

WEEKEND TOURISM AS AN INSTRUMENT OF LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

Radu-Daniel PINTILII

Correspondence Address: University of Bucharest, The Interdisciplinary Centre for Advanced Researches on Territorial Dynamics (CICADIT), 4-12 Regina Elisabeta, Bucharest, Romania, e-mail: pinty_ro@yahoo.com

Daniel PEPTENATU

University of Bucharest, The Interdisciplinary Centre for Advanced Researches on Territorial Dynamics (CICADIT), 4-12 Regina Elisabeta, Bucharest, Romania, e-mail: peptenatu@yahoo.fr

Cristian DRĂGHICI

University of Bucharest, The Interdisciplinary Centre for Advanced Researches on Territorial Dynamics (CICADIT), 4-12 Regina Elisabeta, Bucharest, Romania, e-mail: cristi7772001@yahoo.com

Andrei SCHVAB

University of Bucharest, The Interdisciplinary Centre for Advanced Researches on Territorial Dynamics (CICADIT), 4-12 Regina Elisabeta, Bucharest, Romania, e-mail: xabi_andrei@yahoo.com

Abstract: In the influence area of a big city, the weekend tourism remains a dominant feature, from the touristic point of view. Economical activities from an urban influence are mainly connected to the dynamic process and structure of other activities from “the big city” by a stream of matter, substance, energy and information propelled in different ways and with different intensities. Due to the dimension and different consequences of the city on its surroundings, inside the influence area appear certain territorial disparities. In order to diminish these and to empower them, the tourism generally, but the weekend tourism as well, both can be an instrument of local, areal and even regional development policies. The touristic phenomenon turned itself into a true industry, building by itself an important branch of the tertiary sector. The nature of its complexity develops from the powerful implications that it has in the social, political, cultural and economic environment. Although the tourism industry distinguishes itself as a unique element, its future evolution and development is determined by and is always connected to the development level of the other economical branches, at a national and local scale. At the same time, it has an overwhelming part in developing these other branches, like the development of industry, agriculture, constructions, infrastructure, commerce, of the space culture, etc.

Key words: week-end tourism, influence area, territorial disparity, local and regional development.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Week-end tourism is a branch that is hard to be defined and quantified, just because some of the related activities are not used exclusively in tourism consumer. A good example is that of restaurants and a part of local services in a community. In some

cases, week-end tourism has an important role in local, regional and even national economy (Dissart J.-C., Aubert, F., Truchet, Stephany, 2009). Till now, both in Romanian and foreign literature, the potential impact of tourism in the economic local regional and even national system has been well described. We can add here some Romanian books that analyze tourism from the economic and geographic point of view, and some scientific researches and Ph.D. thesis elaborated abroad.

In 2004, E. Spiriajevas, argued that often tourism development is being chaotically structurally and territorially and it is not adjusted according to conditions of the economic, social, cultural and natural needs (Murphy, 1985; Cooper ir Wanhill, 1997 – cited by E. Spiriajevas in 2008).

The influence area of a big city, no matter of its size and position on the hierarchic scale of an urban system, from a touristic point of view, the weekend tourism remains a dominant element. If we add to this the fact that the specific urban center has the main function of capital city, besides weekend tourism and complementary to that business tourism national reunions, seminars and congress evolve. Economical activities from an urban influence are mainly connected to the dynamic process and structure of other activities from “the big city” by a stream of matter, substance, energy and information propelled in different ways and with different intensities. The tourist routes, no matter what destination and form of tourism is spoken about, have become an important element in promoting tourism activities (Rogerson, C.M., 2007). Due to the dimension and different consequences of the city on its surroundings, inside the influence area appear certain territorial disparities. In order to diminish these and to empower them, the tourism generally, but the weekend tourism as well, both can be an instrument of local, areal and even regional development policies.

2. METHODOLOGICAL ELLEMENTS

Most of the week-end tourism activities proved to be influenced by seasonality, considered one of the important enemy of tourism, in general. Another important determinant of the tourism activities is the time and the possibility to spend it in such activities (Buliung, R.N., Rooda, M.J., Remel, T.K., 2008).

The touristic phenomenon, by its complexity, turned itself into a true industry, an exquisite fragment of a country's economy, building by itself an important branch of the tertiary sector. The nature of its complexity develops from the powerful implications that it has in the social, political, cultural and economic environment. Although the tourism industry distinguishes itself as a unique element, its future evolution and development is determined by and is always connected to the development level of the other economical branches, at a national and local scale. At the same time, it has an overwhelming part in developing these other branches, like the development of industry, agriculture, constructions, infrastructure, commerce, of the space culture, etc.

The attitude of the local inhabitants should be positive regarding tourism development in their space. They also must have a positive attitude concerning hospitality and the tourist's visits (Pipinos, G., Fokiali, P., 2009).

How could possibly help tourism to the development of a territory? From an economical point of view, the tourist (or we may call him the visitor as well) draws himself towards the usage of goods and services belonging to the touristic domain, paying for these a valuable unit, most of the time this being associated with money. Part of the expenses made comes directly to the selling unities as a profit. The profit is used for paying the wages for the employees or for some investments and the other part goes to local budgets as taxes; a last part enters straight in the economical branches as a payment for the products and services that were delivered for the touristic necessities.

The complementarities between the development of the touristic phenomenon as a whole and the economical development are obvious because it leads toward an

acceleration of the request for a large number of services and goods, which, in the absence of the touristic activities would not have been made. So, there will appear chain reactions, beginning with a multiplication of income first in these branches and later in other economical branches. This type of reactions is found in branches like:

- Constructions - by ensuring the technical and material basis of the tourism, developing both construction firms and institutions who give the financial support for constructions (banks, financial powers); tourism can contribute as well to the development of secondary residences by building and maintaining them;
- Infrastructure: - regarding both the transport infrastructure (by the development of the road, port, airport, tunnel networks) and the utilities infrastructure as well (the supply of water, electricity, gas, telecommunication, etc). Road transport is used for many purposes, not only for locating some of the great tourism infrastructure but also as a great transportation provider for both passengers and heavy loads (Kordel, Z., Senator-Bentkowska, Krystyna, 2009);
- Commerce - the development of the commercial unities' network and the alimentation's network as well;
- the light and related industry which produce different sort of goods requested by tourists; they can put forward even some of the local traditional products
- Food industry: - it delivers food products, beverages, etc, in order to satisfy the tourists' needs;
- Different services: - public transport, postal services, telecommunications, internet, hair style, maintenance and service, cleaning, etc.;
- Cultural and artistic areas:- cinemas, theaters, museum, exhibitions, as well as sports events frequented by tourists(world championships, winter and summer Olympics, etc).

The economical effects of tourism must be quantified through the incomes made by the working class, which has direct or indirect contact with touristic activities.

At the time that an intern point (objective) enters in the touristic circuit, the latter develops at first a positive influence over the local economy and later these benefic effects will be applied to the whole economy. So the investments made for new touristic objectives increase the selling of detailed goods (especially in commerce and alimentation) and of services for tourists; these increases will lead to chain reactions with positive effects on local and national economies.

Another positive effect of the week-end tourism, from the philosophical-cultural point of view, refers to the dialogue and the cultural integration between humanities and science (Ilieș Dorina-Camelia, Josan, N., 2009).

This phenomenon is extremely complex if we consider that, even from the previous stage of introducing the touristic objective in the touristic circuit, the investments already show plenty of good effects like: the construction, infrastructure, and financial organizations development.

Besides all these positive effects of the tourism, we have to mention also a sum of negative effect which tourism generally, but also the week-end tourism as well, can bring to the economical and geographical environment. From an economical point of view, the week-end tourism may lead to the increase of speculations on the construction market. This way, in a very short period of time these prices which are very low, (few euros/sq m) can multiply various times, reaching the value of couple of hundreds of euros. Such an example is met in the suburbia of the capital city. Around powerful but a low economical rate cities, some investors can buy land or buildings at a low price for investing in tourism and after that they will develop touristic activities at quite increased prices. Negative effects can appear also for the geographical environment. A certain category of tourists, by the manner of showing their touristic behavior, leaves behind them quite a large amount of residues, mostly non-biodegradables. Also a raised pressure on the natural

environment from the tourists, by overriding its capacity of endurance can determine an irremediable damage, sometimes catastrophically.

Beside all these effects, week-end tourism can also add itself to the increase of competition between various economical domains. As an example we can give the change of the way of use of the land, sometimes by removing from the agricultural circuit some plants and replacing them with entertainment features or the building of new housing buildings.

From an economical point of view, the tourism can lead to the increase of employment, the diminishing of unemployment and also an increase of the well-being of the local people. A job in tourism determines at its turn other jobs in different economical areas, which leads to solving different social conflicts. Unemployment has a major part in causing other serious conflicts, like migration, augmentation of tensions in the familial environment, of criminality, etc.

The cultural effects are shown by the enrichment of knowledge level of the tourists, but especially of the local people. The tourism can lead to the rediscovering of local interest events, all by its manner of putting first the local values. This is also the way to renew long time gone traditions or the ones almost vanishing, connected to folklore and tradition of the natives.

3. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BUCHAREST INFLUENCE AREA, FROM THE TOURISTIC POINT OF VIEW

The touristic potential in general, but the weekend's in particular, situated in the influence area of Bucharest raises by the dominant anthropic features, diminishing the natural ones. If regarding the natural environment, the touristic potential features for the week-end tourism can be reminded just "the green oasis" surrounding the city: Baneasa, Snagov, Pustnicul, Cotmeana forests, and the water surfaces like Snagov lake, Pantelimon II lake, the anthropic one is much more developed.

Although the potential touristic in the Bucharest influence area is not an excellent one, the anthropic one appeared and developed during ancient times becoming nowadays an important regenerating source of touristic flows. Most of Bucharest's touristic potential is one of historical, cultural and religious nature.

The most valuable monuments build the anthropic touristic potential from the influence area of Bucharest belong to XVI- XVIII centuries. These ancient monuments, with patrimonial value are added to cult edifices from XIX-th century, but also some secular buildings raised by overlords, landowners or princes who, by their social position have influenced these regions.

Although these objectives listed above, are part of the kind intended for tourism, the weekend tourists often visit them also. In most cases, weekend tourism understood as escapes with family or friends in the forest for relaxation, where they consume grilled meat products and light alcoholic beverages (beer) and refreshments (photo 1).

It should be noted that through the weekend tourism are not only understood these activities, but all forms of short tourism (3-5 days) carried out especially at weekends. Weekend tourism is at interference of the main forms of tourism, provided that the period for conducting it is predominantly the end of week.

The phenomenon of the weekend tourism in the influence area of the city of Bucharest is remarked by a great discontinuity, caused by the presence of seasonality. As otherwise, the entire business of tourism, also the weekend tourism is influenced by the sequence of seasons. In the area of influence of Bucharest Municipality, these activities have a greater intensity during spring and autumn, and very little at the beginning of summer, as to the potential tourist here; compete to offer every tourist seaside or mountain area or other areas with touristic potential, from the country or abroad. For the offer at the weekend are competing with seaside resorts on the Romanian Black Sea, or even those on the Bulgarian coast, the stations from Albena or Balcick. As well known are

the mountain, in this respect, resorts in the Prahova Valley are the most frequented. On tourism infrastructure of the area of influence of Bucharest Municipality, it appears in general with the insularity in terms of the degree of development and planning, being more complex in areas with tradition in terms of tourism. There are remarked such structures as the tourist reception area of Snagov, situated in the north of the capital, the complex “Lebăda” located in east, and Mogoșoaia complex in the west, etc.



Photo 1. Weekend Tourism in Influence Area of Bucharest



Photo 2. Residential explosion near the capital

In terms of accessibility and transport infrastructure, mostly in the area of influence prevail roads and communal councils, un-modernized and in a continuous and an advanced state of decay. Certainly, the state of development of infrastructure, both of the specific travel, but mostly, depend on the transport and tourism development in future area of influence of Bucharest municipality.

To this infrastructure are also added recreational facilities, because the weekend tourism, the utmost importance in an increasing tourist flows have the fittings and facilities for tourists. Agreement tour became during the last period, a very important component of the tourist product.

Currently, to escape the daily stress, and for a recovery of the body after the fatigue accumulated at work during the week, tourists are looking to spend their leisure at the end of the week in a as pleasant and as diverse way possible. For now, at this chapter, the zone of influence of the city Bucharest does not excel, with small exceptions given by the AquaLand located near the Otopeni town, with equipment that meets the requirements of the most pretentious customers, of the sports and entertainment from Snagov, etc.

What it is noted in the last period in the influence area, is the increasing pressure emphasis on new residential peri-urban areas, with the potential and beyond. The lack of space for building, with which the capital faces currently, resulted in a much-stressed dynamic of the property market and an intense demand for land for housing construction, most of them secondary. At the edge of the capital and even in villages around appeared a large number of new real estate projects, which regard the building housing a villa or apartment blocks for the housing. As mentioned in this connection are housing of Pipera - Voluntari, Snagov, Ciolpani, Corbeanca, etc. (photo 2).

Expanding the inhabited space built may widen role in developing local tourism, with the emergence of new housing will also develop transport infrastructure and the technical municipal facilities, commercial establishments and food, recreational facilities, etc.

4. THE TOURISTIC POTENTIAL HIERARCHY IN THE INFLUENCE AREA OF BUCHAREST

Uneven spatial distribution of the touristic heritage in the area of influence of Bucharest Municipality and quantitative and not quality differences of its components led to a hierarchy shape, designed to facilitate future intentions of organizing and planning the tourist area of influence of Bucharest municipality.

The hierarchy existing heritage of tourism in the area of influence of Bucharest Municipality seeks the delimitation process on objective criteria of space inside, favorable to the occurrence and development of touristic activities in general and those of the weekend's in particular. This delimitation takes into account the diversity and abundance of tourist targets, material and technical base and recreational facilities in the area of influence of Bucharest city. This is based on a detailed knowledge of the assessed territory and the use of separation criteria: the criterion of existence tourist resources, the recovery or arrangement, the existence of tourist flows, etc.

Given the distribution of your concentration of the touristic patrimony in the influence area of Bucharest municipality, one can distinguish the following 5 taxonomic steps (figure 1).

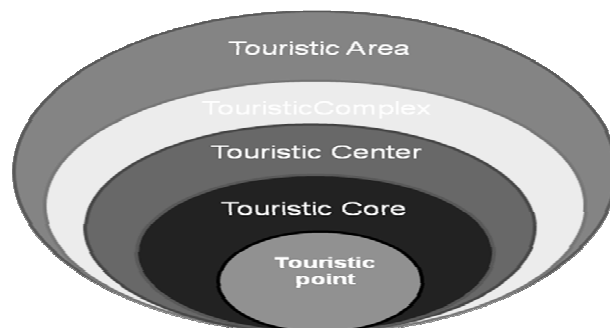


Figure 1. The Hierarchy of Touristic Patrimony

Touristic point – constitutes the lowest taxonomic step, represented by a single unit, a single element of tourism's heritage, whose potential is meant to be a factor in generating tourist flows. This can be traced both in the urban settlements and those in rural area of influence of Bucharest Municipality and may represent an element of the natural or anthropogenic, such as Baneasa Forest, Mogoșoaia Palace.

Touristic core – is the hierarchical superior tourist point's step, consisting of an element of the tourism potential (it is natural or anthropogenic) and no more than one or two elements of the technical-material basis designed to complement it. (Cernica Monastery, Pasărea Monastery).

Touristic center – is a local urban or rural area, in which is present more tourist kernel, which determines the emergence of tourist flows higher dimensions, such as Mitreni, Calarași County, with important elements of the tourism's natural and anthropogenic potential.

Touristic complex – represents a concentration of tourist resources, a much larger material and technical base and facilities for tourists, in a relatively restricted area (The “Astoria” Complex in Snagov).

Touristic area – includes other taxonomic levels listed above and it is the highest rung in the area of influence of Bucharest municipality. Within the area there are highlighted the diversity of tourist resources, but also a certain uniformity of facilities, and make fingerprint on the definition of certain forms of tourism (weekends, recreational, hunting and sport, fishing, etc). As the most important tourist areas identified in the area of influence of city Bucharest, one can remember the northern area, the area of eastern, southern area and western area. This separation was based on the criterion based on the concentration of tourism heritage and of the cardinality, based on the cardinal points.

The hierarchy above takes account of the tourism's heritage viewed as a space phenomenon, given the size and quantitative not qualitative dimension. The main idea is focused on the physical proximity between the component elements of touristic inheritance existing in a certain area, located within the influence area of the City of Bucharest.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Limiting the hierarchical step in the tourist area is due whether both physically there would be a link between the tourist centers in the zone of influence city Bucharest, in terms of running for this area, these links are closely bound, determined and influenced by the presence of the capital.

Expanding the building space, particularly in areas with high tourist potential can have a greater role in developing local tourism, but also it must take into account the fact to supervise the impact of urban aggression. Furthermore, the occurrence of secondary housing or new residences can help enhance tourism weekend, which in its turn may force a specific infrastructure development.

In the whole area of influence of Bucharest Municipality, in terms of territorial physiognomy and distribution, tourism represents a potential positive discontinuity. This discontinuity may contribute to the production of other discontinuities, stressing temporarily either production of the territorial conflict, or the balanced development of all areas of influence of the city of Bucharest.

Applied in the theory of Fr. Perroux, tourist areas may be regarded as growth poles in the influence area of Bucharest. Developing tourism activities cause a further development both vertically, within all economic sectors and horizontally, between existing settlements in the influence area of the capital.

Applying this model in the analyzed space, it can be built an integrated development model of the fragile areas by tourism phenomenon. The integrated development of an activity inserted among other activities implies that the first activity

does not disturb the trajectory of the others. The inserted or the developed activity must adapt itself or must be adapted in accordance with the others.

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