

VALUE ESTIMATION OF TOURISM POTENTIAL AND MATERIAL BASE IN LĂPUȘULUI LAND IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF REGIONAL TOURIST ARRANGEMENTS¹

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Abstract. *Value Estimation of Tourism Potential and Material Base in Lăpușului Land in the Perspective of Regional Tourist Arrangements.* The analysis of the rural touristic phenomenon from Lăpușului Land aimed at the detailed inventorying, using a system of quantifiable indicators - of all the existing components with a touristic impact or involving at the level of every locality, through taking into account of those three great groups of factors belonging to the natural and anthropic environment, as well as to the material basis (considered as participants with equal weights in the tourism's development), differentiated in a variable number of categories and attractive elements. Every major group was granted a partial score - depending on their participate weight or touristic importance - comprised between 0 (in the case of respective element or phenomenon's absence) and a partial maximum score (50 points). The accumulation of the partial scores, obtained for every locality partially, permitted the achievement of a precise "radiography" of the existent situation. It was done through the identifying of the main differentiations and, on their basis, the realization of some comparative evaluations and the establishment of the priorities in the touristic development of diverse touristic objectives, settlements and areas. On the basis of the partial scores, the factorial territorial dominants of the touristic offer were highlighted. In their terms, it was accomplished, finally, the actualization of a projection with a real and objective base regarding the direction of development, the types and the forms of tourism, practiced and practicable as a result of some actions of proper general and touristic arrangement.

Key words: attractive resource, tourism prospecting, quantitative estimation, value indicators.

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1. GENERAL GEOGRAPHICAL – TOURISM CHARACTERISTICS

The geographical position of Lăpușului Land, at the contact area between three Romanian “lands” those of Maramureș, Năsăud and Chioar, whose influences are mainly expressed in traditional clothes and customs, but also in the traditional architecture, collective mentalities and people's behaviour as well as its socio-economic situation, influenced by three important endo-dynamic areas of the Northern Transylvanian space,

¹ This article was accomplished by the PN II – IDEI 505 project's contribution, financed by CNCIS

namely Baia Mare, Dej-Gherla and Bistriţa, partially circumscribed to the neighbouring “lands”, marked in a decisive way both the Lăpuş population and its system of values, without diminishing its specific social, cultural and economic particularities, well individualized over a well personalized evolution of several centuries.

Both the specificity of the spatial localisation of Lăpuşului Land and its particular natural systematisation that allow, on the one hand, to individualize and functionally and complementarily combine several morphological distinctive levels, and, on the other hand, to actively insert and adapt the human element to this physical-geographical configuration contributed to the formation of the specific “brand image” of Lăpuşului Land. This gradual edification of a great diversity of attractive resources, in which the ethno-folkloric element is a basic component of the tourism patrimony of the Lăpuş space, individualizing it in comparison with “the neighbouring lands”, stands as the main cause and effect of the above mentioned “brand image”.

All these result in shaping out an opposable and complementary tourism offer, by exhibiting a variation of natural and anthropic resources in a structural, physiognomic and functional manner, as well as in creating some convergent tourism fluxes capable of managing this offer at high levels of social and economic efficiency.

What makes Lăpuşului Land unique is the remarkable geographical diversity mainly certified by a complex natural space, in which lithology and the geological evolution imposed three main relief levels, mountain, piedmont and periphery hills, and the depression area itself, recognized not only in the hypsometric and morphologic contrast this way induced, but also in the significant number of its elements. These are reflected in the number and diversity of orographical forms, landscape, climatic and bioclimatic particularities and their hydrographical and hydro-mineral resources, and last, but not least in the bio-geographical ones.

As a result, in a tourism perspective, Lăpuşului Land disposes of sufficient reasons for its integration into the regional and national tourism circuits, and in the European international tourism as well, starting from absorbing tourism fluxes from the neighbouring countries, Hungary and Ukraine or even the West-European ones, especially through means of rural tourism of ethno-cultural facture.

If within the depression area of Lăpuşului Land the natural tourism resources are less representative despite the high morphologic and implicitly landscape complexity, though having an attractiveness potential significantly higher than the other depressions, with similar functionalities, extensions and shapes, the periphery mountainous-hilly complex reveals superior attractiveness, through its hypsometric and morphologic contrasts displayed in the depression area, as well as its different altitude distribution within the mountain area, its structural and petrographical complexity together with the differentiated morphogenetic action of the external modelling agents.

If we add to all these, the possibility of a panoramic view of the extremely picturesque landscape offered by practically all the peaks of the mountain units, especially mentioning those of Arcer, Țibleş, Bran and Hudin of Țibleş Mountains, Văratec and Secu of Lăpuş Mountains, as well as Şatra peak or even certain places from the Breaza Hill over the depression area laying at their foot, with its succession of extremely “fragmented” morphologic elements concentrated here that, at an individual level or at the level of landscape association show multiple attractions such as: the succession of volcanic necks, fragmented by the Lăpuş river tributaries, that created extremely picturesque valleys, the presence of a spectacular, savage and hardly accessing pass situated in the Western extremity of the region, the presence of both endocarstic and exocarstic relief, and others/etc., capable of stimulating recreational tourism as well as cultural and scientific tourism, we have a complete image of the complexity of a region holding a valuable natural potential of attractiveness.

As for its variety and value, *the anthropic tourism potential of Lăpușului Land* directly correlates to the evolution of human civilization and cultural interferences of the ethnic mosaic specific to the Transylvanian space, though in a smaller measure, if we compare it to other areas of the intra-Carpathian territory. Therefore, we can observe several categories of attractive objectives, each of them with its different ratio among the diverse localities or tourism areas identified within the region, such as: archaeological vestiges, religious objectives (wood churches, cathedrals, and monasteries), historical monuments, and accumulation lakes, cultural objectives (museums, collections, libraries, as well as culture and education institutions). Beside these, a series of objectives, activities and, not to forget, ethnographic manifestations, that altogether constitute an exceptional attractive patrimony, a product of original Romanian rural civilization and culture, as well as first rank “raw material” for rural tourism, which is one of the tourism practices in full process of development at a national level.

The accommodation base has registered significant oscillations during the last years, reflecting a chronic lack of endowments at a regional level, as well as a series of differences both from point of view of the number of available beds and their distribution in accommodation units and their territorial repartition. By summing up the already existent accommodation places and those offered by the classical accommodation structures, it will result a total accommodation capacity of 294 beds, within Lăpușului Land. Their territorial distribution appears in accordance with their typology revealing a number of 104 beds in family boarding houses, representing 35,4 % of the total regional number, 35 beds in lodges, with a percentage of 11,9 %, 36 beds in motels, respectively 12,2 %, 50 beds in school camps, respectively 17 % and 69 beds in hunting lodges, respectively 23,5 %.

2. METHODOLOGY

A detailed indexing, by using a system of quantifiers, of all the elements having a certain impact on tourism that exist or are involved in tourism activities within each of the localities in the studied territory, imposes the necessity of taking into consideration the three main factors: natural, anthropic and material base. It is considered that these are equally involved in the development of tourism. They are differentiated by a various number of categories and attractive elements, which were given, according to their participation ratio and importance, a partial score ranging from 0, in case of total absence of the alleged element or phenomenon, to 50, the maximum partial score.

By cumulating the obtained partial scores for each of the localities it becomes easier to create a precise “radiography” of the exact present situation by underlying the main differentiations, establishing a real value hierarchy based on a thorough analysis of the real situation in the field. At the same time, when applying a unitary methodology to all the localities within Lăpușului Land we are given the opportunity to notice some distinct value categories, based on which we could make some comparative evaluations that would allow the formulating of recommendations for the future regional development and the priorities for tourism development and the integration of various objectives into functional tourism circuits, therefore emphasizing on certain settlements and areas. Consequently, partial scores can lead to the identification of some territorial factorial dominants of the tourism offer, according to which, eventually, it will be possible to accomplish a projection based on a real and objective support regarding the direction of development, the types and forms of tourism active now or practicable in the near future as a result of actions for general and adequate tourism arrangements (see also N. Ciangă, Șt. Dezsi, Gabriela Rotar, 2002, J. Benedek, 2000).

3. VALUE ESTIMATION OF TOURISM POTENTIAL

3.1. The analysis of *the natural tourism potential* and its components started from a maximum partial score of 50, the allocation of partial scores to each of the emphasized elements being grounded on the importance and its actual or potential level of involvement in the promotion of the tourism phenomenon. Besides these, we have chosen to consider other criteria specific to tourism, as well, such as: the number of objectives having the same features, their grouping within the territory expressed by levels of concentration or dispersion, levels of accessibility and the attractive impact derived from its shape, magnificence, beauty of landscape, taken alone or seen in association with other natural elements, the novelty of some objectives, the excitement that a certain type of attractions have over actual or potential tourists, the degree of satisfaction, under the conditions of adequate arrangements, and tourism demand. Such an attempt can neither presume nor assess the complete exemption of subjectivism that undoubtedly accompanies an initiative regarding the quantitative indexing of qualitative features and expressions. Especially since this action is made by a single person and not by an interdisciplinary team of specialists, this being the only reasonable possible way to reduce the probable, possible and especially inevitable inadvertencies caused by such a research (see P. Cocean, Şt. Dezsi, 2001).

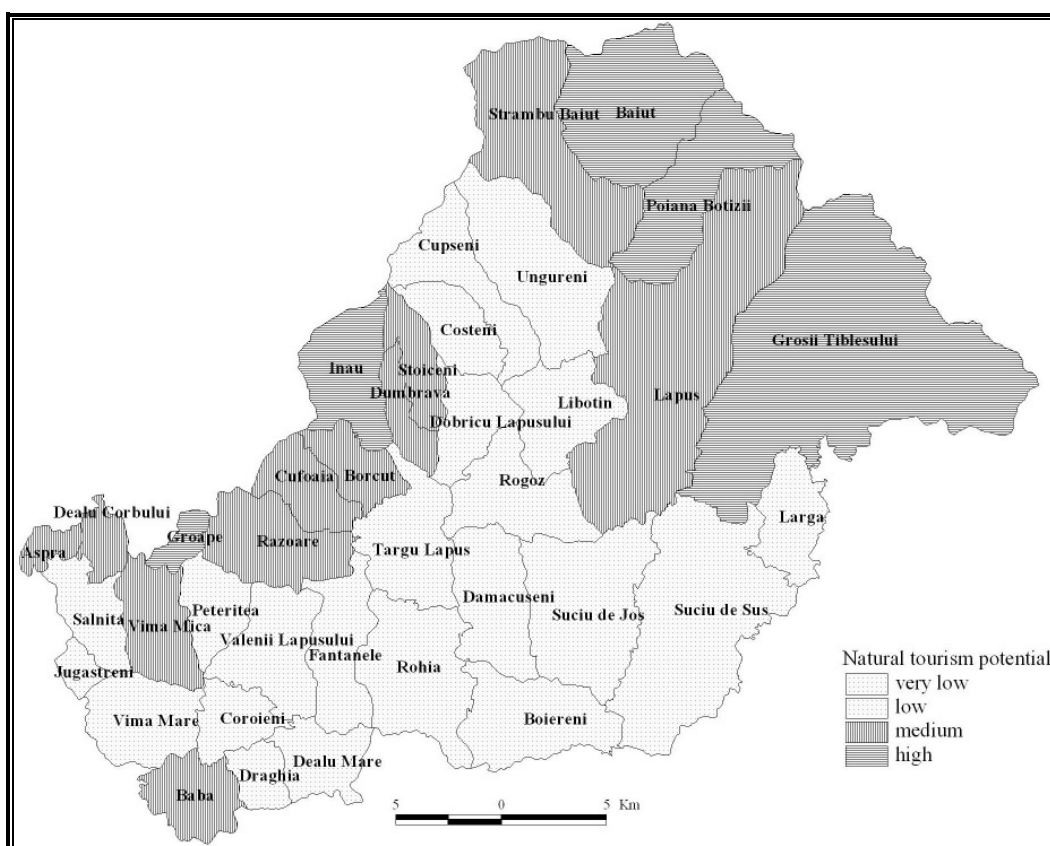


Figure 1. Categories of the natural tourism potential

Our analytical research tried to focus in this case the analysis on the entire range of elements of the natural tourism patrimony: morphology, climate, hydro-mineral, lakes and hydrographical network, and biogeographical tourism.

Therefore, considering its particular importance in the shaping of Lăpușului Land attractive heritage dowry, both under the aspect of altitude contrasts and its induced landscape differentiation as well as its involvement into the flooring and altitude differentiating of all the other physical and geographical elements, *the morphological factor of tourism* (the relief) was accredited with the most important score, which on its turn is able to fit a scale between 0 and 26 points, meaning that it represents over a half of the partial score given to the natural resource. On their turn, the main elements of lithology and morphology were differently estimated, according to the criteria mentioned before, as it follows: the relief crusted on volcanic rocks receives between 0 and 6 points; the relief on limestone and conglomerates with a higher diversity of forms, and here karsts are worth mentioning between 0 and 6 points; the relief on crystalline rocks reaches 4 points; other morphologic categories with a lower landscape impact (piedmonts, saddles) score only from 0 to 2 points. The highest number of points, between 0 and 8, was allocated to the most spectacular category of relief within the Lăpuș area, the gorges and the defiles, thus considered to be a distinct category.

By including the main meteorological elements in the individualization of a micro- or topo-climate with impact on the human body and by inducing either a certain thermo comfort or bioclimatic stress, or giving the possibility to practice climate therapy, and not to forget the level of favourability for practicing winter sports, *the tourism-climate factor* was allocated a score oscillating between 0 and 6 points.

A slightly higher score was registered by *the hydrologic element*, between 0 and 10 points, and the reason for it was the variety of elements involved or possible to be involved in stimulating the tourism phenomenon. The score was differentiated according to categories as well, the mineral waters and the lakes receiving values between 0 and 4 points, while the hydrographic network was allotted only 0 to 2 points.

Through its multiple and complex roles, among which the aesthetic and landscape variety and the possibilities created for practicing other special types of recreational tourism – hunting and fishing practices- the numbers allocated to *the biogeographical element* vary between 0 and 8 points, again differentiated: vegetation, especially forests, registered 0 to 2 points, hunting – 2 points and fishing – 1 point, to which we may add protected areas, natural monuments or natural reservations, no matter the type, with values between 0 and 3 points.

By applying these scores to all the localities of Lăpușului Land we obtained a ***differentiated hierarchy on four categories of value***, hence:

The first category consists of six localities with *high natural tourism potential*, characterized by value and complexity, with a significant presence of the morphologic element whose variety of shapes displays superior attractions, at least in comparison with the localities in the other three categories of value - see below, to which we can add the other natural elements even if on different levels of involvement. The presence of those six localities within this category is due to the minimum of 25 points accumulated, their order of value being: Poiana Botizii 32 points, Inău 29 points, Groape, Băiuț and Groșii Țibleșului each with 26 points and Lăpuș 25 points. The territorial distribution of the localities in this category reflects their concentration in an almost compact area in the North-Eastern landscape compartment of Lăpușului Land, respectively the Western - North-Western one, at the contact area or even “in the centre” of the volcanic or crystalline mountain area, highly diverse morphology and lithology (of great relevance being the Lăpușului defile because it sustains the prime position of Groape village and Inăului Gorges that sustains its homonym village) and hydrography (we can include here the hydro-mineral resources, especially in the case of Poiana Botizii and Băiuț villages), covered with forests, a well represented hunting and fishing stock, and last but not least a tonic bio-climate that favourably stimulates climate therapy.

The first rank position of Poiana Botizii locality in this hierarchy derives from a cumulative complex and valuable tourism potential, favourable for practicing tourism activities, potential that resulted from the combination of a volcanic and limestone relief, i.e. Peştera cu Oase Cave, a mountain climate favourable to hiking during summer and practicing winter sports during winter, the presence of mineral springs with a very well represented and complex bio-geographical element (included in the category of nemoral, boreal-nemoral, and boreal floor of vegetations), completed by fauna elements of hunting interest.

The category of settlements with a *medium natural tourism potential* includes localities that cumulated a score ranging from 15 to 24, 9 points. This value group comprises 11 localities, mainly located in the compartments from the periphery of the depression area and at its contact with the mountain area, are characterized by a more modest and in some cases even singular display of morphologic and hydrologic elements like mineral waters or forest lands, at least as compared to the first category, having a certain impact in tourism. Thus, Răzoare and Borcut localities have cumulated 23 points mainly propelled due to the presence of Lăpuşului defile, and to the homonym gorges and the complex crystalline and limestone relief. The localities Strâmbu Băiut, Aspra and Dealu Corbului each with 22 points are mainly supported by the presence of specific morphologic, climate and landscape elements. Dumbrava locality summing 21 points has a similar situation with that of Borcut locality. Baba locality scores 20 points due to the attractiveness of Babei Gorges as its most representative element. Cufoaia locality, with 19 points, is enriched by its gorges sculpted in crystalline deposits, doubled by a beautiful limestone relief. Stoiceni locality totalizing 18 points holds important mineral springs in its volcanic relief. Vima Mică locality with 17 points has a “direct access” to the Lăpuşului defile, therefore benefiting from a particular landscape created by the spectacular conglomeratic abrupt of Breaza – Dealul Vimii Hill.

The category of settlements with a *reduced natural tourism potential*, includes the lowest values registered in this hierarchy (scores between 8 and 14, 9 points), given according to the morphologic and lithologic elements that have modest tourism impact, and climatic or hydrographical elements less relevant for tourism or forests covering small surfaces that dispose of a limited hunting stock. This group of value includes only six localities located in the centre of the depression, where, and as compared to the other two previously analysed categories, there is a slight presence or even non-presence of the morphologic or hydrologic elements valuable for tourism, as well as a limited surface covered with forests with a fauna stock of hunting interest. The decreasing order of the tourism value of the natural elements this way established places on top the Rohia and Suci de Sus localities, each summing up 11 points due to their more representative forest areas, the first mentioned having a forest reservation as well. They are followed by Târgu Lăpuş and Costeni localities, each with 10 points mainly earned because of the presence of the lacustrine surface at Lighet and also of the forest reservation at Dobricel, and the vicinity with Şatra Massive. Dămăcuşeni locality, “owing” its 8 points to the presence of its homonym lake, stands last in the present hierarchy.

The other evaluated settlements, a number of 16 localities forming the most significant group of values, were estimated as having the smallest scores, of under 7,9 points, thus reflecting an *insignificant natural potential of attractiveness*, characterized by the absence of any relevant natural elements with tourism impact or an isolated presence of landscape features with a minimum value, at least as compared to the previously evaluates ones. The results situate the settlements in this category in a descending succession starting from the group consisting of Larga, Suci de Jos, Boiereni, Rogoz, Vima Mare and Vălenii Lăpuşului localities, each of them accumulating 6 points, followed by the group Dobricu Lăpuşului Coroieni, Ungureni, Dealu Mare, Cupşeni, Peteritea localities, each receiving 5 points, respectively Libotin and Sălniţa with 4 points each. The last positions are filled by Drăghia and Jugăstreni localities that register only 2 points each.

3.2. The anthropic resource of tourism is complementary to the natural one, its various categories of elements generating the apparition of various specific tourism practices. The quantification of the anthropic tourism patrimony of Lăpușului Land aimed at allocating value indicators (points) to all the objectives that would fit into the following categories: monuments and archaeological sites dating from the Bronze Age (settlements, necropolis and deposits consisting of different bronze objects) and from the prime of the Iron Age (the Hallstatt period), monuments and cultural and architectural complexes (wood churches, mural cathedrals and churches, museums and museum collections, monasteries and monastery complexes, urban civil buildings), monuments of art with a memorial value (historic monuments, triptychs, crucifixes), and those connected to material and spiritual traditional culture, the most representative category of elements and components having value of attractiveness that are part of the anthropic potential of Lăpușului Land.

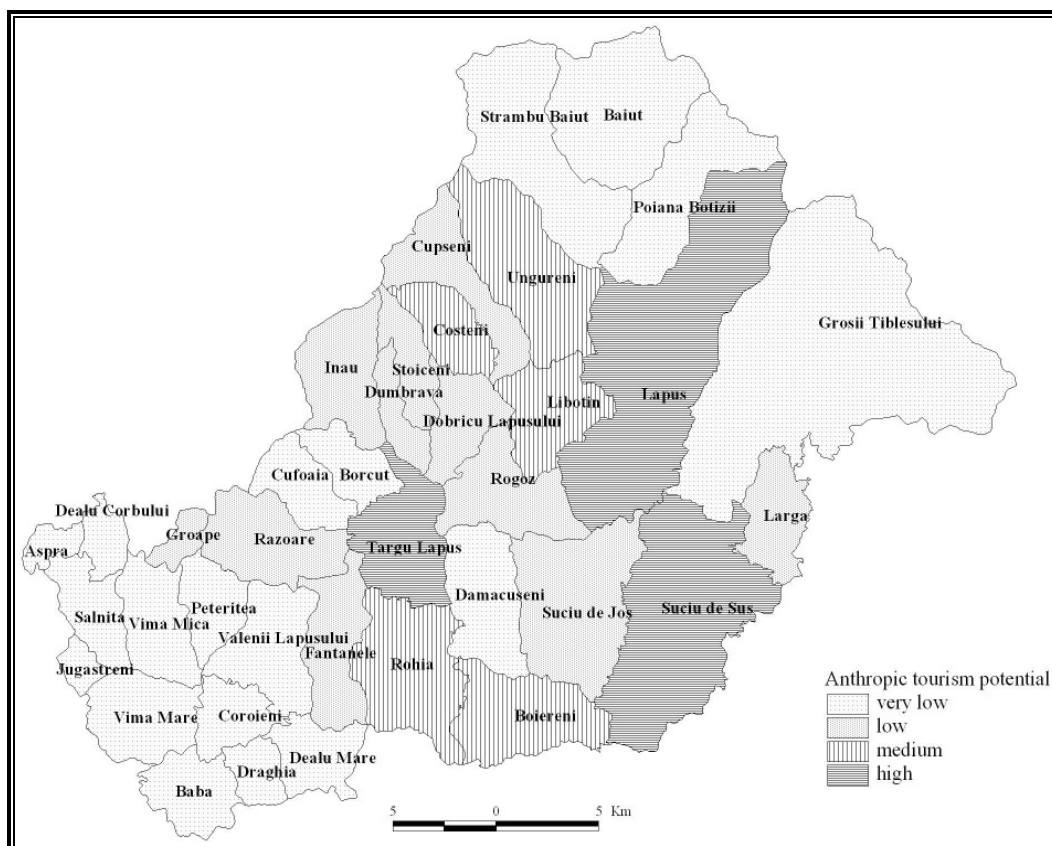


Figure 2. Categories of the anthropic tourism potential

So that this endeavor be as close to the reality as possible, and that the obtained values be representative for the pursued scope namely pointing out the attractiveness particularities of each locality under examination), we used the same methodology for evaluating the anthropic potential of tourism just like in the case of the natural one, allocating different qualitative indicators of value (points) for each of the elements mentioned above, considering the similar criteria taken into account in the case of value estimation of the natural resources attractiveness. To all these, we can add, according to

each specific case, the attractiveness attributes derived from the characteristics of age, uniqueness, originality, novelty, functionality and dimension, particular to each of the elements. Consequently, these can cumulate a high level of attractiveness capable or not of generating convergent tourism fluxes. When summing up all these, the cumulative value must not get over 50 importance points, the maximum value allocated under ideal conditions to a settlement benefiting from the most important antropoc tourism potential.

In this context, the partial scores allocated to every category, and, by detailing, to each element or component of the previous established categories, for their presence and importance in tourism, are included in a scale of 3 to 25 points.

Due to the number, the diversity and the attractiveness role they hold, the category of *monuments and architectural complexes* has received 22 points, the other five components identified within Lăpuşului Land being allocated differentiated scores: due to the particularity that wood churches impress on the Lăpuş anthropic landscape they are evaluated with a score ranging in between 0-7 points, the maximum score being awarded to the most valuable of them, „Sf. Arhangheli” from Rogoz, whose value of attractiveness and high accessibility gives it the highest chances of being integrated into the functional tourism circuits. Wood churches are followed by monasteries and monastery complexes having scores between 0 and 6 points, then by cathedrals and mural cathedrals and churches registering values between 0 and 5 points, respectively by museums and museum complexes with values from 0 and 3 points and last but not least, by the urban civil buildings that that score only 1 point in the present hierarchy.

By transferring a large part of the pieces discovered in the archaeological sites all over Lăpuşului Land, mostly to the County Museum of History of Baia Mare, and the superficial research of the existent sites, are reasons enough for a thorough inventory to be, at least for the moment, delayed, and their putting to use through cultural and scientific tourism activities to be seriously diminished. As a consequence, *monuments and archaeological sites* receive only a small budget of no more than 3 points. And this, because our scope was firstly to indicate their existence as tourism potential resources with real chances to be integrated into tourism circuits in the eventuality that the present unfavorable conditions be eliminated. The three points were distributed differently to the four analyzed categories: settlements from the Bronze Age having between 0 and 1 points, necropolis from the Bronze Age between 0 and 1 points, bronze deposits 0,5 points and deposits from the Iron Age 0,5 points.

The more reduced artistic value, as well as their amplitude, cumulated with their localization in sometimes less inspired places with a less facile accessibility for the possible fluxes of tourists, made it possible that, despite the remarkable historical resonance accumulated, the elements included in the category of *art monuments holding memorial value* benefit of a minimum cumulated budget of only 3 points, distributed as follows: historical monuments receiving between 0 and 2 points, statues and busts having 0,5 points, crucifixes 0,5 points.

Still, considering their originality, diversity and level of preserving the elements and components included in the *traditional material and spiritual culture and civilization*, which justify their major positioning in any tourism development strategy applied to Lăpuşului Land, a maximum score of 0 to 25 points has been awarded to the category corresponding to all the previously mentioned. Their allocation trailed the same model resultant from applying the already mentioned selection criteria, respectively: festivals and folklore exhibitions get 6 points, villages with a traditional display get 5 points, traditional structures register 4 points, households and facilities having a traditional architecture and functionality receive 3 points, national costumes 2 points, the processing of textile materials 1 point, pottery 1 point, wood processing 1 point, pastoral activities 1 point, and lime exploitations, 1 point.

The cumulated score obtained by each of the localities clearly reflects the territorial distribution, the concentration, as well as the dispersion of the attractive elements created by mankind along the centuries and, implicitly, their spatial repartition within Lăpușului Land.

By applying the above described quantification method through which quantitative and qualitative value indicators are allocated, we have distinguished four major categories of anthropic tourism that particularize on a descending scale each of the localities studied. Thus we have a *high potential* category for the localities that cumulated over 20 points, a *medium potential* category for the localities that registered a score between 15-19,9 points, a *reduced potential* category for the localities that recorded between 10 and 14,9 points, respectively a *low potential* category for the localities that were allocated less than 9,9 points.

The category of localities with *high anthropic tourism potential*, distinguished by the highest attractiveness and complexity value within the Lăpușului Land, is numerically reduced to only 4 settlements that managed to cumulate the necessary score, of over 20 points. Among these, Lăpuș locality holds the first place, having cumulated 29 points, thus registering the highest value among the localities of this category. These points were cumulated by summing up the partial scores registered due to the presence of archaeological sites of exceptional value dating from the last stage of the Bronze Age and the Prime of the Iron Age included in the national cultural patrimony, as well as to a few valuable wood churches and a monastery. All these place Lapus among the villages that preserve elements belonging to the traditional material and spiritual culture (traditional architecture, country structures, traditional costumes, and specific activities).

Suciu de Sus locality, with its 24 points, generally obtained by grouping the same type of attractive elements like in case of Lapus, including the archaeological vestiges from the last epoch of the Bronze Age, as parts of the national cultural patrimony, but lacking the churches that weren't preserved here, and Târgu Lăpuș locality whose 20,5 points are owed to a more evident cultural function noticed in the presence of three museums or museum complexes, the existence of some objectives from the category of art monuments with memorial value, or of some cathedrals or magnificent mural churches, to which we can add the folklore festivals organized here, hold the same important position in the hierarchy. We can also mention the Rohia locality with a score of 20,5 points, collected mainly "due to" the well known monastic church located here, as well as to the traditional structure of the village or to the traditional yet still functional activities and structures.

In the category of localities with a *medium anthropic tourism potential*, registering scores between 15 and 19,9 points, are included a compact group of settlements, including 8 localities, with relatively similar tourism values: Ungureni 16,5 points, Costeni 16,0 points, Boiereni 16,0 points, Rogoz 16,5 points, Libotin 16,0 points, Cupșeni 15,0 points, Suciu de Jos 15,0 points and Răzoare 15 points. The already mentioned scores resulted, in most of the cases, especially from the presence of some wood churches, i.e. Sfinții Arhangheli from Rogoz also included in the list of historical monuments of national cultural patrimony, the preservation of some elements belonging to the cultural patrimony and to the traditional rural civilization, such as traditional habitual structures, traditional costumes, different crafts or traditional customs, including country structures in the case of Rohia, Rogoz, Suciu de Sus, Suciu de Sus and Groșii Țibleșului localities.

The category of localities with a *reduced anthropic tourism potential*, registering scores between 10 and 14,9 points, consists of 9 settlements mainly located at the periphery of the depression area, at the contact with the high marginal area that displays cult churches from the category of wood churches, in which case the score was more reduced due especially not to the age or attractiveness value but to a less facile accessibility and consequently to a more reduced potential tourism demand, traditional material and spiritual elements.

The differentiated distribution of the scores led to the following value order: Groape and Inău localities, each with 13 points (both of the localities disposing of traditional, well preserved structures and households, as well as wood churches, and some traditional crafts), Stoiceni locality, with 12 points obtained due to the presence of the wood church, respectively the annual July folklore festival, Larga locality with 12 points for its wood church, traditional households and pastoral activities, Dobricu Lăpuşului locality with 11,5 points, Fântânele locality with 11 points, Dumbrava locality with 10,5 points, Poiana Botizii locality with 10 points all of them having wood churches, traditional households etc., and Groşii Țibleşului locality with 10 points (here the lack of any wood church is supplied by the presence of the still functional country structures, of some archaeological sites from the Bronze Age and of the households with a traditional structure, architecture and functionality).

The other 17 remaining localities within Lăpuşului Land form the most representative numerical contingent, with the most heterogeneous distribution, and, according to the applied criteria, registering the minimum score, of less than 9,9 points, were included in the category of those with an *insignificant tourism potential*, each of the localities disposing of a reduced number of anthropic objectives or elements relevant in the quantification realized according to the methodology presented above. Therefore, they are present in the following order: Dealu Mare 9 points, Jugăstreni 8, Cufoaia and Vima Mică 7 points, Peteritea 5,5 points, Drăghia, Vălenii Lăpuşului and Coroieni 5 points, Dămăcuşeni and Baba 4,5 points, Aspra and Dealu Corbului each with 4 points, Băiuţ and Sălniţa each with 3,0 points, Borcut and Vima Mare 0,5 points. On the last place we find the Strâmbu Băiuţ locality that did not manage to score any points according to the quantification methodology applied.

3.3. By thoroughly observing the methodology used in the attempt of quantifying the tourism potential of Lăpuşului Land, we conclude that in case of ***the tourism potential of the tourism material base*** it was also allocated the same score of 50 points just like for the case of the two major components previously analysed. They were allocated differentially according to the quantitative and qualitative support given by the elements present in the actual structure of the material base.

As a result, the score allocated for the *accommodation capacity* ranges on a scale from 0 and 35 points, differently distributed according to the type of accommodation unit: hotel 5 points, motel/inn 4 points, each type being differentiated by the capacity of accommodation and comfort category); for the endowments destined to *rest, recreation and leisure* were registered scores between 0 and 5 points, allocated on the basis of a simple registration of the presence of the scarce endowments of this kind, finding ourselves in the impossibility of applying the criteria of complexity and density. In the case of *treatment* endowments, presenting a similar situation, there was allocated only one point, meant to emphasize the importance that the management of the hydro-mineral resources existent within the Lăpuş space could have in shaping them as attraction poles for potential tourist fluxes under the conditions of a proper administration, at a regional level. At the same time, the *communication infrastructure*, on whose density, variety and quality depends the free access to tourism resources within a territory and implicitly their level of management, succeeded to register a score between 0 and 8 points, again differently allocated, in accordance with the level of accessibility of the present tourism structures to the modernized county and communal roads and of other categories (i.e. forest roads) and with their actual state.

The application of this quantification method allowed us to establish some classes of value based on which 4 categories of the material base tourism potential were identified: *high potential* (available in case of over 21 points), *medium potential* (in case

of localities registering between 10 and 20 points), *low potential* (in case of localities registering less than 10 points) and *the category of localities lacking any kind of equipments or endowments* as established by the present methodology.

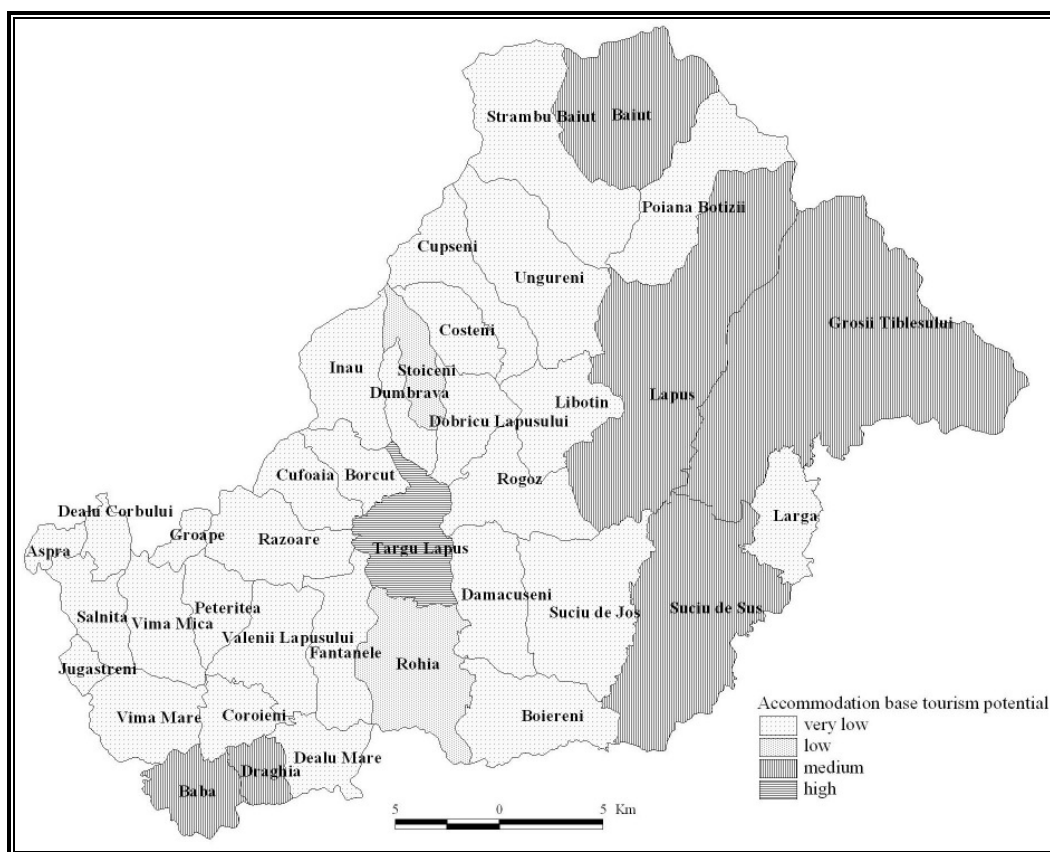


Figure 3. Categories of the accommodation base tourism potential

Only one locality, at the level of Lăpuș space, can fit the “conditions” claimed by the category of *high material base tourism potential*, again, and we emphasize, only by reporting it to the other localities within the analysed territory, namely the only urban centre of the region, Târgu Lăpuș town, which cumulated 44 points. These were obtained due to the fact that it benefits of the highest number of accommodation places but also to the great typological diversity of the accommodation units: a hotel (that, even if not functional until may, 2003, it was “taken into consideration” having reached the final stage of construction, according to the local authorities), a motel, a lodge, several familial tourism boarding houses, a school camp and, last but not least, the only recreation units in the region (around the lacustrine surface from Lighet). Another major advantage derives from the high accessibility given by its position of road communication nod of an interregional importance.

The category of localities with a *medium potential of the material base*, with a cumulated score of at least 10 points, includes 7 localities that have at least one accommodation unit. This is the case of Baba locality that obtained the 12 points due to the presence of one lodge in its proximity, and to the high accessibility given by its location in the vicinity of the most important communication road of the Someșului

Valley. The localities Suci de Sus with 11 points and Rohia with 10 points, which have three familial tourism boarding houses, respectively 5 vacation houses being positioned on roads of county importance verify the same. The best position in this category is filled by Băiuţ locality that registered a score of 20 points due to the presence of the „Tăul Tocilei” motel that offers 20 accommodation places as well as minimal services for treatment, to which we add 5 rural tourism boarding houses, one hunting lodge and facile accessibility offered by its location on a county road. At the same time, the major advantage of the localities next placed in the present hierarchy (Groşii Țibleşului 17 points, Lăpuş 16 points, respectively Drăghia and Suci de Sus, each with 11 points) is conferred by their positioning on the coordinates of rural tourism development (the obtained score deriving from the accommodation places offered by the familial rural tourism boarding houses and by the easy access to a communication road of county importance), in the first case doubled by the presence of two hunting lodges (of 32 places each), respectively of one hunting lodge (offering 2 accommodation places) and by the fishing arrangements from Zămbrița (also used for leisure activities in the past).

The category of localities with a low potential material base, registering scores between 8 and 9,9 points includes settlements that, have an accommodation base, hunting lodges type units, within their administrative territory, as in the case of Dumbrava and Strâmbu Băiuţ, each with 8 points. The fact that both localities have obtained the same score can be explained by the the compensation given by the different allocation of scores allocated unevenly to a variable number of settlements placed on different type of roads (communal roads for the first two cases, respectively county roads for the last one, scoring different number of points). The 9 points registered by Stoiceni locality were determined by the scores obtained for the 8 accommodation places found in the only hunting lodge, the others being provided by one tourism boarding house and due to the access to an inferior and badly administrated road.

At the inferior level of the hierarchy we can find *the localities that do not have any accommodation base, or endowments and facilities with tourism impact*, whose minimum scores, of less than 7 points, exclusively derive from the level of accessibility expressed by access road. The 27 Lăpuş localities are included here prove the already signalled problem of a reduced management of the existent tourism potential.

3.4. The total tourism potential, resulted by summing up the three partial scores, those of the natural and anthropic tourism potentials, respectively of the material tourism base, lead to the materialization/objectification of a situation considered to match to the actual tourism reality.

According to the applied methodology, the Lăpuşului Land localities subscribe to a large range valor comprised between 11,5 and 74,5 points, allowing the creation of a value hierarchy differentiated on four categories of value: *high tourism potential* (over 70 points), *medium tourism potential* (between 35 and 69.9 points), *reduced tourism potential* (between 25 and 34.9 points) and *insignificant tourism potential* (under 24.9 points).

The category of *very high tourism potential* includes only two localities owing their privileged position to a cumulus of very different factors. Târgu Lăpuş locality has registered the highest score, 74.5 points, due to the diversified anthropic tourism potential, accumulated on a rather extended period of several centuries, time in which it held the position of economic and political and administrative centre of Lăpuşului Land. The material base quantitatively calibrated and typologically complex at a regional level, as well as, even if at a smaller extent, the presence of a tourism offer favored by the rare natural landscape (the lacustrine surface of Lighet), have been equally important for the accumulated score. Lăpuş locality stands second cumulating 70 points, due to the

preservation of a traditional cultural and material, even if lax, base, and Suciul de Sus holding 46 points, obtained on basis of its well preserved traditional cultural and material patrimony, endowed with households and functional technical installations/device and an accommodation base meant to sustain them.

The next group of localities belonging to the above mentioned category includes Inău with 45 points acquired due to the complex natural tourism base and a traditional habitat structure including a wooden church, Răzoare, with 44 points scored because of the presence of Lăpuşului defile and wood churches having an increase accessibility, Groapa with 42 points, holding similar attractive resources diminished though by access difficulties, and Rohia with 41 points, mainly obtained from the presence of S. Ana monastery, of the lacustrine surface, of the complex phytogeographic base, of the traditional households and secondary residences. Scores of under 40 points have registered Dumbrava locality, with 39.5 points due to its complex natural tourism offer, the presence of a valuable wooden church, monasteries and hunting chalet, Stoiceni locality, with 39 points accumulated due to its important hydro-mineral resources, hunting lodges and rural tourism boarding houses, and Baba locality, with 36.5 points obtained due to the magnificence of its gorges and to the presence of a cottage in its proximity.

The category of localities with a *low tourism potential* has a better numeric representation, namely 13 settlements. The obtained scores derive either from the existence of elements with tourism impact belonging to the natural tourism base, in the case of the localities situated in the mountain area or at the contact with it: Aspra and Corbului Hill 33 points, Cufoaia 31 points, Vima Mică 31 points, Strâmbu Băiut 30 points, Borcut 28,5 points; or by the preservation of ethnologic material and spiritual elements and of valuable wood churches as in the case of Costeni 30 points, Suciul de Jos 28 points, Rogoz 27,5 points, Ungureni 26,5 points, Cupşeni, Boiereni and Libotin 26 points each.

The last category, that of localities *with insignificant tourism potential*, is composed of 12 localities spread within the entire Lăpuş territory. Their positioning at the lowest level of this tourism value hierarchy is due to their modest tourism base, most of them being located in the depression area, the lack, in most of the cases, of limited numerical and typological accommodation bases and difficult accessibility, the existence of some anthropic or natural objectives with tourism impact being unable to succeed in surpassing the limitations imposed by the above mentioned "flaws": wood churches (in the case of Fântânele 23 points, Larga 22 points, Dobricu Lăpuşului 21,5 points, Peteritea 17,5 points, Drăghia 18 points, Jugăstreni 15 points), mural churches (Dămăcuşeni with 19,5 points, Vălenii Lăpuşului totalizing 18 points), monasteries (Coroieni with 17 points), the preservation of traditional habitats (Dealul Mare with 18 points, Sălăniţa with 14 points) and advantages offered by a special landscape background (in the case of Vima Mare village, located in the vicinity of the Vima Hill, totalizing 11,5 points).

4. CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, so that the management of the attractive resources of Lăpuşului Land and their integration into the tourism circuits would benefit of a logical motivation and a realistic sustaining basis, it becomes obvious the compulsoriness of an exhaustive knowledge of all the attractive resources within the studied territory. From the perspective of their volume, the diversity and quality of the natural and anthropic tourism resources, tourism infrastructure and services, the accomplishment of a strict hierarchy of all the existent assets is the main objective of this research. The scope of this attempt is to establish the priorities of tourist arrangements, the differentiated and successive integration of each objective, locality and area within the analysed region, in the local and regional tourism circuits and subsequently in the national and international ones.

Furthermore, based on this estimative study around the value of tourism potential, there will also be possible to identify the whole range of interrelations established at the level of tourism offer and demand, respectively the exact placement of tourism in the hierarchy of economic branches, and eventually to establish the tourism development directions and strategies, aspects that remain the object of future research.

The results of the process of hierarchically structuring tourism value reflect a series of significant intraregional disparities, both between localities and their constituent administrative and territorial units, respectively at the level of Lăpușului Land's subzones, and among the main units and categories of relief, with a sensitive advantage for the localities whose territory overlaps the mountain area, in the case of natural attractiveness potential, respectively of localities in the central area of the depression, in the case of the anthropic one.

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