

Mountain Tourism – a Challenge for Sustainable Development. Case Study: Parâng Resort

Piero Innocenti^{*}, Cristina Merciu^{**}, George-Laurențiu Merciu^{***}

^{*} Department of Economic Sciences, University of Florence, 9 Via delle Pandette, 50127, Florence, Italy
e-mail: piero.innocenti@unifi.it, piero.innocenti@hotmail.it

^{**} Faculty of Geography, University of Bucharest, The Interdisciplinary Center For Advanced Researches on Territorial Dynamics, 4-12 Blvd. Regina Elisabeta, Bucharest, Romania
e-mail: krysten1009@yahoo.com

^{***} Faculty of Geography, University of Bucharest, 1 Blvd. Nicolae Bălcescu, Bucharest, Romania
e-mail: merciugeorge@yahoo.co.uk

Abstract

The Parâng mountains have a sizeable white dominant mountain area, which justified the touristic outfitting of ski areas as early as the 1960s, which turned it into one of Romania's traditional tourist destinations. In this present paper, the authors analyze the impact of tourist establishments evolution upon mountain landscape and try to configure a sustainable development model of Parâng resort. The most profound changes in the mountain area analyzed occurred in the post-1990 period, consisting in the modernization and expansion of the accommodation capacity. In the current context, competition - consisting in other tourist destinations specialized in winter sports in Europe, in the Alps and Carpathians regions – combined with the uncertainty and turbulence of the touristic market, require the creation of an innovative strategy that should focus on carrying on steps to modernize the resort and on satisfying consumer tourists, with the goal of creating an integrated and flexible touristic project.

Key words: *winter sports, mountain climate, mountain policies, sport tourism, policy tourism, winter resort, tourism planning*

JEL Classification: *L83, Q15, Q53*

Introduction

Engaging in sports goes back to ancient history; as early as that period, it marked the bond between sports activities and trips, in the sense of traveling.

In the 20 century the link between sports and tourism developed thanks to the positive perception of sports as a fundamental activity to engage in one's free time; it gained new values, from the simple physical exercise to a competition-based, ludic and health-restoring activity¹.

¹ Di Marco, G. D'Intino, S. Oronzo, 2004, apud Cristina Iancu, Fausto Siddu, „Golf as a link between tourism and sports. Case study: the Ugolino Club-Florence (Tuscany, Italy)”, *Annals of the University of Craiova, Geographical Series*, vol. XII, 2009, p. 190.

The concept of sport-related tourism has become more prominent over the last few years; however, there have been difficulties defining the sector and academia have frequently seen sport and tourism as separate spheres of activity. Throughout history, travelling for sport is evident, whether it involved journeying to the next village to play a game of football or in recent times (as mountains became an attraction instead of an object of fear) to go skiing².

Sports tourism itself comes in three versions: “leisure sports tourism”³ or “active sport tourism”⁴ referring to people who travel to take part in sporting activities, “sport event tourism” which refers to people who travel to watch a sporting event⁵ and “nostalgia sport tourism” which includes visits to sports museums or stadiums⁶.

Schreiber (1976) was one of the first to develop a profile of the active sports tourist and found that “the sport traveler is more affluent, better educated and more active than other travelers”⁷. This has been supported in further studies of the ski market, and it is indeed often the perception that you need to be affluent both to go skiing and to purchase all the equipment, although this is not necessarily the case.

Mountain Development Policies versus Landscape Protection

The mountain landscapes, featuring alpine characteristics, were capitalized on using nationally-implemented tourist development programs, also known as “mountain policies”, for instance the “Snow plan” in France, the “Alpenplan” in Germany or the “Superski in the Carpathians” national program in Romania.

The guidelines for the touristic outfitting of the mountain space, the results achieved and the ensuing consequences were uneven, consisting in either viable land-management projects (the Austrian model), or unfeasible projects (the French model).

Climate variations able to alter the alpine tourist destination, the new means of production, exchange and diffusion of information, the evolution of host-tourist relationship focusing on personalized services, and the difficult quantification of the terms of the balance between public and private operators⁸ are several factors that brought about the increase - in the past few years - of the environmental complexity where the public administration and touristic operators act with the goal of remodeling strategic and operative processes in the sector of mountain tourism⁹. Global climate change is probably one of the most severe environmental threats that we will face in the 21st century¹⁰.

A report by the International Commission for the protection of the Alps (CIPRA) mentioned that the Alps are overdeveloped, in the sense that they are the most heavily exploited mountain

² I. Matley, 1981 apud Virgil Nicula, “Mountain environments and tourism – a European model of sustainable development”, *Annals of the University of Oradea, Series Economics Science*, Tom XVII/2008, p. 414, available at: <http://steconomice.uoradea.ro/anale/volume/2008/v1-international-business-and-european-integration/075.pdf>, accessed on 16.03.2011

³ Roberto Ciampicacigli, Simona Maresca, 2004 apud Cristina Iancu, Fausto Siddu, *op. cit.*, p. 191

⁴ Ibidem, Heather Gibson, 1998 apud Virgil Necula, *op. cit.*, p. 414

⁵ Ibidem

⁶ Ibidem

⁷ Apud Nicula, *op. cit.*, p. 414

⁸ Previtali, 2003, Sangalli, 2002, Trentini, 2002 apud Gabrielle Cioccarelli, “Turismo alpino e innovazione. Assetti strategici e di governance, relazioni interorganizzative e information technologies”, Giuffrè Editore, Milano, 2003, p. 3

⁹ Gabrielle Cioccarelli, *op. cit.*, p. 21

¹⁰ Camelia Surugiu, Ana-Irina Dincă, Dana Micu, “Tourism destination vulnerable to climate changes: an econometric approach on Predeal Resort”, *Bulletin Petroleum – Gas University of Ploiești, Economic Sciences Series*, vol. LXII, no. 1/2010, p.111

region in the world. The Alps are not only a habitat for the local residents, but they are of special importance for the areas outside the mountain range because of the transport routes that bisect them¹¹ which allow for easy communication between settlements to the north and those to the south as well as between those to the west and to the east of the Alps.

From a touristic point of view, the Alps are a leisure region that attracts millions of winter sports lovers a year: they are perhaps the most visible expression of human pressure generated by tourist traffic threatening the biodiversity of the European alpine mountain space, which requires implementing a reconciliation of economic interests and environmental norms.

Nowadays we witness a repetition of the scenario of the development of alpine mountain tourism in the Central and Eastern Europe, if one focuses on the countries in the Carpathians characterized an exponential increase in mountain resorts, and this trend extends as far as into the Balkans (Bulgaria).

This can also be observed in Romania, if one conducts a comparative analysis of winter leisure centers built in past historical periods and in the current one. One notices a significant increase in the number of recently-built mountain resorts, and a trend towards modernization and expansion of old resorts. It can be observed that unlike the Communist period, when interest in outfitting mountain areas favoring winter sports focused on the southern side of the Carpathians, starting 1990 there was an acceleration of steps to outfit new mountain resorts all over the Carpathian region in Romania as a result of the financial support granted by the government by way of the project “Superskiing in the Carpathians” (Fig. 1).

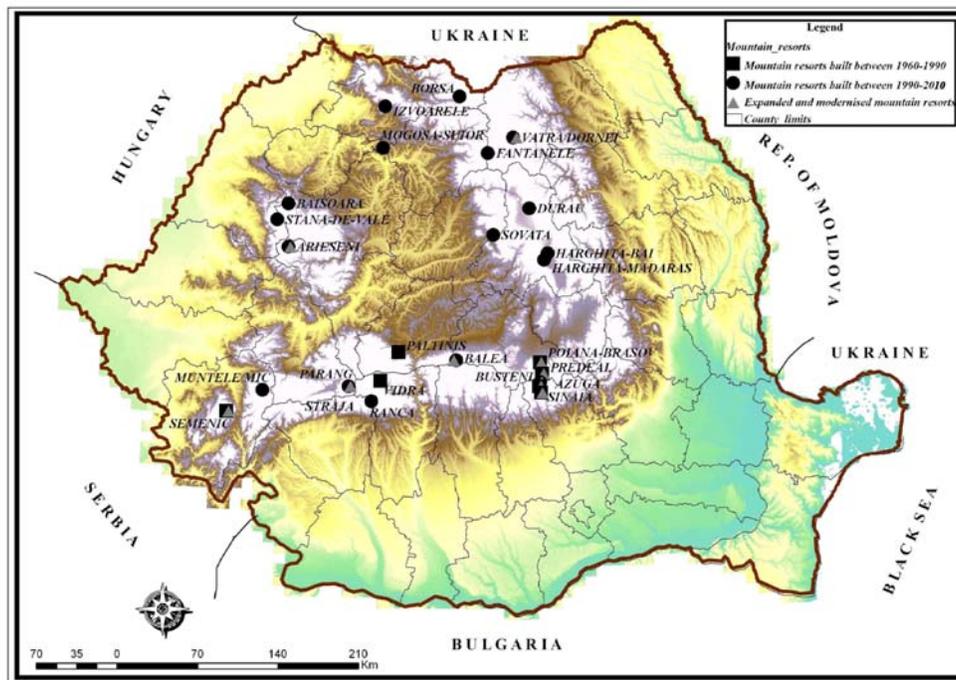


Fig. 1. Map of the evolution of construction of mountain resorts in the Romanian Carpathians during 1960-2010

Source: authors' elaboration based on ArcGIS Desktop 10

This trend is bound to continue in the future, even more so as Romania has the edge of tapping into structural funds in order to develop its general and touristic infrastructure.

¹¹ Michel Revaz apud Nicula, *op. cit.*, p. 414

In the next few years new winter leisure centers will emerge on the map of the distribution of mountain resorts in the Romanian Carpathians (Predeal-Râșnov-Zărnești, the Târlungeni-Vama Buzăului region, Brașov county, Poarta Raiului-Șureanu, Cumpăna, Iezer-Portăreasa-Albeștii de Muscel, the Leaota region, Colibița, Tihuța, Bistrița-Năsăud county, Groșii Țibleșului, Maramureș county, Valea Olteană-Țarcu, Caraș-Severin county, among others)¹².

An acceptable balance between touristic activity and care for the environment is very difficult to reach and in time it may become a feature of steady deterioration of a tourist destination specializing in winter sports. In the past few years one could notice an increase in steps to preserve the natural environment assets, visible at the level of local residents' culture and tourism operators.

Steps carried out nationwide in order to develop new tourist resorts or to modernize existing ones are of an outstanding importance, but it is necessary that the methods of touristic outfitting should focus not only on the opportunities of an economic nature a business enterprise involves – tourism, in this instance – but also on preserving the natural landscape, by means of a land-management policy that would also reflect respect for the environment.

Evolution of Parâng Resort

The development of mountain tourism in the Parâng massif began in the 1960s as part of a large-scale plan for touristic outfitting of areas favoring skiing, implemented at the level of the Romanian Carpathians. The results of this national-importance plan consisted in the creation of mountain resorts in the southern sector of Romanian Carpathians, which now stands out in terms of the high density of ski slopes and tourist accommodation facilities among the other mountain branches.

This initial phase included the first steps to outfit the sports complex specializing in winter sports in the northern part of the Parâng mountains, by the National Physical Education and Sports Academy (ANEFS); the Academy built a facility to serve teaching staff during ski trainings¹³.

A small number of accommodation facilities was built by 1990, most of them small-scale and the result of public initiatives. There was an exponential growth development of tourist accommodation structures, post-1990 and especially post-2000¹⁴, built as a result of private initiative by the local population, which was granted the right to lease part of the land in the northern part of the Parâng mountains. One can notice that during 1990-2010 accommodation facilities diversified (lodges, villas, hotels, secondary residences), and they were characterized by a higher level of comfort. During this period it was registered a significant increase in the accommodation facilities, as the result of the emergence and expansion of parahotel accommodation.

Table 1. Dynamic of units accommodation in Petroșani-Parâng resort

Petroșani-Parâng Resort	Hotels	Motels	Chalets	Urban Pensions	Villas	Secondary residences
1960-1990	3	0	8	0	2	0
1991-2010	1	1	210	1	6	24

Source: field survey

¹² Government Decree 3 of 30.01.2008 on modifications to the national mountain tourism development program "Superskiing in the Carpathians".

¹³ Virgil Teodorescu, 1992 apud Cristina Merciu, „Managementul spațiilor restructurate funcțional. Regenerarea spațiilor industriale din Depresiunea Petroșani prin dezvoltarea activităților turistice”, Ed. Universitară, București, 2011, p. 197

¹⁴ Cristina Merciu, *op. cit.*, p. 199

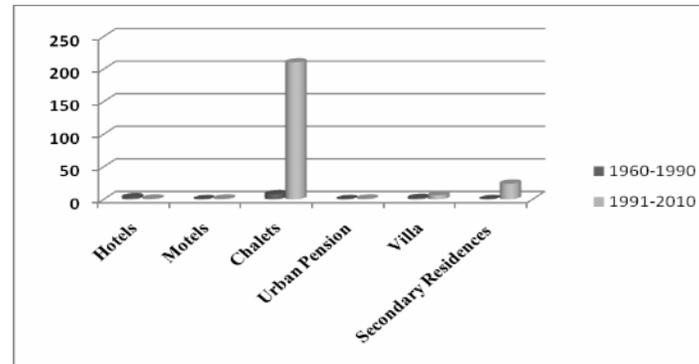


Fig. 2. The dynamic of units accommodation in Petroșani-Parâng resort

In order to determine the accommodation capacity, both official data supplied by the county's statistics bureau, and information obtained in the wake of field investigations were used in parallel. Field research resulted in identifying accommodation capacity for 2,377 beds, by 2010, as compared to 868 beds officially reported before the 90s.

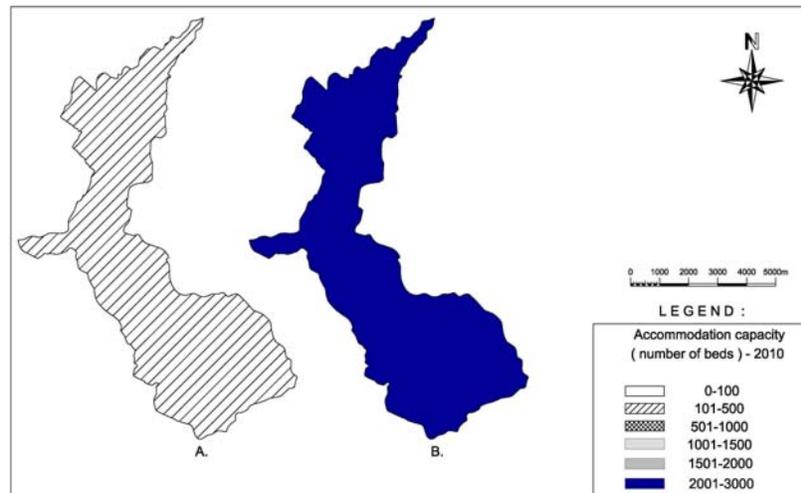


Fig. 3. Accommodation capacity in extant tourist reception facilities in Petroșani-Parâng resort: a) official data (2010). Source: the Deva County Statistics Bureau; b) data collected during field investigations (2010)

In addition to the natural tendency of increase in accommodation capacity, following the creation of new housing units, especially the large differences between the number of accommodation calculated in the wake of field investigations and the figure mentioned in the statistical data are explained by the failure of the statistics bureau to report all hotel beds.

Several accommodation units created before 1990, which are also included in the records of the local administration, are not declared by the county statistics bureau, the reason being that the presence of a low number of units does not fall within the scope of statistic interest (less than 3 units per locality).

Most of recently-built accommodation units as secondary residences or holiday homes are not homologated, because the owners want to avoid the payment of taxes generated by the profit earned from renting beds. According to statistical data, the town of Petroșani and the Parâng resort (incorporated within the town limits), fall within the lower category in terms of size, with 100-500 beds), although their accommodation capacity actually exceeds 2,000 beds (Fig. 3).

Accommodation capacity in service (calculated in bed-days) represents the number of beds in tourist accommodation units with functions of tourist reception, factoring in the number of days the respective units are open during the analyzed period. Calculating the index for the two years of reference indicates an uptrend in the town of Petroșani as a result of the favorable weather conditions, which allowed the winter season to last longer, until late March or even early April.

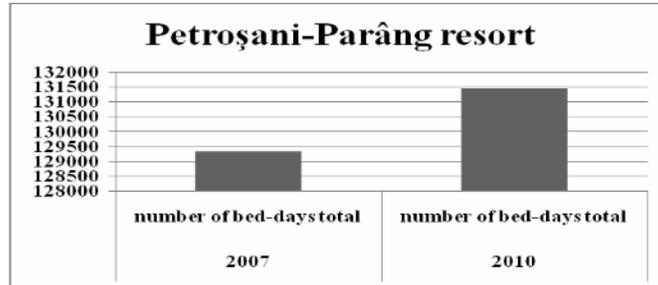


Fig. 4. Evolution of accommodation capacity in service during 2007-2010 in the Petroșani –Parâng resort
Source of data: the Deva County Statistics Bureau

Calculating the monthly evolution of the accommodation capacity in service (beds - days) indicates a strong seasonality of the Parâng resort, because of the dependence of winter sports tourism on meteorological characteristics (the thickness of the snow layer, the number of days with a layer of snow directly influenced by the number of days with sub-zero temperatures).

The touristic function of a locality is calculated by matching the total accommodation capacity in the locality to its year-round population (number of beds/1,000 residents). In this respect, too, it is worth noticing that different results are obtained when calculating that index using the official data for the resort Petroșani-Parâng, and when using the data resulting from field research. Thus, according to data collected during field investigations, the town of Petroșani has an important touristic function (a value exceeding 200 beds/1,000 inhabitants) (Fig. 5a), and it is included in a higher category than the one indicated by the statistical data (30.1-50 beds/1,000 inhabitants) (Fig. 5b).

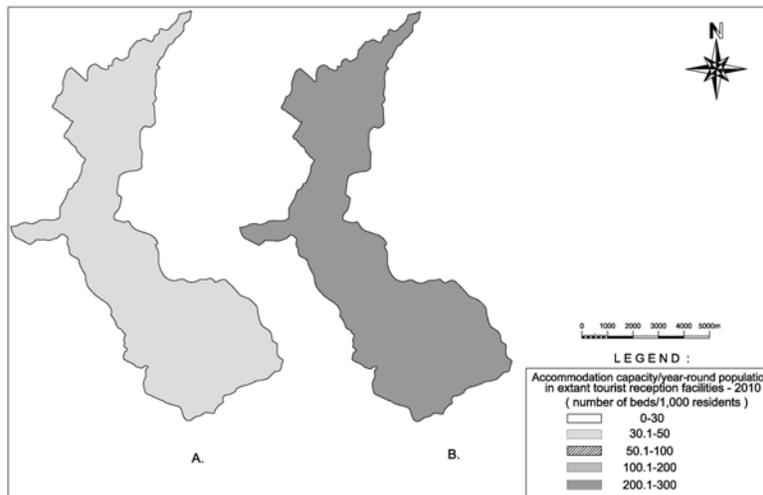


Fig. 5. Accommodation capacity/year-round population in extant tourist reception facilities in Petroșani-Parâng resort: a) official data (2010). Source: the Deva County Statistics Bureau; b) data collected during field investigations (2010)

The analysis of the index of accommodation capacity per km² indicates that using the official data when calculating the density of tourist reception facilities results in lower values (0-10

beds/km²) than those resulting from the data resulting from field research (more than 20 beds/km²) (Fig. 6).

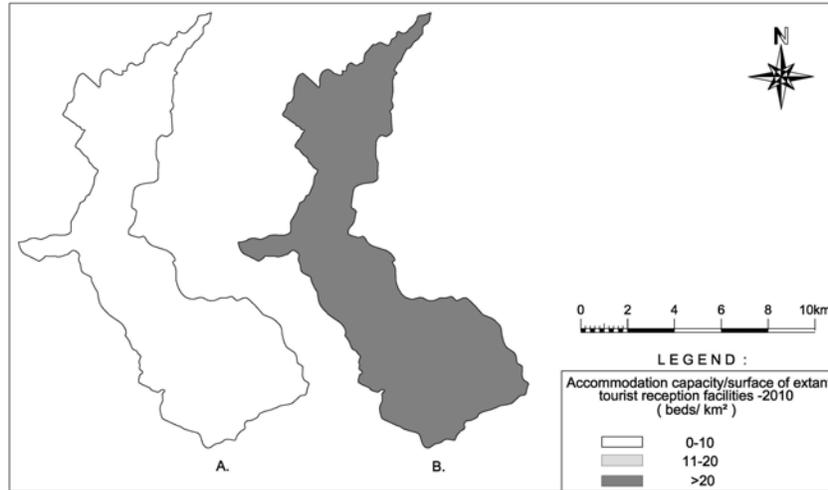


Fig. 6. Accommodation capacity/surface of extant tourist reception facilities (beds/ km²) in Petroșani-Parâng resort: a) official data (2010). Source: the Deva County Statistics Bureau; b) data collected during field investigations (2010)

Although it is a winter agreement centre with a tradition in Romania, because of the precariousness of the services offered, it was recently homologated as a mountain resort of national interest, by Government Decision no. 1205 of 07.10.2009. Although the Parâng resort does not comply with all requirements for that status, it was deemed that its homologation might mean a support to receive non-returnable funds needed to implement the modernization projects submitted at the local administration's initiative.

Mountain Tourism Development Policy Used in Parâng

The importance of the initiative to develop winter tourism in the northern part of the Parâng Mountains is welcome, even more so as during the totalitarian regime actions to outfit mountain areas were limited to construction of a number of low-comfort tourist accommodation units.

Finding an innovative solution as far as the organizational structure of tourism in mountain resorts is concerned and that of mechanisms for inter-organizational coordination is the result of the absence of pre-fabricated or universally-valid solutions for all types of landscapes, and that the solutions must be created function of the resources of the tourist attraction and the local framework, taking into account the variability of climate, landscape, socio-economic and institutional conditions.

The project for development of the Parâng resort was submitted to the scrutiny of a team of Austrian specialists in management of mountain areas favoring skiing, which meant to re-size the ski areas and improving the touristic infrastructure. Plans in this respect involve construction of new ski slopes, an action that will contribute to expanding the ski area from 3.8 km to 23.6 km, and creation of other forms of tourist entertainment (construction of an artificial lake to be used as a skating rink in winter), the installation of new cable lift machines (gondola lift) (the project "Outfitting the ski area in the Parâng resort"). These actions will inevitably impact on the mountain landscape; the weight of natural elements will drop and the scale of installations to be erected will have a heavy anthropization of the northern part of the Parâng mountains as their main effect, inevitably leading to a form of spatial organization "burdened" by human-pressure elements. The ski slopes in the Parâng massif are 10 km away from Petroșani. Under the

conditions, travel to the resort, located at an altitude of 1.700 m, is very difficult. Travel involves the use of an old ski lift, and it takes close to half an hour. Construction of a gondola lift would shorten the travel time and it would also improve the tourists' travel conditions. In order to build the gondola lift, 60 hectares of forest will be cleared. This means an environmental permit will be difficult to obtain because of the large area of forest that has to be cleared. If the necessary permits are received, the gondola lift would be completed by 2013. The need for the construction of the gondola lift arises as an alternative access route to the area.

Winter sports are the leisure component of the Parâng resort's touristic offer. Nevertheless, the organization of national competitions or ski Olympics can be an opportunity for the development of the favorable image as a destination for winter sports tourism, even more so that the resort includes the most exacting ski slope in Romania, used for training by the athletes who earned significant results during the international winter Olympics, which led to the slope becoming known as the "Olympic slope"¹⁵.

As far as the competences of the human resources within the tourist accommodation facilities in the Parâng resort is concerned, one can notice a low ratio of skilled staff, which is a drawback for the tourist offer, one of the reasons being the structural limitations and the insufficiency in entrepreneurial sensitivity in training staff. Other causes that may explain the low attractiveness of the work offer condition the employee-selection process and they are related to several inconveniences (for instance the working hours: inconstant, night shifts, time off out of sync with the winter holidays or the time off of family and friends, increased seasonality of employment, the frequent absence of opportunities for promotion, etc. Also, the job satisfaction plays an important role in tourism hospitality (Costen, Salazar, 2011).

The current system of touristic organization of the Parâng resort faces a set of dysfunctions that enforce a series of limitations on the development of sustainable tourism. As the Parâng resort is, on the one hand, the end-product of mainly private initiative, one can notice a relative ambiguity as far as the distribution of roles in the activity of tourist information/reception is concerned, especially because of the absence of a tourist information center, in addition to several drawbacks in the field of promotion and sale of tourist services.

These dysfunctions are linked, on the one hand, to the random arrangement of accommodation units, and on the other hand to the predominance of low-comfort accommodation units. When building the tourist accommodation facilities, no architectural details typical of the region were used, which was a failure to comply with one of the guidelines of touristic administration¹⁶.

One other aspect concerning organization is the tourist promotion of the Parâng resort. This action is little represented, as a result of the predominance of private initiative in local touristic organization, fragmented into a multitude of independent micro-operators who have no joint projects, which prevents their involvement in construction of a unitary image of the resort. Touristic promotion is accomplished by the most modern and the most widespread medium, the internet, whose potential for development is outstanding. Also, this form of touristic promotion leads to an autonomy in the dispersion of information concerning the services offered to tourists, and it is used by the majority of accommodation unit owners by means of inclusion in online-booking systems, which ensures the possibility for the tourists to get in direct contact; the internet also allows for the promotion of accommodation units (brief but relevant information is presented: the degree of comfort, capacity, location of the unit, auxiliary services – some units also offer the opportunity of having full-service or partial-service meals).

The climate conditions in the studied area – by way of highlighting the qualitative and quantitative features by calculating bioclimatic indexes – indicate winter sports-playing under the best of conditions, ensuring an extension of the tourist season to 5-6 months. The variables

¹⁵ Ibidem, p. 217

¹⁶ Ibidem, p. 198.

in climate and landscape of the northern part of the Parâng mountains are favorable components of the touristic offer¹⁷.

The climate features and the complexity of the geological and geomorphological elements mean that the mountain region under analysis serves as a tourist attraction during the warm season as well¹⁸.

Rethinking the strategy for the development of the mountain area analyzed is necessary, bearing in mind the implementation of a plan to capitalize on the natural touristic potential during the warm season, thanks to the multitude of available forms and varieties of tourism (speotourism, ecotourism, mountain backpacking) or thanks to installations that can be erected with minimal financial expenses (marking horse riding and bike tourism routes). The importance of the two seasons for mountain tourist destinations is reflected in their being seen as two “fields of business/activity” bound by strong interdependence, but distinct nevertheless¹⁹. Drawing a brief timetable of events, scheduling several activities to be held during the warm season, might be able to incense tourists to travel to the Parâng resort during summers, when tourists’ demand is underdeveloped.

Changes in the organizational process of the Parâng resort must focus on the cooperation and collaboration between private and public operators, on matters pertaining to technology, especially those linked to creating a touristic profile that would win over potential customers. A change in the vision of the resort’s development is also necessary, by adopting a strategy of differentiation, diversification and high-quality services.

Formulating a viable strategy must involve designing an tourist offer that matches the frequent changes occurring on the tourist market. Designing a competitive touristic product must involve a set of preliminary stages, necessary and timely because of the complexity and fluctuations of the tourist market, and awareness of the final goals of the strategy to be implemented, according to matters related to customer satisfaction, which is the element that causes the complexity and changes from one season to the next found on the tourist market. Also, the strategy of a tourist destination should not ignore the changes in the tourists motivations. At the same time, mountain policy must not excessively focus on capitalizing a region’s resources because in time this can lead to an unfavourable assessment in the context of its competition.

Changes as far as the tourists’ motivations are concerned (several short-duration stays in one year, and in several distinct regions, increased mobility, the motivation to visit new tourist destinations, a preference for cultural destinations associated with a desire for knowledge and mental stimulation) require that tourism operators should identify them in order to adjust the range of their offers according to the tourists’ preferences and “expectations”, which brings about implementing a strategy to preserve a high level of customer satisfaction.

Conclusions

Mountain regions are among nature’s most sensitive and most vulnerable areas when it comes to climate changes and to degradation caused by human intervention represented in most of the cases by the winter sport tourism.

Protecting the environmental heritage is a topical and large-scale action needed in order to limit human intervention on fragile regions, even more so as the impact of anthropization has

¹⁷ George Merciu, “Analysis of bioclimatic indicators in the white dominant area. Case study: the northern sector of the Parâng Mountains”, *Annals of the University of Craiova, Series Geography*, vol. XIII, 2010, p. 54.

¹⁸ Ibidem, p. 52

¹⁹ Gabrielle Cioccarelli, *op. cit.*, p. 76

expanded to areas that restrict the development of modern society. Frequently, steps to protect the natural patrimony enforce constraints on commercial enterprises. There are numerous examples mentioned by World Wild Fund Romania that refer to the development of touristic establishments on the premises of protected areas. Excessive development of mountain winter sports tourism in the Parâng resort can impact on the biodiversity of the mountain region analyzed and at the same time it can cause irremediable damages to the mountain landscape.

The development of tourist activity focusing on winter sports must also take into account environmental norms, in order to prevent a conversion of winter sports tourism into a variety of critical tourism.

The main aspects of the development strategy of the Parâng resort must be rethought, so that they would refer to identifying genuine opportunities to capitalize on natural resources, without altering the mountain landscape, as well as to creating a competitive touristic product that would match the current demands on the tourism market, in close correlation with the typology of tourists nowadays.

Acknowledgment

This work was supported by the strategic grant POSDRU/89/1.5/S/58852: “Postdoctoral program for training researchers in the sciences” cofinanced by the European Social Found with the Sectorial Operational Program Human Resources Development 2007-2013.

References

1. Cioccarelli, G., *Turismo alpino e innovazione. Assetti strategici e di governance, relazioni interorganizzative e information technologies*, Giuffrè Editore, Milano, 2003.
2. Costen W., M., Salazar J., The impact of training and development on employee job satisfaction, loyalty and intent to stay in the lodging industry, *Journal of Human Resources in Hospitality and Tourism*, vol. 10, Issue 3/2011.
3. Iancu, F. C., Siddu, F., Golf as a link between tourism and sports. Case study: the Ugolino Club-Florence (Tuscany, Italy), *Annals of the University of Craiova, Series Geography*, p. 189-200, Universitaria Publishing, Craiova, 2009.
4. Legea 526/2003 privind aprobarea Programului Național de Dezvoltare a Turismului Montan “Superschi în Carpați”.
5. Merciu, G. L., Analysis of bioclimatic indicators in the white dominant area. Case study: the northern sector of the Parâng Mountains, *Annals of the University of Craiova, Series Geography*, Universitaria Publishing, Craiova, vol XIII, p. 47-54, 2010.
6. Merciu, F. C., *Managementul spațiilor restructurate funcționale. Regenerarea spațiilor industriale din Depresiunea Petroșani prin dezvoltarea activităților turistice*, Editura Universitară, București, 2011.
7. Nicula, V., Mountain environments and tourism – a european model of sustainable development, *Annals of the University of Oradea, Economics Sciences Series*, 2008, available at <http://steconomice.uoradea.ro/anale/volume/2008/v1-international-business-and-european-integration/075.pdf>, accesed on 16.03.2011.
8. OUG nr. 3/2008 privind modificarea și completarea legii nr. 526/2003.
9. Primăria Petroșani, Proiectul “Amenajarea domeniului schiabil în stațiunea Parâng”, 2009.
10. Surugiu, C., Dincă, A. I., Micu, D., Tourism destination vulnerable to climate changes: an econometric approach on Predeal Resort, *Petroleum-Gas University of Ploiești Bulletin, Economic Sciences Series*, vol LXII, no. 1, Ploiești, 2010.

Turismul montan – o provocare pentru dezvoltarea durabilă. Studiu de caz: stațiunea Parâng

Rezumat

Munții Parâng dispun de un domeniu schiabil apreciabil, fapt care a justificat amenajarea turistică a spațiului montan de dominantă albă încă din anii '60, reprezentând una dintre destinațiile turistice tradiționale ale României. În cadrul acestui studiu autorii analizează impactul evoluției structurilor de primire turistică asupra spațiului montan și propun un model viabil de dezvoltare a stațiunii Parâng. Schimbări importante în zona montană analizată au avut loc începând cu anii '90 ca urmare a extinderii și modernizării unităților de primire turistică. În contextul actual, concurența reprezentată de alte destinații turistice profilate pe sporturi de iarnă din Europa, din spațiul alpin și carpatic, la care se adaugă incertitudinea și turbulența pieței turistice, impun conceperea unei strategii inovative care să se axeze pe continuitatea acțiunii de modernizare a stațiunii și pe conceptul satisfacerii motivațiilor turiștilor cu scopul de a crea un produs turistic integrat și flexibil.