THE ROLE OF INFRASTRUCTURE IN GENERATING MULTIPLYING EFFECTS FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT. CASE STUDY THE INFLUENCE AREA OF THE CITY RĂMNICU VĂLCEA

Cristian Constantin DRĂGHICI1, Daniel PEPTENATU1, Radu Daniel PINTILII1, Alina PEPTENATU1, Daniela STOIAN1

1University of Bucharest – The Interdisciplinary Centre for Advanced Researches on Territorial Dynamics (CICADIT), Bucharest, Romania.

Abstract. Today, tourism development has become one of the main economic branches in numerous territorial systems. The problem which rises is the way this sector may be sustained for a durable development, in optimal relationships with the other components of territorial systems, so that positive multiplying effects should be gained. In the present study we aim at identifying the infrastructure’s role, of all types, in the tourism development in a space with a series of specificities. These specificities are given by the existence of a development pole, Râmnicu Vâlcea, which has the role to coordinate a settlements’ network, in which tourism may contribute to the rehabilitation or revitalizing of local economies.

Key words: tourism geography, integrated development, infrastructure, local economy, territorial management

1. Introduction

Tourism development becomes more and more a complex phenomenon whose social, political, cultural and economical implications are bigger and bigger, becoming the main engine of local economy, at the level of certain territorial systems (Peptenatu et al, 2009). The special spread of this phenomenon determined the apparition and development of a certain industry, an individual sector of national economy. The development of this economic branch brings into a favourable context the integrated development of local economies, by the direct determinations upon other fields, among which agriculture, constructions, transports, trading etc.

The connection between infrastructure and tourism is emphasized in numerous professional studies, which underline, on the one hand, the special role of tourism development in the infrastructure’s modernizing, and on the other hand the reverse direction, the generation of multiplication effects of infrastructure development upon tourism (Hultsman et al 1999; Swarbrooke 1999; Mowforth and Munt 2003; Williams 1998; Gunn 1994; Gunn and Var 2002; Eagles and McCool 2002).

Today, the infrastructure development represents a preoccupation of the decision factors and specialists from almost all fields, for the elaboration of detailed plans regarding the infrastructure development, the transport infrastructure having an important role (Boers and Cottrell, 2007; Culbertson et al, 1994; Beedasy and Whyatt 1999; McAdam 1999; Itami et al, 2002).

Generating multiplication effects is conditioned by the way relationships between infrastructure, tourism and local economies are managed, at the level of all decisional levels (Wells and Brandon 1992; Peptenatu et al, 2009; Kinnaird and Hall 1994; Milne, 1998; Belsky 1999; Swyngedouw, 2000; Drake, 1991; Teague, 1990; Milne and Ateljevic, 2001; Milne and Gill, 1998).

In many professional works, the importance of infrastructure in the evolution of touristic phenomenon, especially from the qualitative point of view, is considered to be a
determinant factor for the tourists’ satisfaction, this psychological state being the basis of a certain territorial competitiveness in this field (Alegre and Cladera, 2006; Crompton, 2003; Bigné et al., 2001; Kozak and Rimmington, 2000; Yoon and Uysal, 2005).

In the professional literature, a special attention is given to the quantification of infrastructure role of all types in the tourism development within a space (Crotts and Pan, 2007; Petrick et al., 2006; Pritchard and Havitz, 2006; Ravenscroft and Rogers, 2003), as well as the elaboration of some complex standards for the appreciation of territorial systems’ idiosyncrasy at touristic development (Matzler and Sauerwein, 2002; Crompton, 2003; Jensen, 2004; Chan and Baum, 2007; Truong, 2005; Truong and Foster, 2006).

The development of touristic infrastructure supposes the elaboration of detailed territorial management plans, able to ensure balanced relationships between the territorial systems’ components, especially between infrastructure and economy, on the one hand, and the rural environment, which very often feels the development of touristic activities, on the other hand (Wiener, 2006; Weaver, 2001; Andersen & Miller, 2006; Christensen et al., 2007; Cottrell and Meisel, 2004; Garrod and Wilson, 2003; Cottrell and Graefe, 1997).

The development of touristic infrastructure has a fundamental contribution to the increase of the complexity of touristic phenomenon, which contributes to the increase of functional complexity and territorial competitiveness. Infrastructure’s development attracts a series of activities, which accompany the touristic phenomenon, upstream and downstream (Bulbeck, 2005; Knight, 2005; Maneesha, 2006; Lovelock, 2008; Andereck et al, 2005).

2. Methods

The relationship between different types of touristic infrastructures, other components of local and environment economies, as well as the multiplying effects of infrastructure development upon tourism can be analyzed by the systemic approach of these relationships.

The quality of natural touristic resources (QNTR) and anthropic touristic resources (QATR), evaluated by means of the amenity coefficient, represents components with a direct action upon the quality of touristic services, these resources determining the touristic phenomenon, more exactly the existence or inexistence of the touristic phenomenon. Once the touristic resources from a space were turned to profit (CNTR-Capitalization of Natural Touristic Resources, CATR- Capitalization of Anthropic Touristic Resources), there can be discussed of touristic services of a certain quality (QTS-the Quality of Touristic Services). In this interdependence relationship, the management of touristic services (MTS) is the one which ensures the optimal proportion between productivity, quality and profitability (Peptenatu et al, 2009b) (Figure no.1).

The detailed analysis of the quality of touristic services underlines two major structures, with an important role in the qualitative evolution of touristic activities (Figure no.2), main components (MC) (transport systems – T, accommodation base – Ac, alimentation – Al and Recreation – R) and secondary components (medical services – Ms, Treatment – Tr, etc) (Peptenatu et al.2009b).
At the level of the territorial system, the infrastructure’s development may be regarded as a decisional impulse oriented towards variable components with the aim to develop the economy of territorial system.

In the studied area there were analyzed the relationships between the transport infrastructure and the three main components of touristic infrastructure: the accommodation base, restoration and recreation infrastructure.

These relationships were analyzed by the way they contribute to the development of tourism in the influence area of the city Râmnicu Vâlcea.

The county Vâlcea, by its geographical position, and also by its touristic resources (natural and anthropic), represents an area where the development of touristic sector may be a viable economic alternative for the future. Besides the county Vâlcea occupied, in the year 2007, the second place at national level after the county Constanța, regarding its accommodation base, with a number of 168 structures, totalizing 10,556 places, divided between the 5 existent touristic resorts (Voineasa, Vidra, Călimănești-Căciulata, Ocnele Mari, Olănești and Govora).

The influence area of the city Râmnicu Vâlcea also stands by the concentration of an important part from the natural and anthropic resources. Thereby, the mountainous area (with its two natural parks Cozia and Buila–Vânturarîta) and an important part of the Subcarpathian area (where there are resources of mineral waters) are included in this area. As regards the accommodation base, a number of 156 units (representing 92,8%) are also situated at the level of the influence area of the city Râmnicu Vâlcea.

The capitalization at a high level from the economical point of view of the touristic resources (natural and anthropic) from the influence area of the city Râmnicu Vâlcea cannot be accomplished without the existence of an important touristic infrastructure, able to turn these resources into profit. The touristic infrastructure represents, besides natural and anthropic touristic resources, an important component for the development of touristic activities. It includes, besides the accommodation base, the infrastructure of food service and transport, too.

In certain studies, the accommodation infrastructure practically represents a component of the touristic offer from a certain area. Its role is to satisfy the touristic request from a certain area, by its facilities and development degree globally, but also at territorial level.

2. Results

The accommodation base represents the main component of touristic infrastructure, by its number of units, but also by these units’ structure, this component being responsible for the satisfaction degree of tourists who come in this area.

The accommodation base from the studied area is represented both by the accommodation structures of large dimensions, like hotels, and by accommodation structures of small dimensions, like chalets and villas.

As regards the dynamic of the accommodation base from the influence area of the city Râmnicu Vâlcea, for the interval 1991 – 2007, it can be noticed (Fig.3) that the city registered accentuated fluctuations only in the case of the four resorts Călimănești, Olănești,
Băile Govora and Voineasa, which registered a similar dynamic in the case of the touristic phenomenon, too. This interval can be divided in two periods: period 1991-1999 and period 1999-2007. For the first interval, there can be noticed a decrease of the accommodation units’ number, from the value of 100 units in the year 1991, to 75 units in the year 1999 (a decrease of 25%). Thus, for the interval 1991-1999, the most important decrease was registered in the case of the resort Băile Govora, from 27 units (in 1991) to 9 units (a decrease of approximately 67% with 30% in the year 1995). In the case of the resort Călimănești, for the same interval it was registered a decrease of 34% between 1991-1995 (from 32 accommodation units to 21 accommodation units), and after that, in the year 1999, the number of accommodation units reached 23 units (a decrease of 28% compared to the year 1991).

The low value of these resorts may be attributed to the closing of some accommodation units, or to the uncertainty regarding their form of property, being known that many of these villas were nationalized in the old regime, and in the respective period the former owners asked for the recovery of their property right.

A special evolution is held for this period by the resort Olănești, where the number of accommodation units increases from 15 to 27, due to the fact that, like in the other fields, in tourism the enterprise starts to be contoured. For this interval, too, there can be noticed that a number of 24 localities from the influence area, namely 72% from their number, did not have any type of accommodation unit.

During the interval 1999-2007, the number of accommodation units increased, reaching, in the year 2007, 137 units, much more than the number of units registered at the
beginning of the analyzed interval, with 27% respectively with 62% compared to the year 1999.

Fig. 4. The dynamic of the accommodation capacity per localities in the influence area of the city Râmnicu Vâlcea (1991-2007)

In this period, all the localities from the influence area which held, up to that date, accommodation units, register a different increase of the number of accommodation units, from one locality to another. Thus, there are localities where the increase is over 40%: Călimănești (40%), Voineasa (43%), Băile Olănești (45%), Brezoii (50%) reaching even 83% in the case of the locality Malaia. For the localities Băile Govora and Ocnele Mari, the increase is of 35%, respectively 25%.

It is to be noticed that, at the level of the year 2007, the number of localities from the influence area which did not hold any accommodation units decreases from 24, in the year 1999, to 18 (54% from the total). Also, there are 6 localities registered in the statistics, for the first time, as holding accommodation units, starting with the year 2007.

The dynamic of the accommodation capacity, in contrast with the dynamic of the accommodation base, registers a constant decrease which is more accentuated in the period 1991-1999 (from 12324 to 9289 places, a decrease of 26%). The decrease is correlated with
The diminution of the accommodation units from the respective period. A slight increase follows, in order to reach in 2003 the value of 9471 places (a value with 2% than the value of the year 1999).

The decrease of the accommodation capacity can be explained by the closing of the accommodation units of small dimensions like campings, touristic villas, but also by the diminution of the number of accommodation places from the hotels. This tendency practically follows the general tendency registered at national level (Fig.2).

The analysis at locality level shows the fact that this decrease is accentuated in the localities Govora and Călimănești, both of them exceeding the value registered at the level of the influence area. Thus, for the first resort, the number of accommodation units decreased from 2332 places in the year 1991 to 1072 places in the year 2007, a decrease of 54%, while for the second resort the decrease is of 32%, smaller than in the case of Govora, but bigger than the average from the level of the influence area.

At the level of the year 2007, there can be noticed a concentration of the number of accommodation units in the northern part of the influence area, where the main existing touristic centres are situated, both on the local and county level (Fig.4). Thus, it is also to be noticed that the highest number of accommodation units are registered in the touristic resorts: Călimănești (38 units), Băile Olănești (34 units), Voineasa (33 units). The concentration of accommodation units in this area is due to the existence of some important touristic resources, both natural and anthropic, which are and can be exploited in tourism. Also, on the basis of these resources, the accommodation base from these localities presents important perspectives of growth, both from the quantitative and qualitative point of view. For the other localities, the accommodation base is represented by a smaller number of units, namely under 6 accommodation units (Malia and Ocnele Mari), but most of them are situated in the interval of under 2 accommodation units.

As regards the repartition of the number of places from the units of touristic welcome (fig.4), the hierarchy is the same, the first place being held by the resort Călimănești (36%), followed by Băile Olănești (26%), Voineasa (19%) and Băile Govora (12%). The four resorts hold together 93% out of the total of accommodation units existent at the level of the influence area in the year 2007. The other localities have got values of under 3% (Ocnele Mari 3%, Malai 2% etc.).

On accommodation units type, the highest number of places is held by hotels with 72% out of the total number of places existent at the level of the influence area. This fact can be explained as hotels are accommodation units of large dimensions, many of them, especially those from balneary resorts, being built before 1990 with a very large number of places. The locality with the largest number of hotel places in the structures of touristic welcome in the year 2007 is the resort Călimănești (2482 places), followed by the other important resorts from the influence area: Băile Olănești and Voineasa.

The lowest number of places is held by the resort Băile Govora with 814 places. Besides, at the level of the influence area, only the four localities previously mentioned hold accommodation places in hotels structures. For the category inns and motels, five localities hold accommodation places for these types of structures: Călimănești, Milcoiu, Golești, Mihăești, Brezoii. From among these Călimănești and Milcoiu detach, holding together 78% (106 and respectively 102 accommodation places) out of the number of accommodation places of this type. It is to be mentioned that the accommodation structures which hold this type of accommodation places belong to the localities situated on the main traffic arteries which get through the county and implicitly through the influence area (E81 and DN64).

The distribution of the accommodation base depending on the type of comfort at the level of the year 2007 (Fig.5) shows a clear domination of the 2 and 3 stars structures, these totalizing 82% out of the total of the accommodation base at the level of the influence area.
(91 units), the category of tourists they go to being that of the tourists with medium incomes. This situation can be also explained by the fact that most of the accommodation base was built before 1990, in order to answer to certain standards (we refer here to the so named mass tourism, when the level of comfort requested did not exceed 2-3 stars). Today, these structures need very high costs for modernization, in order to accomplish higher comfort standards. Besides, there can be noticed that the number of 4 stars units (2 units) is very low, as these are new built units and of relatively small capacity. The units classified at 1 star represent 16% out of the total of the accommodation units.

It is also to be mentioned that the 2 and 3 stars units are concentrated in the four large resorts Băile Olănești, Călimănești, Băile Govora and Voineasa.

Besides the accommodation base, an important contribution for the good evolution of touristic activity is held by the structure of food service, like restaurants, bars and fast-foods, to which others are added, too. The most important activity is the service for consumers, who are the final beneficiaries of the alimentation services in particular and of touristic services in general.

A unit of service is the set up area formed by one or several rooms, equipped with facilities, furniture and inventory objects specific for the profile and categories they belong to. These are divided into luxury units, of I, II and III categories. In the influence area of the city Râmnicu Vâlcea there are all types of food units. The most important, the restaurant, presents several subtypes, depending on the gastronomical profile and the unit’s particularity: classical, specialised (hunting, pescatorial, rotisserie, lamb specialities serving restaurant, dietetical, lacto-vegetarian, family type or pension), with a particularity (wine cellar, local or national particularity), brasserie, beerhouse or summer terrace.
Other types of food service are the bar (which can be day or night bar, depending on the schedule, with the following subtypes: night bar, day bar, café-bar-coffee house, disco-bar, snack bar; present in almost all hotels), fast-food units (self-service restaurant, bistro, pizzeria, snack bar), tea room and patisserie (Regulation no.510 from 28th June 2002).

The number of food service units from the influence area of the town Rm. Vâlcea was, for the year 1991, of 251 units, and for the year 2009 of 128 units. As regards the repartition at the level of the localities from the influence area, from the above chart (Fig.6) there can be noticed that the highest number of units is recorded in the three large resorts Govora, Olăneşti and Călimăneşti.

![Fig.6. Number of catering establishments in the area of influence the city Râmnicu Vâlcea Sursa datelor DJSV si M.T](image)

This high number, reaching even 50 in the case of the resort Călimăneşti can be explained by the fact that a large part of these were functioning within the accommodation units already existent, and only a small part were functioning independently. The exception is the town Călimăneşti, situated on a transit artery, therefore the number of food service units is higher than that of the accommodation base (50, respectively 32). For the other localities, the number is low, taking into account that many of the food service units function independently and they are usually of smaller dimensions. From the evolutionary point of view, there can be noticed that after the year 1990 the number of food service units substantially decreased for the majority of the localities from the influence area. The exception, from this point of view, is represented by the two large resorts in the area: Călimăneşti and Bâile Olăneşti. For the first resort, the number of food service units remained the same (50 units), whereas for the second resort the number of food service units increased from 29 units in the year 1991 to 34 units in the year 2009. This phenomenon is explainable by the continuous development of the two touristic resorts, which are important for the tourism from Vâlcea county and more.

For the year 2009, there can be noticed that the weight of the number of places in the food service units is the highest for the resort Călimăneşti, with 41,6% out of the total, being followed by Bâile Olăneşti with 19,3% and the other two resorts Bâile Govora and Voineasa, each of them with 14,4% out of the total. It must be underlined that all four resorts hold together 89,7% out of the total number of existent places. This fact is determined by the concentration of the accommodation base at the level of the four resorts previously mentioned. The other places belong to accommodation units situated mostly on the important transit arteries which cross the county: Milcoiu, Brezoi, Goleşti (the three totalize 8,8% out of the number of places).

Today, the tendency to give up the classical form of spending the holidays is more and more pregnant, and we assist to the increase of the requests regarding the holidays of
active type. Regarded from this perspective, the recreation services become one of the major decisional motivations as regards the decision of spending the holiday.

Recreation represents a main component of the touristic product, aimed practically to satisfy that active part of the holiday, more and more present in the new touristic products. Thus, recreation envisages the tourist’s relaxing and recuperation from the physical point of view, but it also aims at ensuring entertainment and the instructive-educational part, necessary for developing and satisfying the tourist’s psychological capacities. On the other hand, recreation represents one of the main means of individualization of the touristic offer.

The development and diversification of recreation means, as element of competitiveness, may determine the increase of the attractiveness of touristic areas, which may be translated by the increase of the touristic activity’s economic efficiency.

For the localities from the influence area of the city Râmnicu Vâlcea, the recreation facilities are mostly old or in an advanced degree of degradation, or if they still exist, they present a private character. Such an example is represented by the facilities from the level of accommodation units from the localities: Călimănești, Olănești, Bâile Govora.

Transports’ development must represent a priority for national and local policies, this sector representing the engine of local and national economies’ development. Thus, transports represent an important economic branch, their role being to ensure the smooth course of the production processes.

The transport infrastructure afferent to the influence area of the city Rm. Vâlcea is determined by natural conditions (hilly and mountainous relief), but also by anthropic conditions, which are displayed more or less favorably or restrictively. Firstly, the infrastructure serving the touristic objectives and the accommodation base are characterised by the fact it is represented only by the road transport, which has different levels of modernization (we refer to the presence of modernized roads and electrified railways). It is also underlined the coordinating role of the city Rm. Vâlcea for the transport infrastructure, as the main road arteries intercross here (E81 makes the connection to the cities Sibiu and Pitești; DN67 makes the connection to the city Târgu Jiu, DN 65C makes the connection to the city Craiova and DN64 makes the connection to the city Slatina). Railway arteries (the railway crossing the county from north to south and facilitates the connection to the towns Sibiu and Slatina), connects the city to the other localities from its influence area, and further on with the county seats of the neighbouring administrative-territorial structures.

Another relevant aspect for the development from the touristic point of view of the localities from the influence area (especially for those from its northern part) is represented by the modernization of the already existent infrastructure, as it is the transcarpathian road which crosses the Parâng mountains, connecting the county Gorj (the locality Novaci) and the county Alba (Sebeș), crossing the county Vâlcea in the area Obârșia Lotrului, known as “Transalpina” (DN67C), having a total length of approximately 150 km. It received a financing of over 300 million euro for rehabilitation, modernization and asphalt workings.

3. Conclusions

The evolution of the main indicators of touristic phenomenon and the analysis of the evolution from the level of each type of touristic infrastructure shows a strong determination, in the way of getting multiplying effects of tourism development once the infrastructure developed. Detailed researches showed interesting evolutions of local economies, once the tourism developed, in the way of the development of some traditional branches, as wood manufacturing, pastoral economy and all types of ceramics.

The systemic approach of complex relationships between the components of the territorial system, at the level of the influence area of the city Râmnicu Vâlcea, shows the need to elaborate some complex strategies of territorial management, in order to create a
favourable climate for business environment which is interested in investing in the field of tourism. The strategies of territorial management must firstly envisage the development of road infrastructure at a certain level, able to catch up traffic in a continuously development. Also, these strategies must be sustained by the authorities in the field of touristic infrastructure’s development, by financial impulses from the level of the European suprasystem.

Acknowledgements
The methodology we used in this article was elaborated in some research project Territorial Management Based on Growth Poles Theory (CNCSIS-UEFICSU-PNII-Idei, 1950/2008).

References


Wiener C., (2006), Imi o na ala o ke moana: Learning the ways of the oceans, an evaluation of ocean education and marine tourism practices in Hawai'i, Unpublished MES paper thesis, York University, Toronto, ON, Canada.
