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Integration of landscape into territorial development policy from mountain tourist areas

Case Study: Tourist resorts in the Prahova Valley

- PHD DISSERTATION SUMMARY -

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INTRODUCTION

The main objective of this paper is the study of territorial development model and determining the landscape value in Prahova Valley resorts. The ultimate goal is to set up a new model of territorial development to improve the socio-economical policy of the area. The choosing of the Prahova Valley resorts as subject for this research was motivated by the relatively uniform evolutionary profile of the tourist region that is restricted to a small area: Bucegi resorts belonging to the Prahova County: Sinaia, Buşteni, Azuga. Prahova Valley resorts earned the reputation as the main tourist mountain destination due to their favorable geographic position in relation to major urban centers. The research has as main hypothesis the Prahova Valley landscape as part of a whole complex represented by the territory (Bertrand, 1984). As George Bertrand stated, the landscape is not just an image, it does not consist in static images, but "it is global and multiple" (Bertrand, 1984).

The research methodology was conducted on types of analytical methods based on documentation, but also on direct observation in the field. The combination of methods shows an objective and realistic image of the current status of the resorts in Prahova Valley, and also new directions for action regarding the landscape.

Landscape capitalization is a new initiative which is part of the European Landscape Convention principles and it can be used for understanding the importance of the territory as a crucible, where nature and culture created an original form.

1. CHAPTER I: TOURIST ATTRACTIONS IN PRAHOVA VALLEY – OVERVIEW

The first chapter summarizes the evolution of Prahova Valley tourist area and analyzes its main features based on the socio-economic, cultural and environmental characteristics. It appears that landscape is perceived as a multidimensional social construct (Fortin, 2007, quoted by Peyrache-Gade, Perron, 2010), which demonstrates its value as a resource of the territory through its elements: frame of life, cultural and natural heritage. The landscape is perceived here as a base for tourism policy making.

Each resort has its own path of development from its basic tourist function (Sinaia) to industrial and mining functions – Buşteni and Azuga.

After 1989 the evolution of territorial development in Prahova Valley caused a gliding of the communities characteristics from the original industrial functions (Buşteni and Azuga) towards exclusively tourist functions as the sole way for territorial development..

Tourism potential of the area can be measured by natural, cultural and historical attractions, as well as by identifying accommodation in Prahova Valley.

Pondereea structurilor de cazare in Valea Prahovei

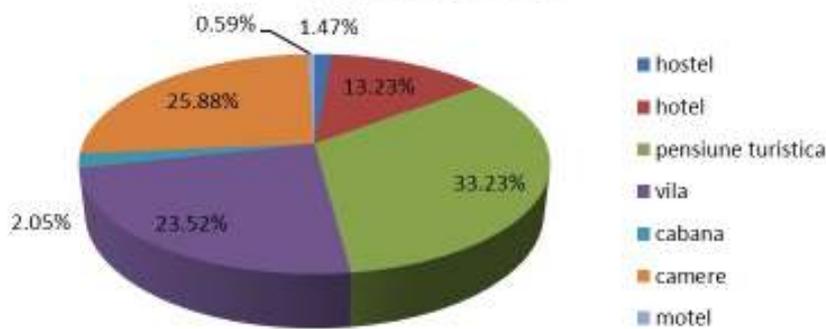


Figure 3: Accommodation structures along Prahova Valley (Source: MDRT, 2011, made by C. Fabian, 2011)

Prahova Valley and Bucegi Mountains attractiveness arises from blending the built scenery of the valley with the magnificent landforms of the mountain. The image of the resorts is created by natural and anthropogenic landmarks used in brochures, flyers and postcards.

In this context, Prahova Valley ranks high regionally and nationally through its many classified historical monuments, the three resorts have 15.56% of the total classified national monuments.

Landscape diversity makes Bucegi Mountains very attractive through the sequence of residual rocks on the alpine plateau, combined with alpine ridges, glacial valleys, detritus and karst forms such as caves (Ielenicz & Comanescu, 2006). The winter season is the most important tourist season in Prahova Valley, period which covers between 50-75% of tourists throughout the year (Micu & Dincă, 2008). During summer the main attraction is the opportunity to make hiking in Bucegi.

In Prahova Valley case the geographical stakeholders have different objectives and actions for their area of specific interest: from the protection of the territory to its economic development through tourism, and the interaction between them and their hierarchy is perceived in the territory according to their actions and the intensity with which they occur in the studied area (Figure 2)

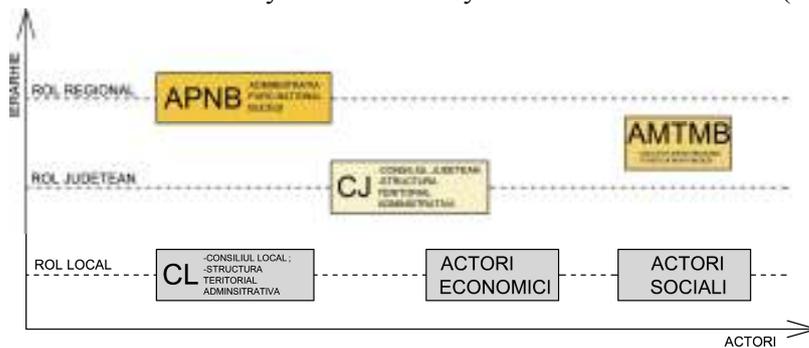


Figure 2: Stakeholders' hierarchy in Prahova Valley (made by C. Fabian, 2012)

Prahova Valley landscape can be defined as an interaction between anthropogenic and natural environment, which is in a delicate balance. This fragility is determined by the force with which the actions of the local stakeholders can transform the relation between the natural and constructed. At territorial level there is one major stakeholder that has the declared function of protection and conservation, which is Bucegi Natural Park. Other stakeholders promote socio-economic projects by

highlighting the area's tourism function.

2. CHAPTER II: LANDSCAPE AND ITS PRESENT-DAY ROLE

The many meanings of the term landscape open the way for various definitions. Defined as a complex of emotions and elements, of actions and information that define it through the plurality of its components (Donadieu, Perigord, 2007), the landscape exemplifies the richness of relations (Jackson, 1984) that a society creates with its life space. Nowadays landscape is perceived as a tool of urban and regional development policies through the broad social participation to its creation.

Landscape is defined by the interaction between human and life framework, which was briefly defined by Norberg-Schulz (1981): "Human identity involves the identity of the place."

The balance between human and the space he occupies is defined by Augustin Berque as mediation. This concept tries to justify the continuous changes which hold equilibrium in the relation between environment and society. Defined as a complex element consisting of dual terms (subjective – objective, cultural – ecological, physical – phenomenal) Gucht & Varone, 2006), landscape is obtained by the intersection of these three major groups of elements (Figure 3).

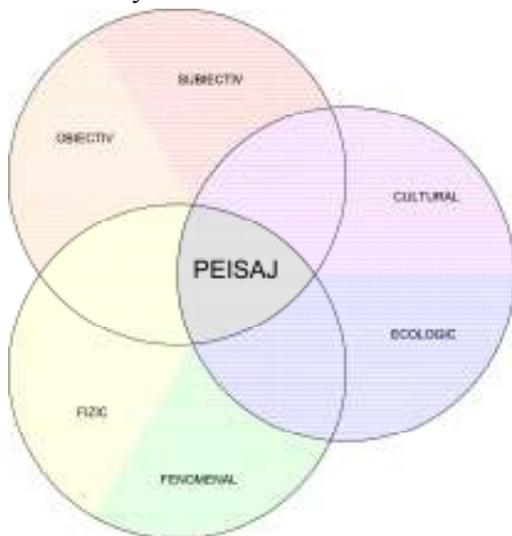


Figure 3: Landscape representation by the three major groups of elements (made by C. Fabian, 2011)

Landscape is partially a result of the past of each region and of each community that inhabit it. Landscape is structured in time and it is a dynamic component, which changes rapidly (Dewarrat, Quincerot, Weil, Woeffary, 2003). Landscape can be a "symbol of collective ideals of a group" (Michel Conan, in Berque, 1994), through the value that is assigned to it. It is the witness and the testimony of the existence of a social group, through its seemingly persistence in relation to the existence of the group.

It's a trick (Cauquelin, 2001), through which we try to anchor in this world and to characterize it. Landscape is not nature, it is not a part of nature, it is a creation of the man who projects a certain image on the things around him, doubled by feelings and experiences (Cauquelin, 2001). Scientifically, it varies depending on the epistemological universe where it is placed, and it can be characterized as a dynamic interaction between biological triptych environment – physical environment – the anthropogenic environment. A third form of definition, the static one, refers to

landscape from the ecological perspective. Evolution of the definitions shows a gradual perspective of the landscape term, from its artistic meaning to its ecological and economic terminology.

"The concept of landscape is a fluid one" (Lowenthal, 2008), which means that landscape can shape and receive influences from different fields. It is actually a double product of man (Milan, 2005) through its assigned symbolic value (cultural, artistic, historical good), and the result of landscape product by exploiting natural resources which are transformed in landscape (vineyard landscapes windmill landscapes).

Landscape is now conceived as a crossing between two dynamic logic (Clément, 2007): one determined by man and one represented by nature, where anthropogenic dynamics refers to the evolutionary form of elements in the territory that are culturally determined, and the dynamic of nature is related to biological phenomena and interaction of physical factors.

The integration of landscape in public policy is a new stage that began in Western Europe in the 1990's. Landscape appeared in the speech of the decision makers through its using in shaping the land. To develop a culture of landscape for outlining scenery policies, it is necessary to involve all the stakeholders of a territory. It is necessary an awareness regarding landscape policies and their implementation at the local level (Marcel, 1989).

3. CHAPTER III: LANDSCAPE POLICY – A STEP TOWARDS LANDSCAPE DEVELOPMENT

The importance shown to landscape by including all forms of landscape (from the outstanding landscape to the daily one) in the development policies, which were subject to an inevitable democratization, was mentioned by J.B. Jackson, who described "the third landscape" as future landscape, a landscape based on daily gestures and participation (Jackson, 1984). In public policy, landscape becomes a normative principle when it comes to sustainability and respect for landscape (Sgard, Fortin, Peyrache-Gade, 2010).

Landscape policies act at all levels of decision from the national to the local. Landscape thus implements its supremacy over the living environment; it becomes natural and cultural landmark for the people that live on it. European Landscape Convention sets out the main elements underlying policy landscape: **Landscape protection**, **Landscape management** and **Landscape planning**. For a balanced and sustainable development, the objectives of organizing the European territory are drawn in the spirit of a balanced development of territory, rational exploitation of the natural resources and efficiently connecting European regions.

As a legal act of global importance, UNESCO Convention is the most widespread document that speaks of protecting and conserving the most important elements that are part of human history and are basic elements which perfect our identity. The cultural role of landscape is recognized by the impact it has on outstanding sites. IUCN (The International Union for Conservation of Nature) is another international body that relates to landscape from the point of view of protecting it. Classifications imposed by the IUCN include a wide range of protected areas from those with a strict policy of biodiversity conservation (areas with increased protection, such as national parks, where human presence is not allowed) to natural areas where human communities live and exploit natural resources (Dudley, 2008). (Table 1)

Categoria de protecție	Denumire arie protejată	Caracteristici de protecție
CATEGORIA Ia	Rezervații Naturale Stricte: arii protejate administrate în special pentru interes științific	O zonă terestră și/sau marină ce posedă ecosisteme, caracteristici geologice și geomorfologice și/sau specii reprezentative sau cu o valoare remarcabilă, destinate în principal pentru cercetare științifică și/sau monitorizare de mediu.
CATEGORIA Ib	Zona de sălbăcie : arie protejată administrată în special pentru protecția zonelor naturale sălbatice	O suprafață mare terestră și/sau marină nemodificată sau puțin modificată, ce își menține caracterul ei natural, fără a avea așezări permanente sau semnificative, care este protejată și administrată pentru menținerea caracteristicilor naturale.
CATEGORIA II	Parc Național: arie protejată administrate în special pentru protejarea ecosistemelor și recreere	O zonă terestră și/sau marină desemnată: (a) să protejeze integritatea ecologică a unuia sau mai multor ecosisteme pentru generațiile prezente și viitoare, (b) să excludă exploatarea sau ocupațiile contrare scopului pentru care a fost desemnată aria și (c) să furnizeze o bază pentru oportunități spirituale, științifice, de educație, de recreere și vizitare, toate acestea trebuind să fie compatibile ecologic și cultural.
CATEGORIA III	Monument al Naturii: arie protejată administrată în special pentru conservarea caracteristicilor naturale specifice	O zonă ce conține una sau mai multe caracteristici naturale sau natural/culturale care au o valoare remarcabilă sau unică din cauza rarității înăscute, reprezentativității, calităților estetice sau importanței culturale.
CATEGORIA IV	Arie de Management pentru Habitat/Specie: arie protejată administrată în special pentru conservarea naturii prin intervenții manageriale	O zonă terestră și/sau marină supusă unei intervenții active de management pentru a asigura menținerea habitatelor și/sau îndeplinirea necesităților unor specii particulare.
CATEGORIA V	Peisaj Terestru/Marin Protejat: arie protejată administrată în special pentru conservarea peisajului terestru/marin și recreere	O zonă terestră, după caz având și zona costieră sau marină, unde interacțiunea dintre oameni și natură pe parcursul timpului a produs o zonă cu un caracter distinctiv, cu o semnificativă valoare estetică, ecologică și/sau culturală și descori cu o înaltă valoare a diversității biologice. Apărarea integrității acestei interacțiuni tradiționale este vitală pentru protecția, menținerea și evoluția unei astfel de zone.
CATEGORIA VI	Arie Protejată pentru Managementul Resurselor: arie protejată administrată în special pentru folosirea durabilă a ecosistemelor naturale	O zonă ce conține predominant sisteme naturale nemodificate, administrate spre a asigura protecția și menținerea pe lungă durată a diversității biologice, furnizând concomitent un flux continuu de produse naturale și servicii pentru satisfacerea nevoilor comunităților.

Table 1: IUCN categories for the Management of protected areas, source <http://www.mmediu.ro>

Vincent Auzanneau (2001), in the article "Le paysage, expression d'une culture plurielle", speaks about the European Landscape Convention as one of the democratic means by which European population may express a position regarding the environment in which they live. They can intervene through direct participation in public debates on landscape, and the European Directives and the Natura 2000 network fall among European and international norms (IUCN, UNESCO), where the major concern is on the protection and conservation of natural areas and only then on the culture.

At national level, landscape still lacks a law to justify its importance. Romanian legislation supports the biodiversity component to the detriment of a balanced relation between nature and anthropogenic.

4. CHAPTER IV: DETERMINING LANDSCAPE VALUE IN PRAHOVA VALLEY

This chapter examines the value of landscape in tourist resorts in terms of aesthetic values (images, remarkable items), social values (housing, perception, attachment) or monetary value (by imposing a price that acts directly-indirectly on natural and anthropogenic landscape). Methods for determining the value of landscape are designed to quantify the degree of conservation of an area to determine the value of tourism or to measure the impact an intervention has on the landscape (Neuray, 1982). These methods have always proved improvable and applicable only in specific areas without a high degree of enlargement.

Tourist image of Prahova Valley can be characterized by a rich architectural heritage which represents many historical periods, from villas and castles from the end of the nineteenth century, to the ecclesiastical architectural heritage. There is a grading of the landscape heritage from the built one that dominates Sinaia to the natural landscape of Azuga. The criterion of landscape accessibility is

expressed by the large number of real estates and tourist homes that are purchased in Prahova Valley.

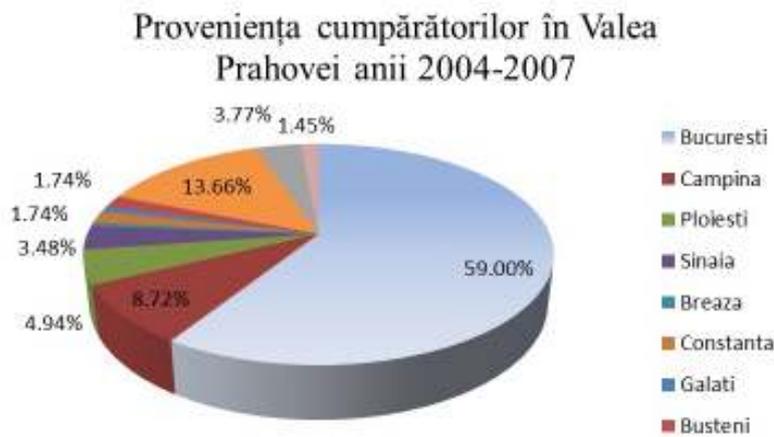


Figure 4: The cities of origin of real estate buyers in Prahova Valley in 2004-2007 (Source: Mervana, made by C. Fabian, 2012).

Historical and cultural backgrounds are the main topics that Sinaia presents in tourist guidebooks. Landscape capitalization is made sequential, with a clear differentiation of the anthropogenic framework from the natural one, and within the resort there are two major tourist areas determined by the value of tourist real estate: the historical area and the south area. In Bușteni, the natural environment is the main element that attracts tourists in travel brochures and leaflets. In Bușteni there are three major areas that stand out depending on a relevant geographical exposure in real estate activities. Zamora and Piatra Arsă neighborhoods are those that directly exploit the view the Bucegi Mountains, real estate projects in Valea Albă have as reference the ski slope found in proximity.

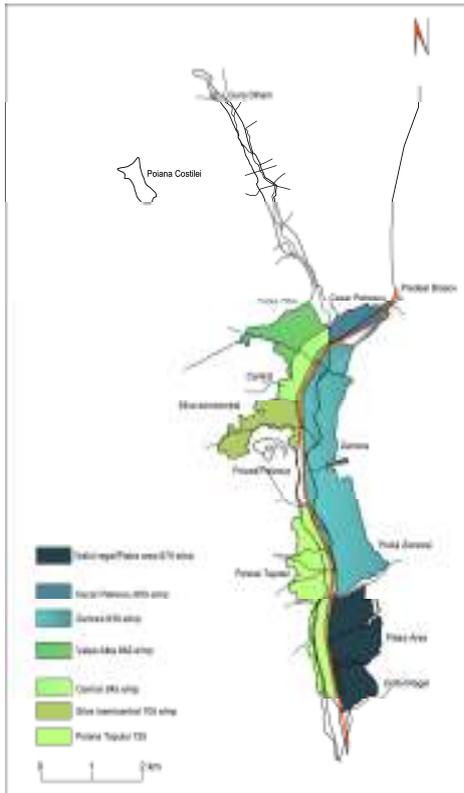


Figure 5: Real estate zoning in Bușteni (made by C. Fabian, 2011)

Azuga image is based on winter sports, with Cazacu and Sorica slopes, and the natural reservation nearby.

Approved tourist structures in Azuga are determined by the main function as winter sports resort and by a large number of tourists during the ski season.

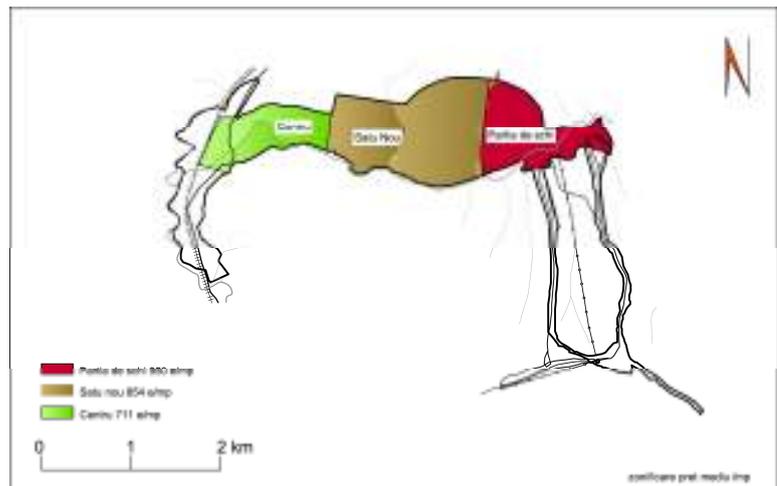


Figure 6: Zoning depending on the price per square meter in Azuga (made by C. Fabian, 2011)

5. CHAPTER V: LANDSCAPE AS AN ENGINE FOR TERRITORIAL DEVELOPMENT

In this final chapter there is model of territorial development approach, where landscape has the leading role with an improved example represented by the Regional Natural Park (PNR) French concept as a tool for spatial planning through which local communities are aware of the value of landscape.

The primary role of the Regional Natural Park is of mediating the actions of various groups of stakeholders that operate in the same territory. It is involved in environmental protection policy, spatial planning, economic, social and public education development and is defined as a test area (Laurens, Cousseau, 2000). Studied as a territorial, the Chartreuse Regional Natural Park creates its main objectives around landscape and heritage protection, the cooperation between territorial stakeholders and the development of innovative local projects (sustainable agriculture handicrafts, tourism, leisure).

Socio-territorial stakeholders represented by professional associations, by representatives of local and regional government, NGOs are those that coordinate the protected area with the rest of the territory. Park management is provided by a mixed syndicate created by professionals, elected officials and academia stakeholders.

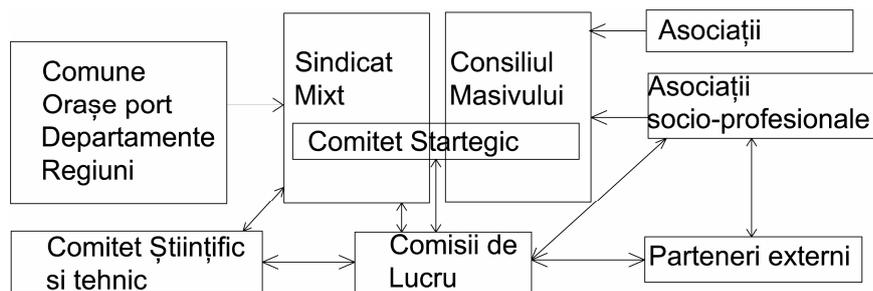


Figure 7: Diagram of stakeholders involved in the management of Chartreuse PNR (PNR Source Chartreuse, made by C. Fabian, 2011)

Introduction of examples of good territorial practices can be a starting point in landscape capitalizing. It is necessary to start a discussion regarding the landscape, both in planning and environmental protection.

Based on the above example it can be distinguished the fact that local associations are moving towards structures like the Regional Natural Park to receive support in their initiatives. Prahova Valley territory includes the necessary elements for a constructive dialogue between local stakeholders that can lead to new forms of spatial planning based on landscape as a sustainable development policy.

GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

Methodologically, this dissertation discusses, in stages, the landscape issue from the overview of the present situation of the studied site – Tourist resorts in Prahova Valley – to presenting a model of territorial development which has landscape capitalization and protection as a basic component.

Applicability of the French model in Prahova Valley finds support in presenting a local stakeholder that remained on a secondary position: Bucegi Mountains Micro-Tourism Association. Although it doesn't have an active role, it can become an important stakeholder in association with Bucegi Natural Park. Dialogue and involvement of all stakeholders in setting common goals regarding the area they administrate lead to dynamic actions regarding landscape.

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