

THE MAIN TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN BOTOȘANI COUNTY

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Abstract

The development of the touristic sector is dependent on the identification of attractive elements that are responsible for the degree of development of tourism in that area. This article is a reference to better highlight the positions that urban and rural settlements from Botoșani County hold in terms of tourist attraction. This will create a hierarchical classification which would allow a coherent and logical identification of the attractive areas.

Key words: *Attractiveness; Touristic potential; Tourist routes; Botoșani County; Hierarchical classification.*

JEL Classification: *L83, Q26, R58*

INTRODUCTION

The image analysis of the degree of organization and development of a territory has to start from a more accurate inventory of existing resources, reaching then to the differences of units that can enroll in a hierarchical system. From this point of view, in the field of tourism it is necessary to identify spatial units that reflect natural and anthropic resources and also the existing tourism infrastructure at a given time.

Location of tourist facilities, their concentration or dispersion is given according to the quantity and quality of existing tourism resources in a particular geographic area. Tourism resources represent all the attractive features of a territory, regardless of their origin and relations between them (Cocean, 2004).

Every destination who wishes to develop tourism must carefully assess the development potential, and from this assessment will be determined the valorization method, respectively the strategic options that will be chosen. Overall development strategies must target the weak points through targeted activities that can actually overcome the current impasse.

The setting of touristic areas is influenced by the distribution of natural or anthropic resources but also the necessary equipment associated with this field. Many times the degree of satisfaction of tourists is done not only by visiting and knowledge of some patrimony elements, but also by the quality of the services and tourist equipment presented.

Within the Botoșani County, the city of Botoșani and the neighboring communes manage to concentrate almost the entire existing tourist possibilities. This situation is not at all beneficial

because in the future it is wanted a more uniform development of the tourist phenomenon. In these conditions, the evolution of tourism in this county requires coordination, investments, training, promotion, which determines the collaboration between public administration authorities and private companies.

The goal of this article is to create a synthetic study, in a realist image, which contains the spatial localization of the main tourist attractions in Botoșani County to be able to identify the possibilities for improvement of tourism in this area. The methods used in making this article are observation, analysis and the cartographic method. My personal contribution resides in the process of obtained data from sources or direct observation in the field and making of maps for a better understanding of the offered data.

LITERATURE VIEW

What is tourist attractiveness? Although at first sight may seem like a simple question, defining tourism attractiveness represents an extremely complex thing. Tourist attractiveness is a demanding and difficult to standardize concept which plays an extraordinary role in the tourism dynamics, offering important information about the inventory of components that are attractive from the tourist perspective as well as information about the perceptions and expectations of tourists.

Researches in the field have shown studies about the attractiveness of some territories are extremely important in understanding the elements that encourage people to travel. Although we observed similarities between the concept of tourism potential and attractiveness, some authors prefer to use the term tourist attractiveness because it is considered more

comprehensive in exploring the relationships which are formed between demand and offer (Iațu, Bulai 2011). While tourism potential focuses on natural and anthropic resources which together with the infrastructure form the tourist offer of a destination, tourist attractiveness acts directly on the number of tourist arrivals, ensuring the success of a tourist destination. But both tourist attractiveness as well as tourism potential is important concepts that put their print directly on how actors in tourism act.

Tourism Encyclopedia defines attractiveness as a quantitative measure that empowers a destination to bring tourists (Jafari, 2000). As a consequence, the diversity of tourist attractions existing at the level of a destination helps to differentiate between them, deciding which may be eligible.

Tourist attractiveness heavily relies on the impact that the tourist destination has on the tourist, by default on his satisfaction (Formica, 2000). The success of a tourist destination is determined by how it manages to guarantee and at the same time to provide visitors, through the entire offer, an experience and a degree of satisfaction that will exceed other alternative destinations. In other words, tourist movements are not random representing a response to an attraction (Bryer, 1961).

Assessment of tourism potential attractiveness of a territory remains a very difficult task in the light of its complexity, or by the importance of ranking the elements from which is made or the number of grounds that were taken into account in assessing them (Oprea, 2012).

The majorities of the works referring to the tourism in Botoșani County are insufficient, out-of-date and cannot exceed the inventorying stage of natural and anthropic resources. In these conditions, it is required a series of studies which can reveal the actual situation, highlighting the possibilities but also the impediments in the development of the tourist sector relative to other counties.

EXPLOITATION OF TOURIST RESOURCES IN BOTOȘANI

To initiate and develop tourism activities in any region or territory, natural or anthropic potential made up of a series of resources has always been a key factor. Knowledge of the own resources which can be used for tourism purposes and the extent to which they can be used, is an important element for the various categories of tourist activities. Depending on the dominance of one or other of the natural components and their differentiated valorization, tourist accommodations are made distinguished in volume, aspect and functionality.

In the last 20 years tourism in Botoșani has distinguished itself by a low dynamic compared with other counties in the Moldavia region, largely due to the lack of investment, innovation and promotion. At

the level of perception, it is placed in a deep rural area with a high birth rate and facing a number of economic problems. Creating this negative label led to the lack of pertinent domain analysis on what really exists in the territory. Therefore, tourism must be explored and pursued dynamic through a system of specific indicators to assess the effects that it induces. But leaving aside the negative economic label this territory is recognized as an important cultural area, through simple and hospitable people.

Figures 1 and 2 are intended to identify the main natural and human attractions in Botoșani County to highlight areas where the focus of tourism resources is higher than other areas.

Although the natural tourism fund brings together a wide and varied range of components it fails to generate economic contribution or specific tourism structures. Into the natural potential stands the hydrographic network which is represented by a high density of ponds and lakes that create optimal conditions for promoting fishing tourism, leisure or weekend tourism. Unfortunately, the equipment level is relatively low in tourism infrastructure taking into account its natural potential. Nowadays it's emerging more and more, for forest vegetation, the tourist attraction function, as forested areas are like a peaceful oasis without pollution and become a favorite destination for those escaping especially from urban areas. This is the case of forest and wildlife reservations in the county that could support activities with tourism profile in the conditions that there would be properly arranged.

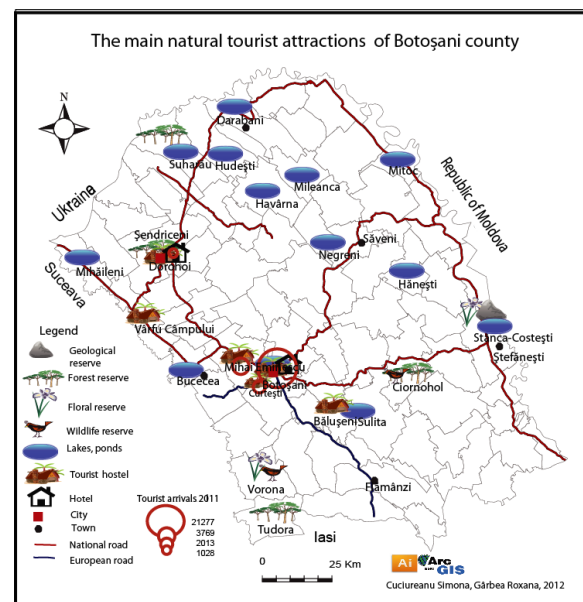


Figure 1 - The main natural tourist attractions in Botoșani County

Anthropic resources, which reveal from the cultural heritage and related activities, show a strong spatial concentration in the west of the county. It emphasizes a classification of human resources, which may be the premises for tourism development:

memorial houses, places with ethnography and traditions, settlements with monasteries and churches with cultural significance and museums.

The mere existence of a varied cultural heritage is not enough to develop a strong and competitive tourism sector on a regional level. A number of steps must be taken to exploit these goals and to become true attractions, being the early stage of their valorization.

The technical and material base is underdeveloped, focusing on accommodation units close to the municipal areas of the studied region (Botoșani and Dorohoi) to the detriment of other areas that have significant tourism resources. Thus we can see a polarization of urban areas from the point of view of tourism infrastructure and arrivals, which diminishes the ability of rural areas with tourist attractions to impose in terms of tourist attractiveness.

Modest development of accommodation units was particularly influenced by social and economic conditions that have a major role in building tourist facilities over time. Interdependence of material and technical base, accessibility and tourism resources contribute to urban centers individualization in tourist preferences, the touristic phenomenon being supported by these factors.

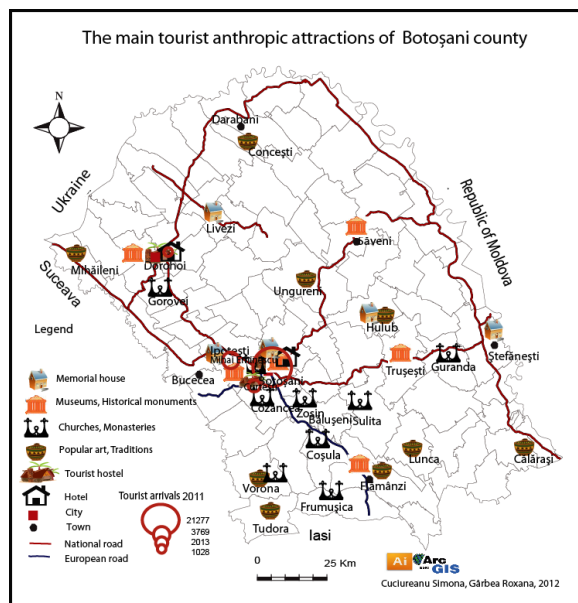


Figure 2 - The main anthropic tourist attractions in Botoșani County

Following the analysis of natural and anthropic tourism fund, there were identified several possible tourist routes to highlight the unique territory and to promote some specific forms of tourism, focusing only on a particular type of tourism to highlight the target group. Analyzing the existing tourism background in the county Botoșani you can notice some elements that can provide unique and local identity towards tourism development.

The proposed tourist routes contain both natural and anthropic resources, which are: cultural

route - includes a circuit to memorial houses of prominent personalities from Romanian culture originating in Botoșani (Mihai Eminescu, George Enescu, Nicolae Iorga, Ștefan Luchian, Octav Băncilă, Demostene Botez), pilgrims road - contains churches and monasteries which have a significant history and attractive architecture (Gorovei, Coșula, Botoșani, Sulița, Cozancea), ethnographic and unchanged traditions road - includes settlements where there are museums that preserve ethnography of the area and places where traditions are kept such as pottery, crafts, popular art, although civilization and modernity have entered in a continuously way which caused their loss in other counties (Mihăileni, Vorona, Tudor, Flămânzi, Lunca), ponds road in eastern and western county - contains a circuit that promotes tourism and recreational fishing in the most important ponds / water accumulation in the county, being grouped according to their accessibility and geographical area, because the rich presence of ponds fosters this type of tourist road (Mihăileni, Bucecea, Cătămărăști Deal, Sulița and Suharău, Darabani, Hudești, Havârna, Mileanca, Mitoc, Negreni, Hănești, Stâncă-Costești), and recreation areas circuit - contains a path of areas with the natural potential of green areas / reservations which is promoting complex forms of tourism like recreational tourism, hunting, birdwatching (Suharău, Șendriceni, Vorona, Ciornohol, Ștefănești- Ripiceni).

Therefore the proposed route highlights an opportunity to exploit the tourism potential and to develop tourism as a major economic activity for these areas. Forms of tourism one can practice are diverse and complex, and through integrated spatial planning you can diversify tourism activities. An important factor for supporting the development of proposed tourist routes consists of tourism infrastructure which is poor and requires development by enriching the number of housing units. The perspectives that emerge from the analysis carried out are numerous valorization of the fund can be possible by implementing tourism policies.

At county level there is a material made by NSP (National Spatial Plan), which is a local legal framework, offering several directions on important tourism resources, but does not emphasize the importance of the tourism phenomenon and its development as currently this does not represent an opportunity for socio-economic development and reducing gaps at local level.

So for a better understanding of these issues we analyzed the structure of different types of tourist attraction objectives based on quantitative assessment of tourism potential used in NSP. Analyzing and deepening of these features of attractiveness determines the authenticity of the assessment of these components. In case we will notice major differences between scores provided by NSP and data from the NSI, the score will be recalculated and changed to have a more realistic image.

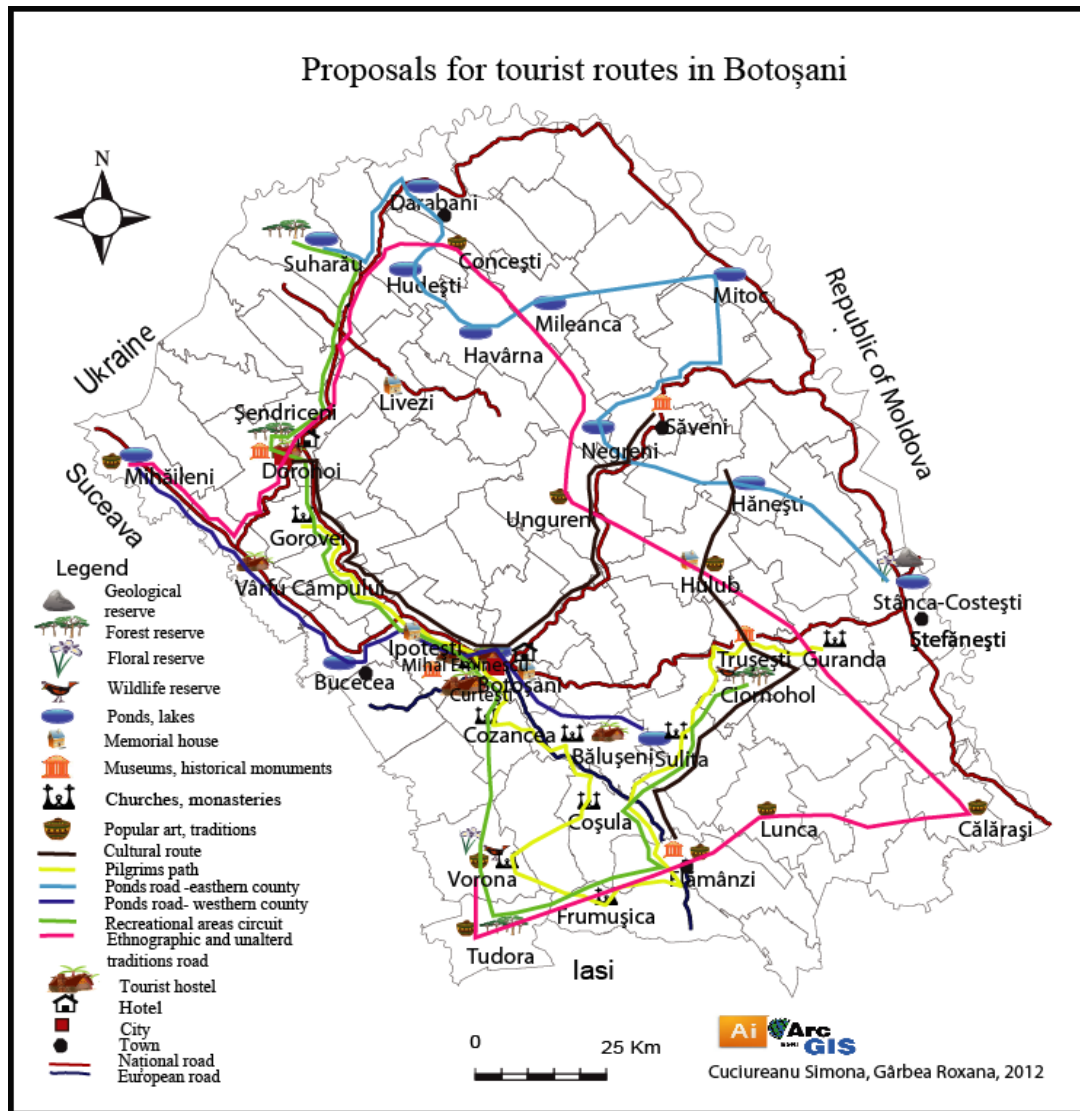


Figure 3 - Proposals for tourist routes in Botoșani County

In the National Spatial Plan (NSP) there is a section, 'tourist areas', which aims to assess as close to reality tourism value for all administrative units in Romania. In this research were involved several institutions specialized in tourism and related fields, economics, territorial planning, geography, sociology, etc. The study area lies in this national material, which provided an opportunity to achieve classification of spaces in terms of tourism, taking as criteria natural and anthropic resources and technical and touristic infrastructure. Therefore a typology was made that highlights localities with tourist resources and infrastructure, settlements with tourist resources but without infrastructure and areas without tourism resources.

Typology of tourist facilities highlights that there are only 4 locations - Botoșani Bucecea, Dorohoi and Mihai Eminescu - that developed the tourism phenomenon, having the benefit of natural tourism resources, anthropic and also the necessary infrastructure. It is noted among these two

municipalities, a city and a suburban town, which shows that urban areas are more developed in terms of tourism compared to rural areas. Then comes the areas with natural resources and technical infrastructure (high accessibility), the villages in the vicinity of cities Botoșani (Curțești, Bălușeni, Stăuceni, Răchiți) and Dorohoi (George Enescu, Șendriceni, Văculești), but also cities like Ștefănești and Darabani with rich resources, consisting of ponds and reservations. Areas with rich natural and human tourism resources but without developed infrastructure are a few developing communes (Tudor, Vorona, Vârfu Câmpului, Dersca, Santa Mare and Avrămeni) which have a high accessibility due to their position as border settlements. Areas with tourist resources, technical infrastructure, but without accommodation are settlements with city status such as Săveni, Flămânzi or developing communes like Mihăileni, Frumușica, Copălău, Mitoc and territories without tourism resources and infrastructure, which represents a number of 28 communes.

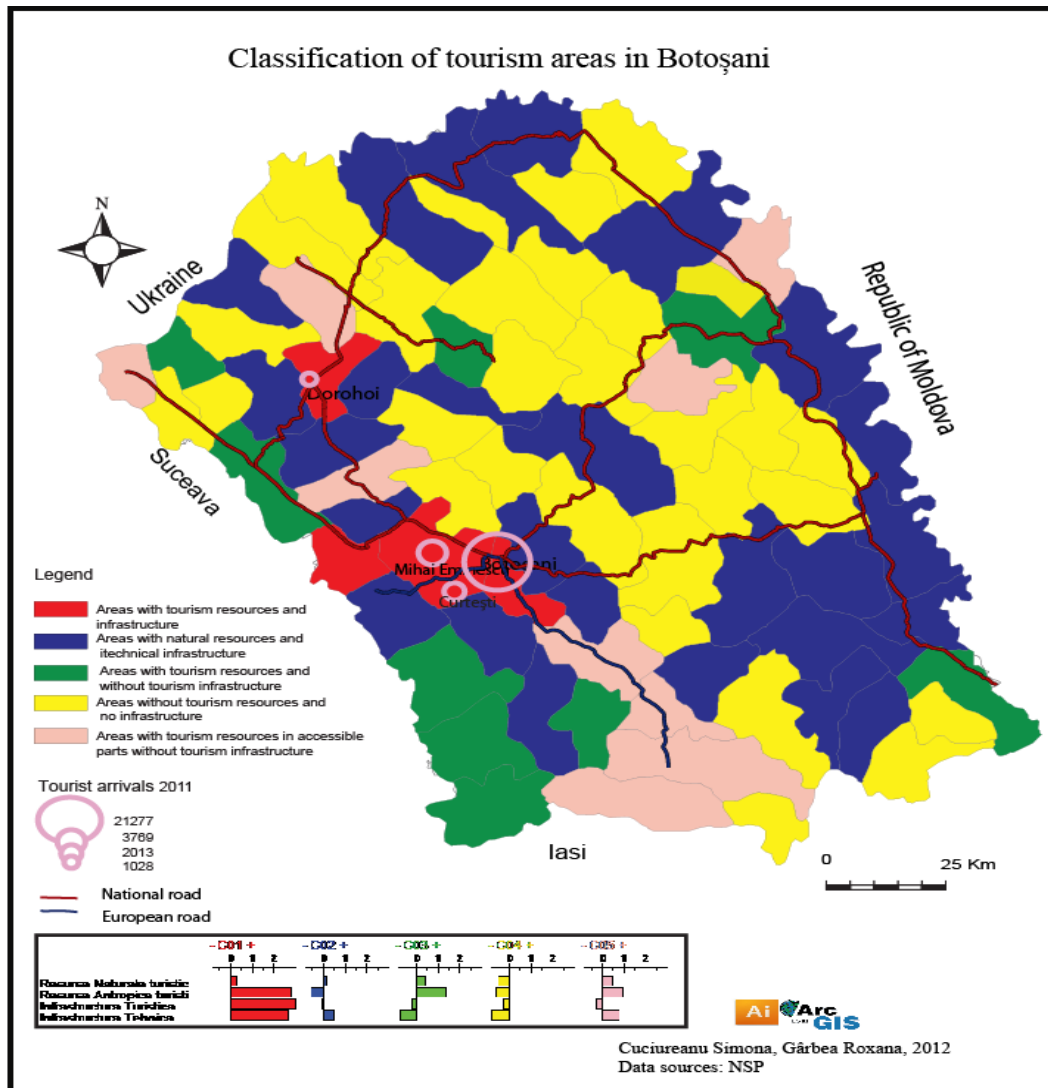


Figure 4 - Classification of tourist facilities in Botoșani County

Depending on the type of tourist facilities we can notice that areas valued in terms of tourism are the urban areas and those developing which belong to commons and can be found at the border of Suceava County. Thus we can see that in terms of tourist infrastructure urban tourism is favored at the expense of rural tourism, but with an integrated tourism development strategy we could combine the resources of urban areas with rural ones.

CONCLUSIONS

Capitalization of tourism in Botoșani should be based on thorough knowledge of the realities of the geographic space, on natural environment and human characteristics, highlighting the main elements of attractiveness. Quantity and quality of these tourism resources determines the size, intensity and diversity of tourist movements.

Analysis of tourism attractiveness in Botoșani County showed the existence of some tourism resources, natural and anthropic, that may be the premise for the tourism phenomenon development. An opportunity for capitalization and valorization of the resources with tourism valence consists on developing some specialized tourism trails/tours which can shape forms of tourism that can be used, but this will be the assumption for further study in the future.

In the county of Botoșani it is necessary the realization of a tourism study for the local authorities, because it is an efficient way to observe the tourist attractiveness with its main elements: tourism potential, accommodation and technical infrastructure. Thus a detailed evaluation is made of all the zones in this area and offers a concrete vision to the local authorities, this way creating the opportunity of valorization and tourism development.

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