

TOURISTIC REGIONALIZATION OF ROMANIA

V. Surd, P. Cocean*

Key words: Romanian touristic regions

The touristic phenomenon, alike all the processes of geosphere, has its own dynamic, materialized in spacial expansions and regressions, in rhythmic intensifications and attenuations. Today we assist to an extensive development of tourism on large territories, including attractive resources, unvalorized, and generating new flows between transmitting centres and receiver areas appeared recently. Occupying a certain space, that is assumed by it at complexity levels shaded to the highest degree, the touristic phenomenon receives an absolute geographical tint (P. Cocean, 1996). However, is difficult to discern the specific features of this territory as well as the manner in which recreative processes are developed within its limits. From the multiple classifications of functional touristic units, this region is detached as a sine qua non entity, of a maximum relevance. If the touristic area is constituted as a result of the first process of spacial association among the cells of touristic habitat, the region comprise within its limits large areas at whose scale the touristic phenomenon is unfolded in its entire complexity. In the first case, of the region, a single functional system is consolidated, with a high degree of specialization, in the second, a series of functional systems appear that are different from the others (or outdistanced from each other, when they have common traits) but all of them have as a common denominator the complex satisfaction of touristic request.

The touristic regionalization of Romanias territory was made having as operational points the following three criteria, namely: 1), the spacial concentration of attractive resources; 2), the structural peculiarity (as an expression of connexions and interrelations between the component elements) and 3), the functional specific features (reflected in the horizontal and vertical integration of matter and energy flows and interests conveyed in own systems).

Applying the mentioned criteria at the diversity of territorial structures, the following types of touristic regions were outlined (fig. 1):

- touristic regions with recreational character - A;
- touristic regions with cultural function - B;
- mixed touristic regions - C.

A) *Touristic regions with recreational character* are superposed to territories dominated by the presence of attractive resources belonging to the natural environment, with more reduced densities of population and habitates, with economic substructure and limited anthropic impact. Some regions like these are Danube Delta, Meridional Carpathians, Banat Mountains, Poiana Ruscă Mountains, Curvature Carpathians and Subcarpathians. Typical for the territorial units we mentioned is the different degree of touristic exploitation: some regions - first of all Meridional Carpathians - benefit by a complex substructure, in permanent affirmation, while the others - especially Danube Delta are found at an incipient stage of utilization.

* "Babe-Bolyai" University, Faculty of Geography, Cluj-Napoca

Another trait that is stored in the variety of attractive resources determines the diversity of tourism's recreational forms that can be practiced: trip-making, mountaineering, hunting and fishing, winter sports, boating etc.

Among the touristic regions from this category, Danube Delta is to be noticed with an attractive patrimony, unique in Europe. The unwonted scenery, the channels and numerous lakes, sand banks, vegetation and fauna of a great diversity placed it among the territorial units of a great perspective from Romania. By its statute of biosphere reservation, delta set itself up as a field where tourism is expected to be established selectively through those forms that will not affect the natural equilibrium of its geosystems. Nautical pleasure through swimming and boating, fishing and hunting are the main recreational activities that can take place here. At present the touristic substructure is minimal. The basis from Rosu, Mila 23, Puiu and Lebăda play the role of incipient implantations whose function must be amplified in future, all the more as Tulcea represents an actual gateway of delta, having a lot of endowments.

The touristic region of Meridional Carpathians comprise within its limits the most high and massive sector of Romanian Carpathians (Bucegi, Făgăras, Parâng and Retezat groups). The attractive resources are contained in the Alpine type of landscape with ridges, abrupts, cycles and ice valleys, gorges, caves and narrow paths. The climate is auspicious for tourism and the hydrography (through lakes, waterfalls, springs, thermal waters), vegetation and fauna take part in the diversification of recreational offer. Otherwise, turning to account some of the above mentioned resources, traditional touristic basis were strengthened here (Sinaia, Busteni, Predeal, Băile Herculane, Bălea, Păltinisi etc). If in Bucegi Massif the touristic exploitation reached high heights, in the other mountainous groups, the attractive resources that are to be exploited make up a sure reserve for far-reaching tourism.

B) Touristic regions with cultural function have in their own structure attractive resources of anthropic provenience. As a result, they integrate spacially the territories of old and intense habitation from Transilvania Depression (IV), Moldova Plateau (VIII), Getici Subcarpathians and Romanian Plain (XI, XII).

The historical vestiges (Roman camps, Paleolithic and Neolithic sites, castles, fortresses), religious objective (churches, cathedrals, monasteries), cultural objective (museums, memorial houses) and ethnographical values of a great originality and authenticity (architecture, traditions, customs, popular costumes) are to be mentioned as the most important attractive elements.

In the regions we mentioned prevail the cultural, recreational and curative tourism. They associate only accidentally on limited areas, being conditioned by the isolated appearance of some resources (anthropic salt lakes in Transilvania Depression, mineral waters in Subcarpathians, salt lakes in the east of Romanian Plain etc).

Typical for this type of regions is substructure dependent on human habitates where the hotels that fulfill pseudotouristic functions are prevalent. During the last years the diversification degree grew by motels camping sites and chalets implantation along the main roads of access.

The touristic circulation takes frequently the form of transit tourism, in circuit or on preferential axis, including on routes as many objectives as possible. The social efficiency of this form of tourism is remarkable while the economic profitableness remain still modest.

Among the mentioned regions, Moldova Plateau stands out in universal context (through the monasteries with external frescoes - Vorone, Moldovia, Sucevia, Humor) and Transilvania Depression in the european one, through the heterogeneousness of material and spiritual culture.

The *mixed touristic regions* are defined by the coexistence of some varied resources that appeal in the same measure to recreational as well as to the curative and cultural tourism. From the above mentioned resources and in tight correlation with the qualitative and quantitative reports, the following types of regions can be individualized:

- regions of recreational and curative tourism (Central Group of Eastern Carpathians, Dobrogea and Black Sea coast);
- regions of curative and cultural tourism (Western Plain, Western Hills and Getici Subcarpathians);
- regions of recreational, curative and cultural tourism (Northern Group of Eastern Carpathians, Apuseni Mountains).

The regions where the recreational and curative tourism is practiced have as an attractive support either the mountainous landscape, with its aesthetic attributes, or the Black Sea coast where the summer pleasure develops plenarily. The curative valences are stored, in the first case, in many springs with mineral water (here is to be found the most dense net in Europe), respectively in the sea water or therapeutical mud of limans and seacoast lagoons. From utilization point of view, the Black Sea coast is clearly detached as part of national tourism, through substructure and touristic flows (P. Cocean, 1993). The seacoast resorts Mamaia, Eforie Nord, Eforie Sud, Costinesti, Olimp, Neptun, Saturn, Jupiter, Mangalia are a good proof.

The regions of curative and cultural tourism are to be found in the western part of the country, where thermal waters represent the basis for a progressive utilization (Felix Spa, Tinca, Boghis, I Mai) and a number of old cities (Timisoara, Arad, Oradea) own historical, religious and cultural objectives of a great importance. Another region is superposed to Subcarpathians and Getic Plateau. It has mineral waters at Govora, Olănești as well as numerous monasteries dating from the Middle Age (Horezu, Cozia, Tismana).

Finally, the regions of a maximum complexity, that assume the interrelation of all types of tourism, are situated in the northern part of the country (Oas, Maramures, Dorna) and in Apuseni Mountains. The unusual mountainous landscape, the favourable climate, the rich stocks of hunting and fishing are associated with mineral and thermal waters having curative attributes and with the unique ethnographical resources.

The touristic basis, initially centred upon the thermal waters utilization (the case of Geoagiu Spa resort, where these waters were curatively used 2000 years ago) have multiplied, being placed near the sources of mineral waters (Vatra Dornei, Sângerz-Bai) or in areas with special recreational facilities (Borsa Spa, Stâna de Vale, Baisoara).

The regions with a mixed profile, of a great functional viability through attraction of a very diversified request, pose as a standard of a slow but ascensional evolution of Romanian tourism.

It is clearly understood that in the framework of the mentioned regions can be delimited touristic areas having their own personality, in which the types and forms of tourism are pregnantly individualized. Therefore the touristic territorial subsystems come out, which are integrated and subordinated to the regions function, as a unit of a superior rank.

Bibliography

1. Cocean, P. (1993), *The Romanian tourism between 1985-1991*. Revue Roumaine de Géographie, 37, Bucuresti.
2. Cocean, P. (1996), *Geography of tourism*, Editura Carro, Bucuresti
3. Surd, V. (coordinator), 1988, *Tourist Monography of the Carpathians*, The Romanian Carpathians, Krakow