

Fig. 4: Tourism overnights in 2005 and 2010 in Oltenia’s Subcarpathians
Data source: Gorj and Vâlcea County Statistical Direction
The most important index for touristic circulation in Oltenia’s Subcarpathians is tourist flow density (fig. 5), which was calculated reporting the tourists’ number to the area. In this situation we obtained four categories of localities, considering touristic flow density: high touristic flow density localities (Târgu Jiu, Săcelu and Horezu), thanks to their great tourists’ number concentrated on small areas (especially in Târgu Jiu and Săcelu); medium touristic flow density localities (Novaci, Baia de Fier, Polovragi and Arcani) – values between 20 and 60 tourists/squares kilometers were obtained due to the great number of tourism arrivals but a large surface; low touristic flow density localities (Padeș, Tismana, Peștișani, Runcu, Bumbești-Jiu, Crasna, Slătioara, Berbești, Câlnic) – either because they have a great or medium number of tourist arrivals but also a great area (Tismana, Runcu, Bumbești-Jiu, Padeș, Peștișani), or they have a little number of tourist arrivals (Câlnic, Crasna, Berbești, Slătioara). Finally, we have a great category of localities for which the statistics have no data, so we cannot calculate the tourist flow density, even if, practically, every administrative unit can have a certain number of tourists.

However, considering tourism arrivals, tourism overnights and tourism flow density, they take shapes three almost compact area for tourism flow: Padeș – Runcu, Târgu Jiu – Bumbești-Jiu and Crasna – Horezu.

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**Fig. 5: Tourist flow density in Oltenia’s Subcarpathians, 2010**

*Data source: Gorj and Vâlcea County Statistical Direction*

In Oltenia’s Subcarpathians area there are, as we previously proved, many cultural heritage objectives, which can become tourist attraction. Moreover, their spatial dispersion, their values, the accessibility, the services quality etc conduced to individualization of
different categories of localities, considering their touristic value. But not every time, tourist attractions are optimal exploited. Figure 6 indicate two different situations: accordance between tourist attractiveness and tourist flow, or discrepancy between tourist attraction and tourist flow. For first case we observed two particular situations; low attraction – low tourist flow (or no tourist flow) in Câlnic, Godinești, Bâlteni, Țicleni, Dănești, Bumbești-Pițic, Stroești and high attraction – high tourist flow in Târgu Jiu, Horezu, Polovragi, Baia de Fier and Novaci.

On the other hand, analyzing the 6th figure, we see a gap between the two parameters either we speak about over-exploited or sub-exploited cultural heritage localities. For the first situation, we can see Șâcelu, where tourist flow density is too high, comparing with cultural heritage value. However, if we take account of Șâcelu resort locality status, we can explain the high number of tourists. Great interest presents the second situation, where tourist potential of cultural heritage is not enough exploited. There are some localities where tourist flow is too low (Padeș, Tismana, Peștișani, Runcu, Bumbești-Jiu, Crasna, Slătioara, Berbești), or there is no tourist flow, according statistical data (Frâncești, Măldărești, Costești, Mateești, Alunu, Lelești etc.). These are the localities where we can do something for improve tourism activities and economical development. About this, after

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**Fig. 6: Relation between tourism attractiveness and tourist exploitation**

*Source: author data and Gârj and Vâlcea County Statistical Direction*
analyzing the countries with developed tourism, N. Neacșu (1999) considers that the economic agents should be encouraged and stimulated for development of tourism structures and facilities.

First of all, it is necessary to improve tourism infrastructure, especially accommodation, either by building new accommodation units or modernizing the existing one. New accommodation units in Frâncești, Măldărești, Crasna, Bumbești-Jiu, Padeș, Tismana and Vaideeni could increase tourist flow in these localities and consequently, could generate local economic increase.

Also, thematic touristic routes in Oltenia’s Subcarpathians proposal can be another efficiency method for local development and tourists’ number growth. Some examples can be monasteries and churches tour, architectural objectives (especially in Târgu Jiu) or an historical route (archaeological sites). Of course, Oltenia’s Subcarpathians cultural heritage objectives can be introduced national and international touristic circuits.

An important reason for the discrepancies between tourist attractiveness and tourist flow in Oltenia’s Subcarpathians is the lack of promotion. Almost each locality has cultural heritage attractions, many with great value, but few people know them. So it is necessary to promote the area intensively, especially wooden churches, traditional houses (cula), but also traditional handicrafts (pottery – in Horezu, carpets – in Tismana). For promotion they can be used printed materials (brochures, flyers, magazine), but also internet sites.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Oltenia’s Subcarpathians is a complex touristic zone, with great and varied cultural heritage objectives, which can become tourist attractions in optimal exploitation conditions. A real tourist development requires both tourist attractions and tourist facilities and in Oltenia’s Subcarpathians most administrative units have medium and high tourist attractiveness, considering cultural heritage so we identified there three areas with a high touristic value in Oltenia’s Subcarpathians (Tismana – Peștișani, Târgu Jiu – Bumbești-Jiu and Novaci – Costești). Many objectives have national and international interest like Tismana, Polovragi and Horezu Monasteries, Constantin Brâncuși’s Sculptural Ensemble from Târgu Jiu, Traditional Architecture Museum from Curtișoara, Ecaterina Teodoroiu’s Memorial House, St. Paraschiva wooden Church from Marița Village, Women Cave Archeological Site, Padeș Proclamation Monument etc, but not all of them are appreciated how they worth, partially because of lack of tourist facilities, which determines in some cases a low touristic flow in area. In Oltenia’s Subcarpathians, we identified two situations, considering the relation between cultural heritage attractiveness and tourist exploitation: accordance (Târgu Jiu, Horezu, Polovragi, Baia de Fier, Novaci) or contrary a gap between them (Padeș, Tismana, Peștișani, Runcu, Bumbești-Jiu, Crasna, Slătioara, Berbești, Frâncești, Măldărești, Costești, Mateești, Alunu, Lelești).
For sustainable development and for correlate the tourist exploitation with tourist value it is necessary to establish some improvement measures like new accommodations units, thematic touristic routes proposal and good promotion, which can make from Oltenia’s Subcarpathians a competitive tourist area.

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