

TOURIST FUNCTION POTENTIAL ASSESSMENT FOR A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF SMALL TOWNS: THE CASE OF TÂRGU OCNA

Alexandru Bănică

Romanian Academy, Iași Branch, Geography Collective

Abstract: The present paper analyses the way that tourist function can be connected to sustainable development perspectives in the case of a small town. Târgu Ocna is a resort of national interest with old tourist traditions, but having a fluctuating line with regard to the turn to profit of its own potential by an appropriate tourist infrastructure. The study comprises, on the one hand, the evaluation of Târgu Ocna tourist identity within the county context, the tourist function and accessibility of tourist objectives within the intra-urban areas and, on the other hand, the analysis of the public perception on the tourist offer and accessibility and the place of tourism within the social-economic urban system. Gaining an insight on these aspects as well as on the local and regional context are premises for the delineation of a comprehensive tourist function development as an element of the overall sustainable development of the town.

Key words: *tourist function, tourist accessibility, public perception, sustainable local development*

I. INTRODUCTION

In the context of recent economic and social restructuring, many small towns are pursuing tourism opportunities as an important component for a sound local development (*Halseth et alii, 2009*). Tourism can be regarded as a development engine capable to integrate some urban spaces within the territories they belong to and to reanimate them upon new economic basis (*G.Cazes, 1992*) by taking advantage of some form of local assets (cultural, historic or physical landscape features) that visitors may desire to experience (*Halseth et alii, 2009*). The small towns are advantaged by their size, being the level of tourist destination suitable for sustainable management strategies modelling, tourist and recreational activities promoting directly linked to raising the quality of living for the inhabitants. The sustainable tourism objectives are interconnected with those of sustainable development because they tend to reduce the frictions created by the complex interactions between the tourist industry, the tourists, the environment and the local communities, leading the overall progress of the locality (*Eligh et alii, 2002*).

Târgu Ocna is a mining town having a population of nearly 14,000 inhabitants, reconverted to tourism activities after the recent changes of the historical and socio-economic conditions. The analysed town has lost its important territorial role it had had during the last hundred years in the weak settlement

system of Moldova. Before 1989 the role of Târgu Ocna in the recent urbanised Trotuș Valley was that of a commuter town/ bedroom-town for Onești City (noun before 1989 as Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej) a highly dynamic urban locality. Currently, in the context of the recent social and economic transformations its status become one of a *stage-town* situated between the two urban poles (Onești and Comănești-Moinești-Dărmănești) and of *intermediary tourist-town* near, and in a sense subordinated to, Slănic Moldova. Tourism is an activity of old tradition in Târgu Ocna area and in Trotuș Basin, remaining a service domain which doesn't reevaluate its natural and cultural/historic potential. To overcome the secondary role at the national level, the reevaluation of local heritage is needed by appropriate planning, tourist facilities and organized activities and their inclusion in the regional tourist's activities. It is also needed the integration of tourism activities with the others activities that have an urban sustainable development potential.

II. TOURIST FUNCTION AND ACCESSIBILITY IN TÂRGU OCNA

Trotuș Basin has a privileged location in Bacău County, having balneary and climatic spas whose polarizing area sometimes overdraws Bacău county boundaries. Some are also known internationally (Slănic Moldova, formerly famous for its mineral waters comparable to those of Karlowy-Vary, but declining for some time) or nationally (Târgu Ocna and Moinești), while others have only local importance (Poiana Sărată).

These issues are highlighted in a significant extent by chronological analysis of *the tourist function rate* at the Bacău county level. This reflects the weight that tourism activity has on local scale, depending on the offer of accommodation places for tourists. The tourist function rate imagined by P. Defert may be calculated by comparing the lodging capacity (L) and the resident population (P), named theoretical tourist function rate, or by comparing the number of tourists to that of the population, named effective tourist function rate (Defert, 1972).

$$Tt(F) = L \times 100 / P$$

Tt(F) – theoretical tourist function rate

L – lodging capacity (places)

P – resident population number

It is a relative index depending on the demographic size of towns, with an advantage for small towns, but useful when comparing them with each other. The index expresses in a relatively accurate way the intensity of the tourist phenomenon, and the corrections available by introducing other variables (as the number of nights spent there) do not severely alter the results (Muntele and Iașu, 2006).

On the one hand, analysis shows that recent evolution was towards an inadequate and heterogeneous exploitation of the tourism potential in Bacău County (only 22 of the 93 communes have accommodation units) and meanwhile it is an expression of the territorial disequilibrium (east of Siret Valley there are no official accommodation units). On the other hand the evaluation proves a divergent

evolution of the tourist destinations after 1990. There is a single location with a dominant tourism profile - Slănic Moldova (although with a steadily decreasing interest of *the tourist function rate* from 62.3 in 1990 to only 14.4 in 2008), followed by Oituz (a beneficiary not only of the natural landscape, but also of a privileged position on the national main road between Braşov and Bacău and of important investments), by Târgu Ocna and some peri-urban rural settlements near Bacău (Luizi-Călugara, Hemeiuşi, Mărgineni). Even though Oneşti has six accommodation units, the town has not a strong tourism profile, while Dărmăneşti shows a significant decline by reducing the accommodation capacity of the children camp from Uz Valley from 920 places in 1990, to 108 places in 2008. In the communist period, tourism was usually practiced in organized and controlled by the state, by distributing treatment or holiday tickets. Currently the share of such "institutional" tourism severely decreased both for Târgu Ocna and Slănic Moldova. In recent years the gap between the two resorts augmented due to the better tourist facilities in Slănic-Moldova.

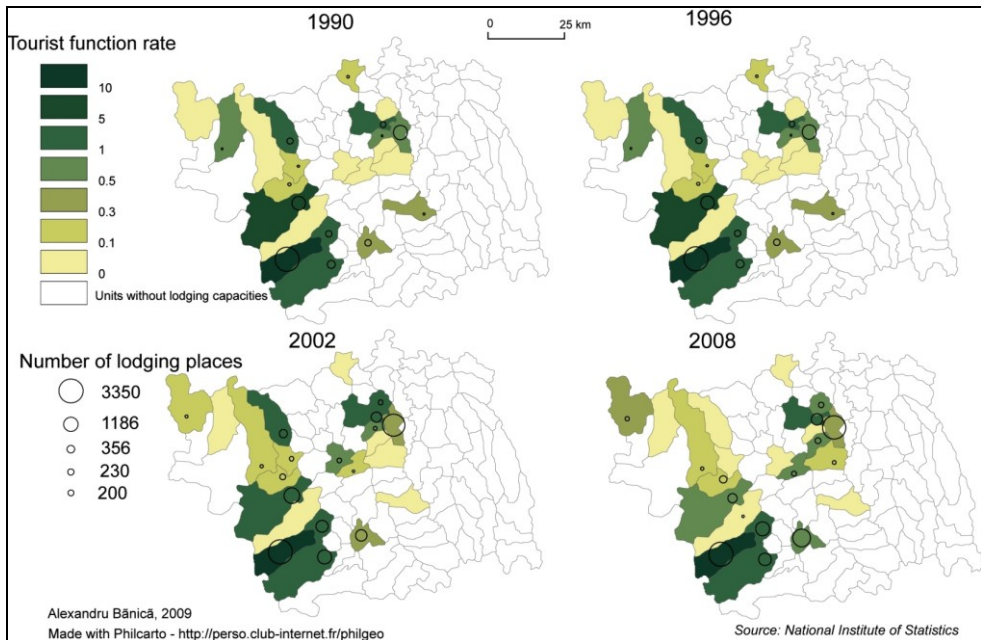


Fig. 1: The evolution of theoretical tourist function rate for the territorial-administrative units from Bacău County (1990-2008)

The year 2001 was a peak for Târgu Ocna in terms of total number of tourists stay, even though then there was only a single hotel and a single agritourism pension with ten places. Most of the 7210 tourist arrivals registered was by tickets for treatment. That year registering 87,600 overnight stays, Târgu

Ocna exceeded the more famous Slănic-Moldova; the average stays being 12 days at the hotel and 17 to hostel. Further development has been downward, the number of tourists accommodated in a hotel or hostel in Târgu Ocna decreased continuously, even though the number of accommodation units increased. This occurred due to a diminished number of tickets for treatment - one third compared to 2001 i.e. only 2,000 tickets. Târgu Ocna has become a tourism resort for the weekend, with a reduced average length of the stays (less than 10 days). These statistical low values are also due to the great number of overnight stays by some unofficial tourism units or private houses.

A thorough understanding of the present tourist profile of Târgu Ocna town is related to the detailed analysis of the historical background. Although the "mentality" of tourism resort has been induced since the nineteenth century when an important infrastructure was built, tourism functionality has been ignored or subordinated to Slănic-Moldova during the communist period. Only recently Târgu Ocna regained the tourist profile not only by authorities' declarations but also by substantial investments in the sector.

Due to the natural favourability – shelter climate and mineral springs with water useful in the treatment of many diseases (rheumatic, musculoskeletal pains, gynaecological and respiratory problems) - from 1894, Târgu Ocna gained the status of climatic resort. Exploitation of mineral waters and the first tourist accommodation dates back to 1846, but only in 1888 capturing of the seven springs is performed. During the second half of the nineteenth century, Târgu Ocna was the second resort of Moldova, after Slănic Moldova. The first organized bath was functioning since 1912 (40 cabins with 70 tubes), while in the central area, there were three hotels (one of them having 52 rooms). Even though almost destroyed during World War I, the town regained in 1927 its resort function by ministerial order. The inter-war period, and especially between 1925 and 1940, Târgu Ocna's tourist functionality was flowering. For instance it was rehabilitated and completed a very modern (for that moment) tourist infrastructure higher than the present one: spa, numerous villas, two hotels and a modern park with mineral springs.

The tourist structures were limited during the Communist period because of the centralist and discretionary investment in the tourism, advantaging the Slănic-Moldova resort, leaving to Târgu Ocna only the roles of extractive industry town and bedroom-locality. In 1970 the last hotel left in town was demolished, and starting with 1978 the mineral springs ceased to be exploited. Thus, we may state that there was no tourist functions left, mostly taking into account that the material basis (especially that at the foot of the Măgura Hill) passed to the charge of IBC Slănic-Moldova. This aspect could have been turned into a positive thing for Târgu Ocna, if the idea of the function in tandem of the two resorts had been thought of. The Târgu Ocna salt mine gradually became a tourist site, both for visiting and for the treatment of respiratory diseases, with a specialized medical cabinet and resting

room. After 1988 a new hotel was inaugurated (Măgura), but the tourist infrastructure was still modest, even though in 2002 the town, meeting the official requirements³, received the title of tourist resort of national interest. There have been many investments during the last years in order to rebuild and complete the tourist infrastructure – building four tourist pensions and rehabilitating the Măgura Park and the balneal Sanatorium.

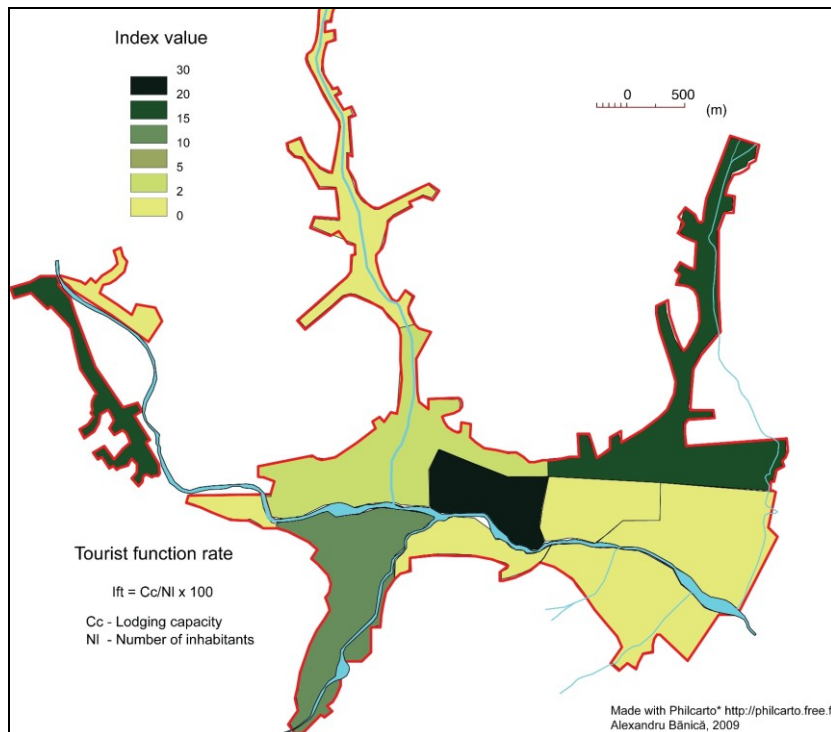


Fig. 2 : The theoretical tourist function rate calculated for Târgu Ocna's neighbourhoods

Currently, the functional tourist structures of Târgu Ocna are the Măgura hotel (256 places) in the centre of the town, Casa Ilinca pension (16 places) near the salt mine, the Select Pension (20 places) and the agritourism pension called Casa Cioca (30 places), both in Poieni and the Casa Creangă pension (32 places), in the Gălean neighbourhood. They all represent 13.48% of the lodging capacity in the department of Bacău. Since 2009, we can add the Anda motel, with 60 de places and the holiday village near the Gălean neighbourhood (tourist houses,

³ According to Decision 852/2008 for approving the norms and criteria to attest tourist resorts, the 37 tourist resorts of national interest meet several criteria regarding the natural environment, the urban planning, the municipal endowments, protection of the environment, etc. having a minimal lodging capacity of 500 places.

club and equitation). If we apply the tourist function index to the functional areas of the town, we can see that, depending on the lodging capacities (lodging places and restaurants), the most frequented areas by the tourists, having the highest incomes from tourism, also have the highest general incomes. We are talking about the central area, with the Măgura hotel, and also public service units, followed by the Poieni and Gălean neighbourhoods, without special tourist objectives, but with agritourism pensions. We got reduced values for tourist function index for Gura Slănic – through the Măgura monastery and the peri-central west neighbourhood, with only one small pension placed near the salt mine.

For a relevant image regarding the role of tourism in local context we used the number, importance and distribution within neighbourhoods of the tourist objectives, upon categories. For the large mass of tourists, the various areas of the town are more attractive if they have a higher psychological impact, diversified, accessible and completed with public food services.

On the administrative territory of Târgu Ocna there are several valuable tourist sites, balneal and cultural, that could justify the current status of tourist resort of national interest: the salt mine (Salina Trotuș), with its complex function, the balneal sanatorium of Măgura, the Măgura hotel, with its treatment facility, the Răducanu church and its annexes, important historic monument, and the Măgura monastery, near the foot of the mountain bearing the same name. We then have a series of ecclesiastic (numerous churches) and historic vestiges (monuments, old buildings, and Ancient and Medieval habitation complexes). Near the town, the natural environment fortunately completes the urban tourist potential, through the mountains and hills, salt lakes or temporary and permanent rivers, with belvedere points, relaxation and leisure areas. The salt mine, the most important tourist objective and the only site of which we may say it has been properly exploited, currently has a complex tourist function, responding to the various criteria of the tourists (balneal, cultural, relaxation and leisure tourism). The first salt mine tourist facility was founded in Târgu Ocna in 1974, in the Pilot salt mine, at 130 m underground, for the treatment of upper airway diseases. Since 2005, the treatment facility was moved in the Trotuș salt mine (dug in the Chicirla hill) and it includes a sanatorium to treat respiratory diseases, a salt lake and a waterfall, the Museum of Salt, relaxation sports (tennis and billiards tables, terrace, sports fields, playgrounds for children), souvenir shops. A special place is that of the Orthodox church called “Saint Varvara” in the Trotuș salt mine, at 240 m underground, one of the few Romanian churches in salt mines (besides Ocna Dej or Cacica) and the only in Europe integrally made of salty. The second tourist area in Târgu Ocna regarding the number of tourists is the Balneary Centre–Măgura Park which used to be the main tourist site during the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th, but losing its importance due to faulty administration. The rehabilitation of the old sanatorium in 2007-2008 through a

4.5 million euros financing from the European Union and the Romanian Government, two pools, the mineral springs and the park itself (the former Năstasache Park), revived the tourist activity in the Gura Slănic area, for both tourist and the local population. On the 10 m terrace and dominating the left shore of Trotuș, the former monastery of Răducănu and the church with the same name, representative for the late Romanian baroque, were built at the end of the 17th century. Besides the grave of Costache Negri, they constitute one of the main tourist sites in Târgu Ocna. The Ocna monastery, situated on the Măgura hill, at 505 m, close to the monument dedicated to the World War I heroes, also has lodging places (60 places). Built between 1750 and 1757, the church inside the monastery was demolished in 1964, building a tourist complex instead. In 1990 the monastery was rebuilt, and in 1993 the current church was finalized.

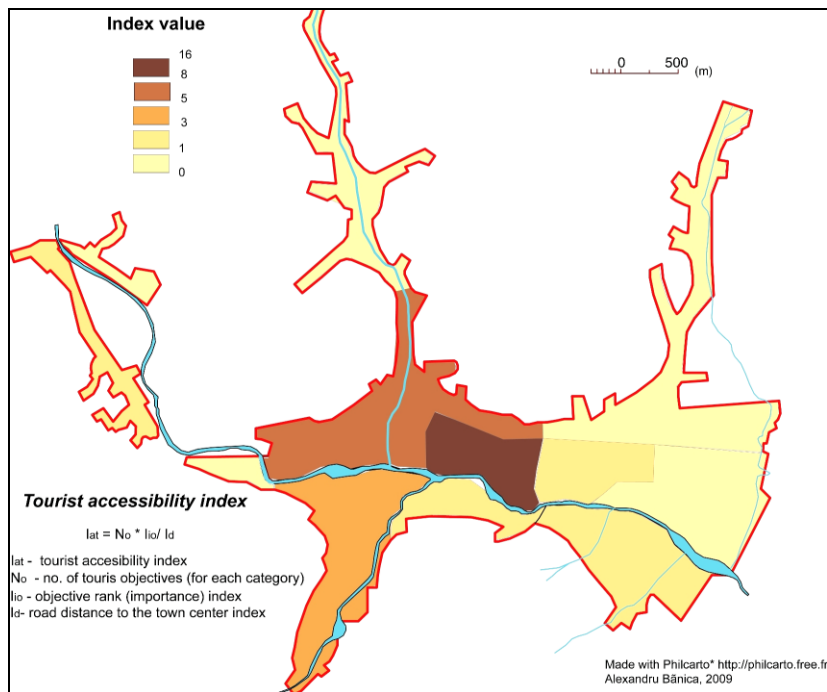


Fig. 3: *Tourist objectives accessibility in Târgu Ocna town*

As regards the *tourist objectives accessibility*, we propose an index taking into account the road distance from the centre of the town (where tourist go when they come from the outside and from where all the other tourist sites start), the number of tourist site in every neighbourhood, the importance of every one of them in the collective memory, and their diversity. We divided them upon value classes and we gave them certain weights within the final formula. We have three types of

local tourist objectives: *ecclesiastic objectives* (the town with most churches, many of them old, official historic monuments), *cultural-historic tourist objectives* (old buildings, historic monuments, museums, and the salt mine) and *balneal tourist objectives* (useful for the balneal tourism). The importance of tourist objectives was determined taking into account the status of historic monument declared by the Ministry of Culture and Cults and the estimated number of visitors.

Naturally, the most advantaged area is the central one, because of the important cultural and historic patrimony, numerous churches and monuments, high lodging and treatment capacity. Nonetheless, there are two more tourist areas in town. Firstly, the salt mine presents a national interest tourist objective and it is the most important tourist site of the town. Situated in the North – North-West part of the town, tourists prefer it because it also has many churches and a lodging facility, even though it is not central and there are transportation problem, not being very accessible by road. The second tourist area is the Gura Slănic neighbourhood, because it is on the itinerary towards the most important tourist resort of the department – Slănic Moldova – and also because it has a modern treatment facility, a monastery and the Măgura historic monument, with cultural-historic and industrial points (monuments, salt drill, the Burlacu Hole, etc.), and ecclesiastic points of attraction. As secondary tourist areas, we have the locality of *Poieni*, at 3-4 km from the centre, not easily accessible, with cultural-historic objectives (including the model of the first mechanic drill – 1861) Roman-catholic and Orthodox churches, *Tisești* – with a church and Dacian vestiges (the ancient city of *Titelca*) and the east peri-central area, with old civilian buildings and a church (with no special interest for tourists). The other neighbourhoods are less important for tourists, but have punctual objectives, which could be turned into attractive sites for the visitors – St. Peter and Paul church in *Vâlcele*, the *Casa Creangă* pension in *Gălean*, the church in *Păcurele* or the cemetery situated in the north of the east industrial area.

Among the tourist objectives with poor valorisation (even local authorities admit it) we mention: the *Măgura* park, the *Hogback* of *Drăcoaia*, the *Ocele Vechi* site, the hills of *La Stupină* (*Chicirla*) and *Fețele Târgului*. With minimal planning (tourist itineraries, planning for camping or relaxation, other non-intrusive tourist services), we can move the human pressure from the urban space, with a positive role in diversifying the local tourism offer.

An integrative and sustainable valorisation of tourist resources requires the complementary valorisation of the objectives outside the town, creating regional tourism circuits, having as potential destinations those listed in *table 1*.

Among the dysfunctions of the local tourist system, the first is the lack of tourism and access infrastructure (it is hard to get to several tourist sites, outside the main transportation axis, situated on secondary, old roads, there are no tourist itineraries for the areas surrounding *Târgu Ocna*). We add the fact that the area

around Târgu Ocna is poorly valorised and there is no communication between local authorities and those in Slănic Moldova, in order to integrate the two tourist resorts in one tourist pole with an essential importance, at least for Moldavia. Among the dysfunctional aspects which have been totally or partially corrected lately we mention: marking the tourist sites, rebuilding the infrastructure for an easier access to certain tourist sites (the road to the salt mine, the bridges between the centre, Tisești and the Gura Slănic neighbourhood), rearranging the seven water springs within the „Măgura” park, which hadn't been used until 2008 in an adequate balneal environment, the park, the amphitheatre and the local pool, with governmental and European funds.

Table 1: *Tourist objectives near Târgu Ocna town*

| No. | <i>Tourist objectives near Târgu Ocna town</i> | <i>Distance from the town (km)</i> |
|--------------------|---|------------------------------------|
| Natural objectives | | |
| 1 | Dofteana Natural Reserve | 11 |
| 2 | Bălătau Lake (Dărmănești) | 17 |
| 3 | Izvorul Alb (White Spring) Forest. Yew Natural reserve (Dărmănești) | 17 |
| 4 | Nemira Fields and Rocks (Slănic Moldova) | 18 |
| 5 | Perchiu Hill (Onești) | 15 |

III. PUBLIC PERCEPTION ON TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

The essential element for a correct and efficient valorisation of the tourist potential is *the perception of local population*. On one side, it is based on a good intuition regarding the local elements that could be valorised, and on the other side, given the fact that a local community (be it even rural) can have a hard word to say concerning the rehabilitation or planning of tourist sites. In 2007-2008, first as a basis for the Strategic Plan for Development of Târgu Ocna and then as a completion for our works, there has been made a major survey on a sample population of 447 respondents. The sample population was two-stages, quasi-probabilistic and stratified (by place of residence, sex and age). The field experience, the discussions held with the inhabitants, and most of all, the mentioned poll based on sociological technique of sampling, data processing and analysis, proved to be very useful for the investigation of the public perception over the necessities for tourist development.

In order to diversify and develop the treatment capacity, we need a rehabilitation and conservation plan of tourist objectives, of the mineral springs in the Măgura Park, of the park itself. Besides the technological rehabilitation of the treatment facility, we need more lodging spaces at the periphery, and also tourist information points. Equally, the authorities have pointed out the necessity of a better infrastructure, by rehabilitating the access ways (access roads/streets,

sidewalks, spaces for pedestrians) to tourist sites in the area, marking the tourist objectives, ensuring the safety by transportation restrictions in the area and also the existence of auxiliary facilities (banks, garbage cans, other street furniture and public toilets).

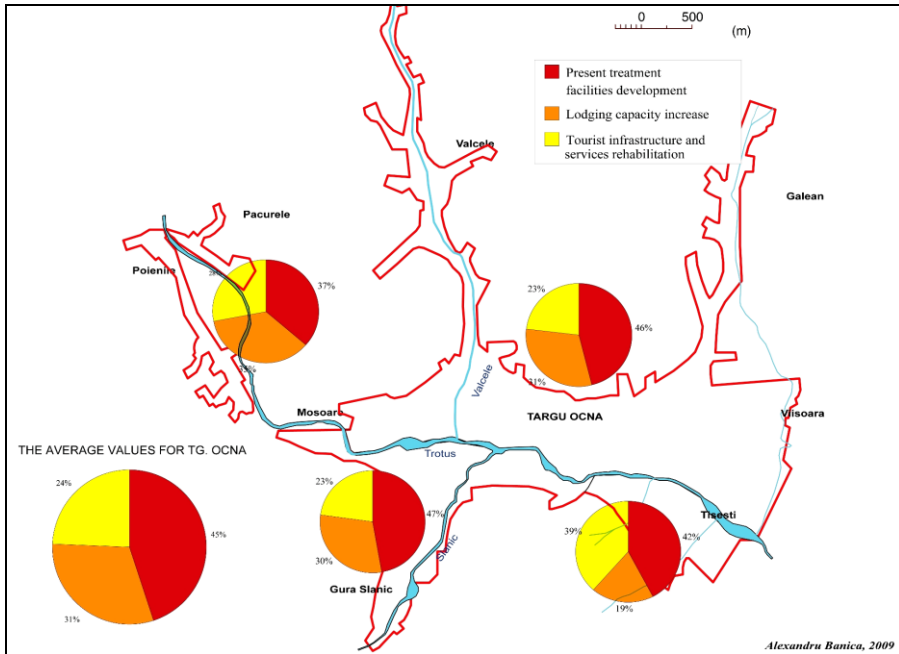


Fig. 4 : Public perception on tourist function improvement in Târgu Ocna town

The local population sees the tourist phenomenon as an opportunity for more jobs and for the development of the town. The main conditions for an efficient and essential tourism are the improvement of the local offer of Târgu Ocna and the surrounding areas, and more tourists. For better tourist competitiveness, we need more and better services, an improvement in the treatment conditions and the rehabilitation of the tourist lodging. All three are equally important, with a stress upon the specificity and originality of Târgu Ocna, meaning the quality of the salt mine treatment.

The public perception shows great homogeneity regarding the fact that things could be improved by promoting the Târgu Ocna brand, seen as essential by inhabitants of all neighbourhoods, but less by those of Poieni, who stress other aspects, more pragmatic: a tourist information point, developing the local tourism/agritourism in the peripheral neighbourhood and opening an archaeological site at Podeni. On the other hand, the last desire, expressed by the people in Poieni, is not much approved of by the inhabitants of the centre and of Gura Slanic neighbourhood and totally uninteresting for those of Tisești. On the contrary, all

inhabitants agree that public information and agritourism are very important for local tourism improvement.

At the same time, the inhabitants of the central area and of Poieni, where most of the tourist sites are situated, give more importance to agritourism and to the development of services as reliable alternative if the classic exploitation of resources fails to success the lack of restructuring in the salt industry, still belonging to the state and using old machines, and the crises in the wood and furniture industry, given that importations are cheaper⁴, transform tourism and agritourism into a valuable “secondary” solution, mostly given the fact that there is much potential.

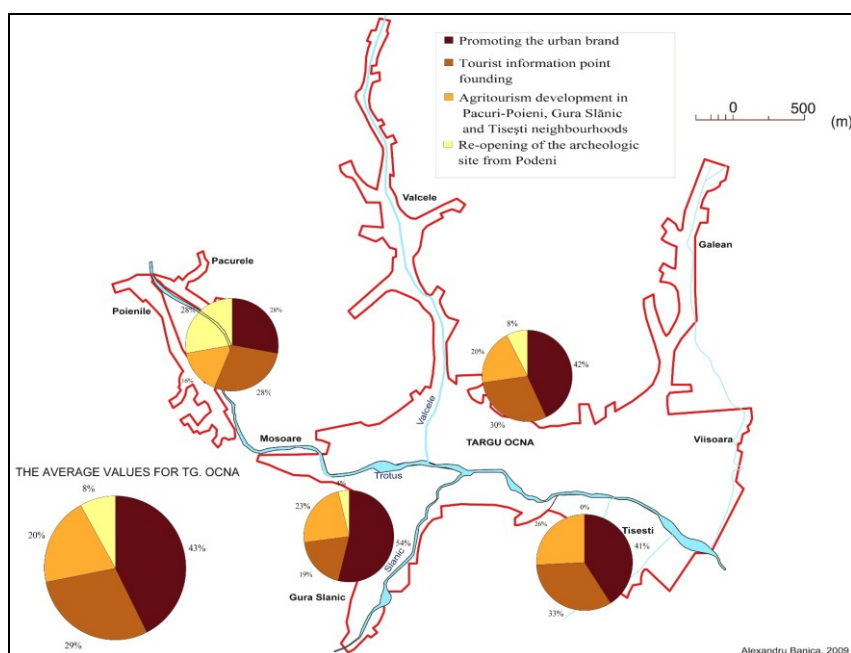


Fig 5: Public perception on Târgu Ocna's tourist accessibility stimulation

As regards the future identity of Târgu Ocna, the *public image associated to a tourist resort* (with a diversified offer) or, more precisely, to a *balneal resort* (only the inhabitants of Tisești believe that this specialization is essential), 87% of the respondents agreeing with the idea. The industrial character, dominant until recently, even though it is secondary on a regional level, is seen as less important by most of the population. Only in Poieni the inhabitants, involved in secondary activities, believe that we should build more industrial sites.

⁴The assessment is still valid even though, for example, the furniture company Coșna was taken over by the Lemarco Group in Bucharest, promising initially to increase the number of jobs up to 500.

As tourist resort of national interest, it is essential for Târgu Ocna to promote its local image and to turn it into a brand. There have been many attempts in this sense, by printing guides, brochures or monographs (Corneliu Stoica, Mihai Pelin), and, recently, by building two information points in the Măgura Park and in the House of Culture. There are plans to build other such points for public information, such as those regarding the environment, local investments, etc., in order to co-interest the local community to take part in the decision-making process. It is equally important to promote the tourist resort of Târgu Ocna in the central media, national television (or private, with a large audience) and the structures within the Ministry of Tourism.

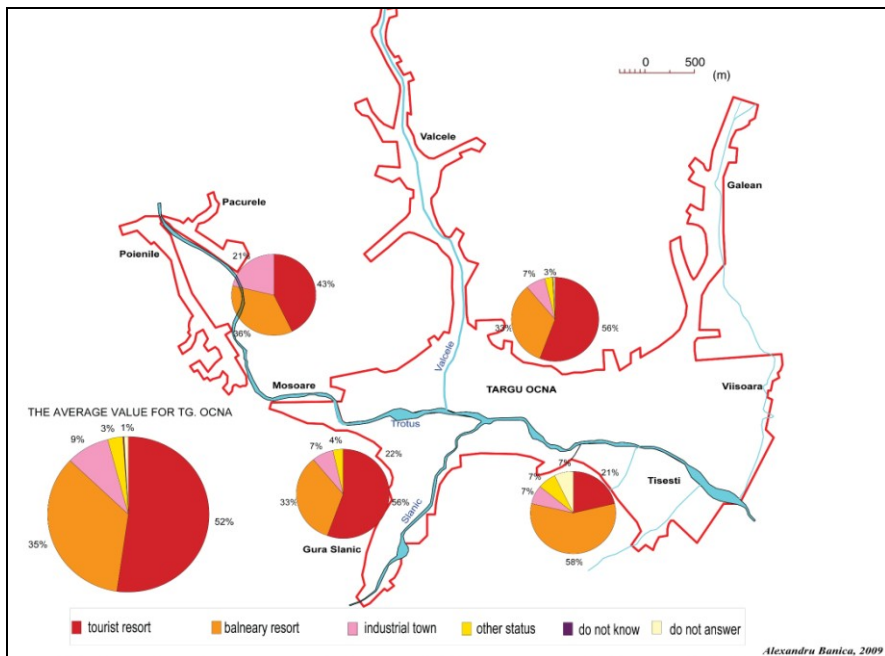


Fig. 6 : Public perception on the future status of Târgu Ocna town

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND SUITABLE FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

The success of implementing tourism activities in Romanian small towns, such as Târgu Ocna, often depends upon the natural and anthropogenic qualities of the site, upon the location (through geographical accessibility) and the characteristics of local politics, all of them reflecting upon the tourist function of that locality. It is difficult to have an agreement between the administrative decision and the public perception, given the real potential and concrete necessities of the community, as all actors involved should arrive to the same conclusions. Beyond the specific aspects, that could be worked out, the issues regarding the tourist activity are a consequence of the lack of “tourist culture”, of not considering

tourist resources and of the incapacity of local authorities to valorise tourist resources or to integrate them at the regional level, which could transform the Trotuș River Basin into an attractive tourist area at national level.

The valorisation of the tourist potential, in an integrated manner, could be achieved through structural actions, having as purpose the improvement of the tourist offer and ensuring the best tourist accessibility. Increasing the lodging capacity may have sustainable premises mostly in relation to the valorisation of local economy products and to the identity reflected in the ethnic and folkloric patrimony, especially by *building new agritourism pensions; improving the quality by rehabilitating the lodging structures and tourist services*, including balneal treatment, *guided tourist itineraries* and *marking the extra-urban tourist itineraries*. In order to have better attractiveness and accessibility for tourists, *Târgu Ocna needs to create a brand*, at national and even international level, through informing and promoting campaigns, both locally and extra-locally. *The co-operation with the other urban and rural localities in Trotuș River Basin, with tourist objectives of general interest* (Slănic Moldova, Onești, Moinești, Comănești, Dărmănești, and also Dofteana, Sălătruc, Poiana Uzului, Târgu Trotuș, Borzești, Cașin, Oituz or Tescani) *for integrated tourist circuits*, may increase the regional attractiveness of an area surnamed, presently with no real motivations, “The Moldavian Prahova Valley”.

The tourist development is not a universal remedy, not even by far, and it must be completed by a real and organic functional diversification, through stimulating local micro-capitalism, entrepreneurship, to create a dynamic, vivid framework, well integrated in the regional and national level. The development bases are both *internal to the town* and *inter-community* through the radiant effects of the development upon the localities within the urban influence area and through the collaboration with other co-interested urban and rural communities.

References

- Armaș, Iuliana, Damian, R., Verga, Mihaela** (2004) - *Saline integrate circuitului turistic. Praid, Târgu Ocna, Slănic Prahova, Cacica*, Ed. Cartea Universitară, București
- Cazes, G.** (1992) – *Fondements pour une géographie du tourisme et des loisirs*, Breal, Paris
- Chicuș, Maria** (2004) - *Târgu Ocna anului 2004 – mic îndreptar turistic*, Editura Didactic Press
- Defert, P.** (1972) – *Le tourisme et les activités touristiques. Essai d'intégration*, CET- Les Cahiers du tourisme, Serie C, no. 19, Aix-en-Provence

- Eligh, J., Welford, R., Ytterhus, B.** (2002) – *The production of sustainable tourism: concepts and examples from Norway*, Sustainable development, 10, 223-234, published online in Wiley Interscience (www.interscience.wiley.com)
- Halseth, G, Meiklejohn, Cathy** (2009) - *Indicators of small town tourism development potential: the case of Fouriesburg, South Africa*, Urban Forum (2009) 20: 293-317
- Muntele, I., Iașu, C.** (2006) - *Geografia turismului. Concepte, metode și forme de manifestare spațio-temporală*, Ed. Sedcom Libris, Iași
- Pelin, Șt.** (2002) - *Târgu Ocna. Monumente și personalități*, Editura Apollon, Constanța.
- Stoica, C.** (2003) - *Istoria ilustrată a orașului Târgu Ocna. Din cele mai vechi timpuri până în 1918*, Asociația Costache Negri, Editura Aristarc, Onești
- Stoica, C.** (2007) - *Târgu-Ocna, oraș istoric și turistic*, Ghid turistic, 2007
- * * * *Strategia de dezvoltare durabilă a orașului Târgu Ocna*, 2007

Received: 30 March

Accepted: 28 July