

**“BABEȘ-BOLYAI” UNIVERSITY CLUJ-NAPOCA
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**GEOGRAPHICAL STUDY OF A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT
THROUGH TOURISM IN THE PIATRA CRAIULUI NATIONAL PARK
AND BRAN-RUCĂR CORRIDOR**

ABSTRACT OF THE PhD THESIS



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Key words: sustainable development, tourist eco-responsibility, green tourism, sustainable tourism, awareness, education through tourism, integrated geography of tourism

INTRODUCTION

Motto: " Separating our knowledge has lost the ability to contextualize the information and integrate it into a package that gives it meaning. The fragmentation and compartmentalization of knowledge in non-adjointing disciplines renders it incapable to perceive and develop the fundamentals and global problems. The thought reform requires thinking reliance, which can connect knowledge between them, connecting parts to the whole, the whole to the parts and can conceive the relationship of global to local and local to global. Our ways of thinking must incorporate a constant back and forth between these levels."
(Edgar Morin, 2011)

Instrument of knowledge and self-knowledge, tourism favours new relationships in inter-cultural exchanges, the education and promotion of values. Through the forces and flux it triggers, it often leads to degradation of the landscape and pollution, to the destruction of the very frame the tourist is looking for in their Corridor, which generates tourism, due to its qualities. Nowadays, a whole series of theories and indicators of a sustainable or responsible tourism appeared, but the lack of a referential reflection for the tourist voyages is to be noted, as to those enterprises meant to be respectful towards the environment, to the territories and to the local people, with all their implications; the consumer becomes an extremely important actor by awakening individual consciousness after important actions that can transform the indifferent tourist into an eco-friendly, responsible person. The potential of recognising all this complexity would be a first step in the direction of a sustainable tourism.

Starting from these premises, the idea of this study appeared, an idea that may seem strange by the organic approach of the two relief units, Piatra Craiului mountain and Bran-Rucăr Corridor, but which shows a series of common and unitary explanations towards sustainability. The characteristic element for the area of Piatra Craiului National Park - Bran-Rucăr Corridor is the fact that it stretches on the surface of two counties, Braşov and Argeş, that previously belonged to two Romanian historical regions of different influences, Ţara Româneasca and Transilvania. That is the reason the evolutionary approach under similar geographical and environmental conditions is so important. Generally, the atmosphere of the scattered and isolated villages is integrated to the totality and variety of the natural elements, creating the "liberation" framework specific to any holiday. The land fragmentation, the harsh weather and the difficult living conditions maintained traditional customs and activities that included the use of the natural resources and territories, which all form the backbone of today's rural tourism.

The ideas supporting the respect of the sustainable tourism for the local communities and the environment are also present, but what lied behind these assumptions and which are the social and cultural consequences of the clash between the tourist and the host? As for the natural parks, it is even more important to ask ourselves whether there is an alternative to the reduction of the tourist flow, so that the supporting capacities of the accommodation may not be overloaded. So, it is only natural and right to ask ourselves if and how tourism can contribute to a sustainable development and if the geographical approach of the sustainable tourism is legitimate in such an endeavour.

The paper consists of four main chapters which follow the logical succession between the theoretical aspects and their practical application on the field.

CHAPT. I – THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL INTRODUCTION

The first chapter treats the theoretical aspects, generally referring to development and sustainability, following the concept of sustainable development from its beginnings up to now. The contextualisation of the sustainable tourism and its expression through the main sustainability pillars is treated alongside the legal aspects, which we consider highly important in this approach. We also underline the necessity of a geographical approach of the sustainable development in general and of the sustainable tourism in particular. We thus consider that tourism is essentially a spacial phenomenon, motivating the geographical studies as necessary and fundamental in the analysis of the tourist phenomenon from the point of view of sustainability.

I.2. ARGUMENTATION AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objective this study proposes is rendered by the following assertion: *"The adaptation of the tourist realities in Bran-Rucăr Corridor in Piatra Craiului National Park to the global tendencies of tourist evolution through the necessity of a re-thinking and creating integrating and functional patterns based on the principles of a sustainable development and on the models of tourist sustainability from the similar rural areas and national parks."*

HYPOTHESES	OBJECTIVES
The presence of the insufficiently or inefficiently exploited natural and anthropic patrimony.	Integral and efficient exploitation in a sustainable sense of the natural and anthropic potential of Piatra Craiului National Park and Bran-Rucăr Corridor
The necessity of applying sustainable structural and functional patterns	The promotion of the sustainable fit-to-area patterns in a structural and functional plan
The necessity of assessing the area's degree of sustainable tourism	The promotion of an integrating assessment of the sustainable development through tourism based on the quality and quantity indicators
The necessity of overcoming the sequential and superficial approaches of the tourist phenomenon	The support of an integrating and sustainable approach of the tourist phenomenon through unitary patterns of promotion and tourist evolution

I.3. METHODOLOGICAL SUPPORT OF THE RESEARCH

The present paper is conceived as a study of tourist geography with strong economical, philosophical, ethnographic, anthropological etc influences and approaches, respecting five fundamental principles for a sustainable development: systemic, spatial, historic, causative and integrating approach.

I.4. THORETICAL FOUNDATION OF A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN TOURISM

I.4.1. Sustainable development

I.4.1.1. The sustainable development within the context of knowledge and development

The concepts of economical increase and progress are kept back by their orientation towards quantification of processes and phenomena, forgetting about the qualitative aspects and the structural changes brought by the economical development.

I.4.1.2. Shaping and evolution of the sustainable development concept

From the point of view of the great thinking trends of growth and development, the theory of sustainable development is a synthesis of the actual theories with a deep ecological meaning, up to the necessity of combining economical, social and environmental priorities.

The true environmental awareness appeared during the Stockholm Conference in 1972. Since then, the notion of sustainable development grew to a global meaning:

- First, as an exploitation of the environmental "constraints", with its three stages: the *healing* stage (repairing the destructive effects of human activities), the *prevention* stage (applying laws and regulations for an advanced acting) and the *environmental integration* stage (the activity can be improves, not counteracted upon, by the environment).

- Then there came the *awareness of the planetary dimension of the development mechanisms and of their consequences.*

1.4.1.3. Theoretical framework and content of the sustainable development

The sustainable development consists of a cohesion between three areas: the economical has a meaning only referred to the human; neither the economical, nor the human would exist in time without the support of nature. The elements of the economical sphere belong to the biosphere and abide by its rules, but not all the elements of the biosphere belong to economy and abide by its rules (Passet, 1996).

1.4.2. Tourism in the context of the sustainable development

1.4.2.1. Tourism within the context of sustainability

Although the world crisis a few years ago induced fear inside the tourist industry, the worldwide number of tourists in 2012 was over 1 billion, 4% more than a year ago (WTO, 29.01.2013). For 2013, WTO announces a tendency of increase ('3 % la 4 %' - Taleb Rifai, general secretary of the WTO, Jan.29.2013).

The motivations and behaviours of the consumers are characterised by a more selective choice of the destinations, a more detailed care for the quality of tourism and an increased interest for the environment, the traditional culture and the local population.

The WTO elaborated a guide (Indicators of Sustainable Development for Tourism Destination – A Guidebook, www.world-tourism.org) which includes over 40 problems occurring in tourism: exploitation of the natural resources, reciprocal satisfaction of hosts and guests, preservation of patrimony, seasonal character, etc.

A sustainable tourism comes from the sustainable development, expressing the need of conciliation between territorial growth, human development, resource preservation, client requests and offer.

1.4.2.2. Environmental aspect of the sustainable tourism

1.4.2.3. The social aspect of the sustainable tourism

1.4.2.4. The economical aspect of the sustainable tourism

The three criteria of assessing sustainable development refer to the following domains: the social, the environmental and the economical. Some specialists also underlined the ethical and moral aspect of the sustainable development.

1.4.3. Geographical approach of a sustainable development through tourism

1.4.3.1. Sustainable development as new paradigm in the geographical research

From the point of view of the approach, there are at least two opinions: the *technocentric* trend (slightly ecological) with accent on humanity, and the *ecocentric* trend (strongly ecological), focussed on the Earth. For the developed countries, the ecocentric approach is obviously underfavoured, since it induces the reduction of consumption (Willis, 2005, p. 175-177).

1.4.3.2. Specificities of the geographical approach of the sustainable development through tourism

The apparition of the sustainable development produced new study objects: the sustainable tourism or agriculture, mobility and transport, the city, the seaside and the mountains.

How can the effects of a local action at regional or even worldwide level be interpreted? How can the significance of a decision or a world phenomenon be understood at lower levels?

1.4.3.3. Tourism – space phenomenon that legitimises geographical study

The tourist studies appeal to interdisciplinary approaches. Is the tourist geography specific? Does it show out by concepts and methods? Is it defined by time, space, territory? Do tourist studies function as a research base?

1.4.3.4. Gateway towards other disciplines

The study of the geographical object is realised mainly by several disciplines at once.

I.5. STRATEGIC AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR A SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH TOURISM

I.5.1. General strategic and legal framework of the sustainable development

At European level, sustainable development has become a EU public purpose since 1997, by its inclusion in the Maastricht Treaty. In 2001, the Gothenburg European Council adopted the Sustainable Development Strategy of the European Union, which has added an external dimension in Barcelona in 2002. In 2005, the European Commission launched a strategy review and published a critical assessment of the progress achieved since 2001.

Nationally, the largest strategic document is the Romania's Strategy for Sustainable Development, 2013-2020-2030 horizons, developed jointly by the Romanian Government through the Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

I.5.2. Legal aspects of the environment and the legal and administrative support of the national parks in Romania

Sources of international law on environment are:

- Conventional rules: bilateral or multilateral treaties with variable geographical extent (global, regional, continental or bilateral); referring to framework treaties complemented by specific agreements, in some cases these treaties establish executive branch/body/committee (secretariat) to administrate or supervise execution;
- International common law that is not focused on environmental issues, this field being much too recent and international jurisprudence;
- General law principles, classic or new, that have no direct legal effect in comparison to judicial rule.

The beginnings of biodiversity conservation have their origins in the late nineteenth century, when the need to preserve landscapes uninfluenced by humans is felt by current propeisagistic personalities as: D. Grecescu (botanist), Nicolae Grigorescu (painter) and I. Bernath (balneologist). In 1920 was founded the first association involved in nature protection, *Hanul drumeților*, later become *Societatea pentru Turism și pentru Protecția Naturii*. An important action was the creation of the Commission for Nature Monuments, aimed to prepare the inventory of natural monuments and to decide which should be preserved for posterity.

The current legal framework is based on a series of laws governing the existence, organization and operation of protected areas in Romania.

I.5.2.1. Environmental protection and protected areas – support of a sustainable development through tourism

Sustainable tourism achieves its goals through a variety of methods, these include: public and private sector partners, media involvement, public education, training for workers involved in tourism policy planning, marketing and demarketing, developing regulations or giving up regulations when necessary, finding a system to stimulate new ideas by the public sector and other sector; all of these must be integrated sustainable tourism strategy.

Thus, in the area of study, a remarkable achievement, since 2003, is the Strategy for Sustainable Tourism in the Piatra Craiului National Park. This paper is the first strategy of sustainable tourism in our country.

I.5.3. General and legal framework of the rural tourism in Romania

Rural tourism is defined as "a special category of tourism, with a complex character, generally with certain characteristics: various services at relatively low prices, high adaptability of services to the needs of the

tourism market, variety and high dispersion in the territory of the primary and secondary resources which form the specific offer, concentrated mainly in the mountains region"(Benedek, Dezsi, 2006, p 40).

Rural tourism sustainability can be approached by using the following features :

SUSTAINABLE RURAL TOURISM	UNSUSTAINABLE RURAL TOURISM
development of local initiative	massive foreign intervention in the area
exploitation of local human resource	seasonal use of human resources
preserving the anthropogenic heritage	failure architectural specification
diversification of economic activities	unidirectional orientation towards tourism activities
capitalization of occupations and traditional products through tourism activities	failure of traditions / non-authentic tourism
Preserving the traditional character of the various cultural and artistic events	Failure of the traditional character of the cultural and artistic events
leisure activities and animation specific in rural tourism	The lack of dynamic activities
obtaining income for local communities	losses caused by oversizing accommodation capacity / catering / leisure

1.5.3.1. Evolution aspects and forms of organising and handling rural tourism in Romania

Rural tourism in Romania exists since the early decades of the twentieth century, but carries a sporadic and unofficial character by visitor accommodation in some villages. Socio-economic and political context after the Revolution has created prerequisites for the rural tourism development. Thus, appeared the first concrete initiatives which promoted this phenomenon, both at the organizational and at the legislative level. The first private nature of rural tourism activities were exactly in the villages of Bran-Rucăr Corridor, Rucăr, Moeciu, Bran, background, Șirnea. It was not by chance but as a result of the existence of rural tourism tradition.

1.5.3.2. Legal framework of the rural tourism in Romania and its assessment

Specific activities of rural tourism are regulated by a set of general laws (the tourism industry in general) or specific ones (rural business). The provisions governing authorization, approval of the structures and tourism activities, financial management, record tourist traffic are other issues.

1.5.4. Principles of a sustainable development through tourism

The most important in promoting sustainable tourism was the World Conference on Sustainable Tourism held in Lanzarote by developing The Sustainable Tourism Charter.

1.6. A HISTORY OF THE RESEARCH AND THE ACTUAL STATE OF KNOWLEDGE

1.6.1. Evolution of the geographical research on the area of Piatra Craiului National Park – Bran – Rucăr Corridor

1.6.2. A history of the research within the field of the sustainable development and tourism

Efforts to scientific knowledge of this area, geographical structure comprising two distinct but complementary and perfectly integrated areas, began over 250 years ago, with particular inclination towards physical-geographical and biogeographical aspects, and more recently tourism .

1.6.3. The employed statistics data

Quantitative and qualitative research on sustainable development through tourism involves a complex implementation and use of complex statistical database consisting of multiple sequences of specific data fields and systematized their subcategories.

1.6.4. Inclusion of the study within the geographical research framework

The "*Geographical study of development through tourism*" is defined as a line which, tourism geography broadens, introducing innovative and integrative structure. It follows the classic approach (the object of study being a geographical entity with a high and complex territorial, evolutionary and functional complexity, using a geographical-touristic arsenal of techniques, means and methods directed towards characterizing the current touristic phenomenon and giving birth to new ways of approach when it comes to directions and perspectives) but this is backed by the proposal of a new vision over tourism geography, the multi-dimensional one, which helps the integration of the geographical perspective into a more comprehensive philosophical with tints towards transdisciplinarity, economical, environmental, anthropological-sociological aspects.

Therefore, "*Geographical Survey of sustainable development through tourism in the Piatra Craiului National Park and The Bran-Rucăr Corridor*" might orient towards integrated tourism geography, being equally a theorization of specific research of geography of rural tourism in protected areas, a systematic and comprehensive analysis of the sustainability of development through tourism, but also an attempt to create framing for the evolving patterns in theme with the principles generally accepted in tourism and development in general. By bringing a broader approach, the study can be used as a model for other research in the field of tourism geography.

CAP. II – TOURISTIC EXPLOITATION OF THE AREA: PIATRA CRAIULUI NATIONAL AND BRAN-RUCĂR CORRIDOR

The second chapter represents a classical study of tourism having as the final goal highlighting the present situation in tourism in Piatra Craiului National Park and Bran-Rucăr Corridor.

At the same time we try to spot the geographical and touristic singularity and complementarity of the area, motivating its choice as a topic for this study. From the beginning, the limits of this area have been a subject for a continuous debate because the bibliography is extremely rich when dealing with the geographical limits of the area, especially those for The Rucar Bran Corridor. Finally, the difficulties were overcome exactly by the aspect mentioned above, which is the geographical complementarity and by taking into consideration the touristic aspects as defining when delimitating an area as different and whole, at the same time, in order to obtain a sustainable development in tourism. Even if the study has a classical approach we would like to underline the details regarding the exceptional biogeography, insisting on the uniqueness of the landscape from Piatra Craiului Mountain and highlighting the details which give to both Piatra Craiului National Park and Rucar Bran Corridor „a personal touch”. The touristic typology is personalized for the area and suited to a matrix which defines, in the end, the essential role of the tourists in modeling the local tourist market.

II.1. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS ON THE STUDIED AREA

II.1.1. Placement and geographical limits

The studied territory, Piatra Craiului National Park and Bran-Rucăr Corridor, is part of the Bucegi Mountain, a subunit of the Carpathians, together with The Bucegi and Leaota Mountains and the Prahova Valley". The two corridors are embedded in the same unit because of their genesis, as reflected in the features and functionalities of their local landscape." (Valeria Velcea, 1982)

One of the most difficult steps of this study was to delimit the area of the research. After a series of cartographic analysis, results from the superimposition of different maps (physical, geographical,

geomorphological, biogeographical, the local administration, land use, the Parks and Mountains National Park and the various tourist maps) and consultation of bibliography regarding the boundaries of the mountain and corridor unit, has been decided setting limits determined by the importance to this study of the possibility to analyse the statistics in tourism.

From an administrative point of view, the analysed territory falls within Brasov and Arges Counties. So, the common Bran with the villages Bran, Predeluț, Sohodol, Poarta, Șimon, the common of Moieciu with Moieciu de Jos, Cheia, Moieciu de Sus, Măgura și Peștera and the common of Fundata with villages Fundata, Fundățica și Șirnea are part of Brasov County and the settlements belonging to Dâmbovicioara (Podu Dâmboviței și Dâmbovicioara) and Rucăr are part of Arges County.

This area with mountainous nature represents through its specific complex with unique value, a complementary geographic region, to both the surrounding mountain units and the Subcarpathians in the south and Brasov Depression in the north.

II.1.2. Individuality and complementarities of the area

From the point of view of the genesis The Piatra Craiului Mountains are very closely linked to depression or mountain corridor Bran-Rucăr.

The links between geo-environmental factors (rock, relief, climate, water, vegetation, soils) has had its specificity, generating a unique geosystem that summarize a range of morphogenetic traits, which are, in fact, geological, geographical, and biogeographic superlatives.

The second component of the area, the corridor unit, is one of the most important Carpathian inflections and is very well defined (Valeria Velcea, 1987) consisting of a lower compartment between Piatra Craiului Massif, Bucegi, Iezer and Leaota, sprinkled with knolls, long ridges and saddles often exceeding 1100 m, but having deeply carved valleys in the area, basins up to the base of the mountain, with typical pastoral settlements and some industrial activities (wood and hydroenergy) or the service sector (tourism).

II.2. TOURISTIC AND GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES

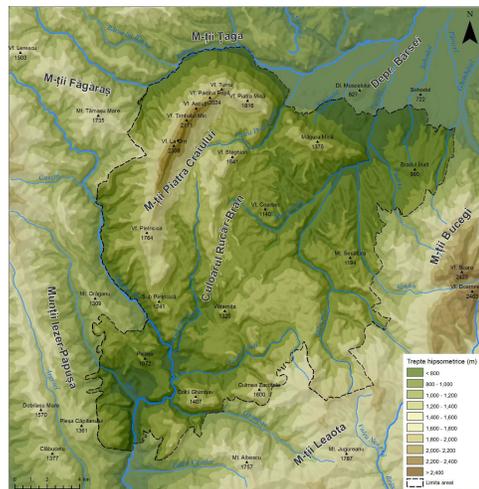
II.2.1. Main physical and geographical features, fundamentals of sustainability of tourism

II.2.1.1. The role of the relief in individualising the area

The current appearance of the landscape is the result of a long evolution, most research showing that this space was individualized in Mesozoic (late Cretaceous) following such movements, which were erected Bucegi, Piatra Craiului and Leaota.

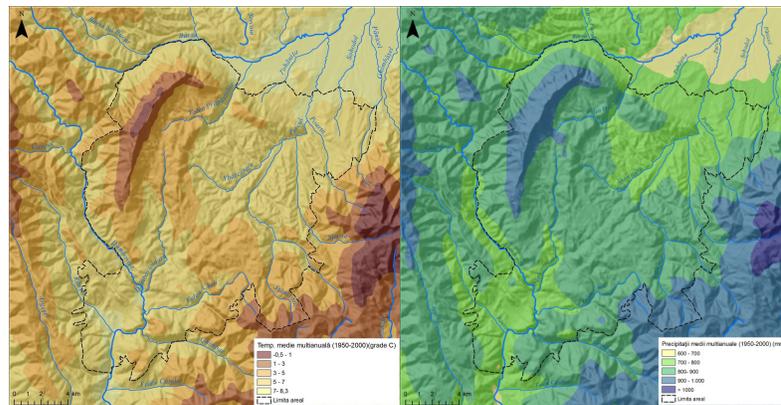
Thus, for Piatra Craiului Mountains we notice two main types of Mesozoic rocks, conglomerate and limestone, which together occupy 96.2% of the massif. Regarding Bran-Rucăr Corridor, we mention that it is made of tough petrographic formations, crystalline-like Leaota and Făgăraș Mountains. All these features are reflected in landforms with special morphology imposed mainly by the structure, but also by periglacial and karst processes.

Scientific interest and their appearance makes them notable like unique relief landforms in the Carpathians and protected, as a result: adina Închisă – Orga Mare, Acul Crăpăturii, Turnurile Dianeii, Țimbalu Mare, Degetul lui Călineț, Căldarea Ocolită, Horjul Mare sau Marele Grohotiș.



II.2.1.2. Tourist aspects of the climatic potential

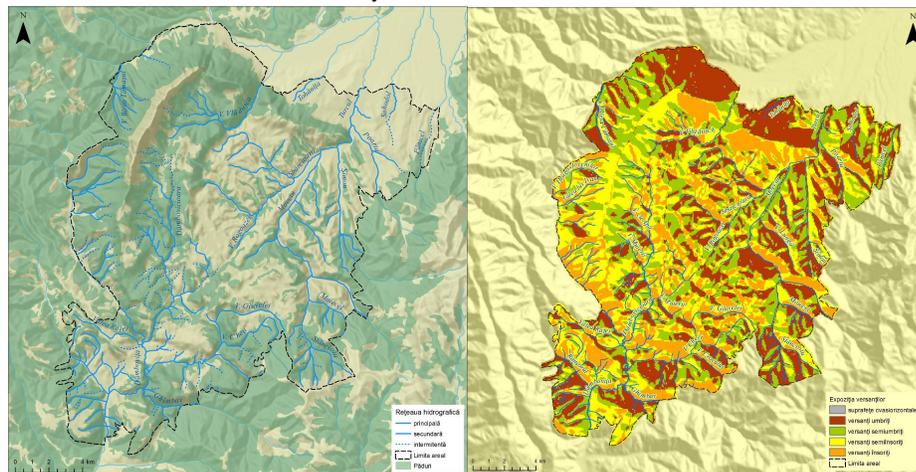
Taking into consideration the peculiarities of climatic parameters, differentiated by topography and the orientation of the slopes, in Bran-Rucăr Corridor were identified (Elena Teodorescu, 1980) five topoclimates: Platform's Fundata topoclimate, southern slopes's topoclimate, northern slopes's topoclimate, eastern slope's topoclimate and the topoclimate of the western slopes. For shaping topoclimates on the whole area of study, it has to be added the topoclimate of Piatra Craiului, marked by different processes (landscape features, particularly the altitude, orientation towards the dominant movement of air masses, lithological and structural features) which explain also the diversity of the climate, distinguishing 6 topoclimates: west - northwestern slope's, topoclimate of the upper eastern calcareous slope, topoclimate of the eastern wooded calcareous slope, the topoclimate of the grasslands from of the eastern slope, northern slope's topoclimate and the topoclimate from the keys.



Temperature (left) and precipitation (right, annual average)

II.2.1.3. Quality and tourist exploitation of the water resources

The area of National Park Piatra Craiului Bran-Rucăr Corridor is part of three watersheds: Dâmbovița, Turcu and Bârsa. The main rivers are Dâmbovița River, which drains the central and southern part of the area, Turcului river which flows in an opposite direction to Brașov Depression and Bârsa river, located in the western part of the area, beyond Piatra Craiului mountains. These rivers belongs to different river systems, Dâmbovița to Argeș system and Bârsa and Turcu to Olt system.



The hydrographic network (left) and the slopes exposure (right)

Because of the western and eastern slopes exposure of the two ridge of Piatra Craiului, in the western part predominate intermittent valleys, while the eastern slope the rivers are abundant. This explains the karst in Prăpăstiile Zărneștilor and Dâmbovicioara Valley.

II.2.1.4. Bio-geographical potential – strong point of a sustainable tourist development

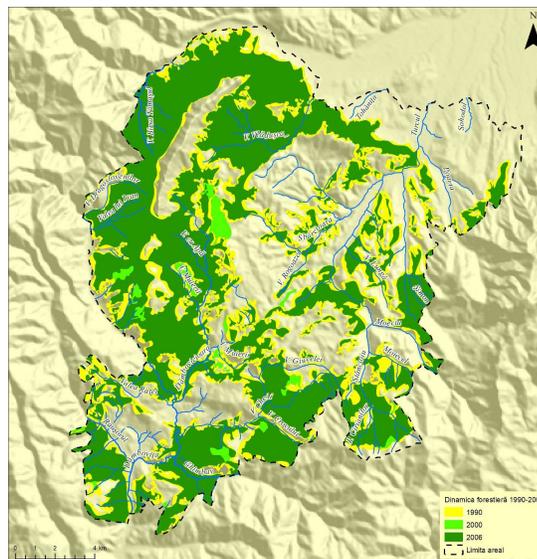
The richness of the species inside the Piatra Craiului National Park is the result of the extremely diverse conditions the territory provides for the development of the vegetation.

A total number of 1170 plant species and subspecies have been identified throughout the national park's territory. Taking into account the fact that Romania's flora records 3136 species, it can be stated that the Piatra Craiului National Park is home for 30% of the superior plant species in the country. 181 species have been included into the "Red List of superior plants in Romania" as endemic, rare or vulnerable species, proving the importance of the Piatra Craiului National Park from the point of view of flora species conservation, namely the Carpathian endemic species. Among these species we name only the most commonly known, which enchant the eyes of nature lovers visiting Piatra Craiului during summer. These species benefit from a strict conservation regime: garofita pietrei craiului (*Dianthus callizonus*) the symbol of the Piatra Craiului massif.

Due to the high declivity, the vegetation layers, formed according to the altitude are best noticeable here, the massif being surrounded, from the bottom towards the ridge, by hay fields, forests, bare rocks and alpine meadows.

The forest vegetation is the most extensive of the ecosystems of the area.

In the last twenty years, there is an alarming reduction of the area of forests with all the implications of this situation confirmed by the map bellow. It should be noted that there are still virgin forests protected in the Nationa Park.



Forest Dynamics (1990-2006)

The area holds a large population of large carnivores: bears - *Ursus arctos*; wolves - *Canis lupus*; lynx - *Lynx lynx*, and also holds a rich bird fauna, including the 111 species identified so far, on the territory, rendering the area an ideal destination for bird watching. The invertebrates fauna is particularly rich counting 35 endemic species and 91 species identified as new for science. We mention two endemic species for Piatra Craiului: *Nesticus constantinescui* (Arahnida) and *Rhagidia carpatica* (Arahnida, Acari). There is also a large number of butterfly species, up to this day 216 species being identified as either rare or endemic.

II.2.1.5. Soil features

As a result of the interaction of other physico-geographical factors (rock, relief, climate, vegetation, etc.), soils complete specific aspects of the area.

II.2.1.6. Importance of the protected natural areas

In 1938, when the natural reserve was set up, it was only on 440 ha. This surface increased in 1972, at 900 ha, nowadays the special conservation area (core area) covers 4879 ha, and the buffer zone stretches on 9894 ha. In 1952 (the year when the first forest management plan was set up in the Piatra Craiului area) around 17.2% from the entire massif surface was designated for conservation purposes.

In 1990 Piatra Craiului is declared national park through Ministry of Agriculture Order no 7 along with other 12 national and natural parks in Romania.

Starting with 1999, along with the implementation of the Biodiversity Conservation Management Project the first park administration was set up.

II.2.2. Social, historical and economical basic ideas for the individualisation of the

II.2.2.1. Political and historical aspects of the individualisation of the territory area and their reflection in tourism

În fact, the entire history of the region is related to The Bran fortress which was built on a cliff between Măgura and The Hill of the Fortress, its position conferring an outstanding view towards both the hills of Moeciu and the ones from the Land of Bârsa. The building of the fortress was imposed by strategic and economic reasons. The strategic reasons underlined by the expansion of the Ottoman Empire which, by the end of the XIV century, began threatening the south-eastern borders of Transylvania; the economic reasons, given by the fact that the commercial road, one of the most important access ways connecting Transylvania to Wallachia, crossed this area.

Historically, an important aspect is the phenomenon of *roiri* (swarming) of the villages. The population movement was within the Corridor of Bran-Rucăr, but in other regions, too: in Moldavia, Wallachia, Transylvania, and even Bărăgan.

II.2.2.2. Administrative and social-historical context of rural development

The main administrative-territorial, demographic, economic and infrastructure coordinates of the National Park - The Bran-Rucăr area has a number of features that favor the development of multiple economic and social activities.

Geographically, the territory includes Piatra Craiului Massive in eastern and north-eastern part and municipalities in its area which are located as follows: in the central north and east of the massive settlements Bran, Moeciu and Fundata and south Dâmbovicioara and Rucăr.

According to the census of 2011, compared to 1992, the population in the municipalities and counties that make up the area to which they belong, has decreased, as in fact, the national population, too. Municipalities are characterized by the fact that their people have large areas with forests and grassland which generated numerous concerns about deforestation. Local people get more income from livestock than from cultivation, areas facilitating these activities being hard to find. In recent years there is an increased tendency to develop rural tourism related activities, an important role here being played by the funds from the Small Grants Programme. Accessibility of the area is quite good (except Ciocanu village), waste collection problems occurring across Dâmbovicioara village. Local people work in exploitation and processing of wood. The income from timber exploitation has contributed to an unbalanced development of constructions. To all these it has to be added, as the main economic activity: the tourism.

II.2.2.3. Tourist cultural, historical and religious patrimony

Cultural and historical heritage is extremely important especially in terms of tourism promotion of the area through the attraction represented by the legend linked to Bran Castle as well as ethno-folkloric aspects who complete the rural heritage of the area.

II.2.2.4. Ethnographic identity features – foundation of tourist exploitation by “preserving the spirit of the place”

In the Bran-Rucăr area at altitudes between 800-1400 m, in contrast to the lowlands of Bârsa, there were only settlements in Romanian villages. The majority of settlements formed in Rucăr Bran Corridor by placing the population of foothill villages and nearby valleys. Historical and economic conditions change, over time, is reflected in the evolution of settlements, so households tend to gradually get closer to the road. We exemplify with the birth of villages Moeciu de Jos and Cheia.

The traditional Bran household was adapted to basic occupations: breeding stock and wood working. In the upper villages, they were combined in reduced proportions with farming and fruit growing, more developed in the hilly villages (Predeluț and Sohodol). In parallel, craft occupations are practiced mainly related to processing wool (main raw material) and wood.

Basic occupations in Bran villages are shepherding, agriculture, cow breeding and also working in the woods, allowing the most efficient use of specific natural resources. It shows an intense pastoral activity, based mainly on transhumant activities. Secondary occupations amongst Bran people include: picking from the nature, hunting, fishing and beekeeping. They also constitute prerequisites for the development of rural tourism in the area by their specificity. Crafts practiced underpinning of continuous trading over time and currently contribute to the diversification of tourism by selling souvenirs from the specific region. Some of these crafts were practiced in ancient times: pottery, woodwork, metalwork, furriers, milling and tanner.

Folk is adapted to geographic conditions and traditional occupations. The clothing is made of woolen cloth and cotton starting the second half of the nineteenth century). Both cloth of wool and linen hemp or cotton are woven using the weaver in two or four threads.

II.2.2.5. Cultural, artistic and sport manifestations that generate oriented and coordinated tourist flux

Traditional holidays represent the perpetuation over time of ancient traditions and customs and today are, for tourists, an open book toward the understanding the spirituality of an area.

Besides the traditions over the year: Christmas carols, whising well at New Year (Plugușorul and Sorcova), Sânzienele (24th June) - harvesting medicinal plants, specific habits are related to: Nedeia Mountains (20 July), ravishing sheep's, Fire Sumedru (October 26).

Among the sporting events, the most important achievement is The European Youth Olympic Festival (EYOF), the largest youth sports event organized in Romania, held in Brasov, whose biathlon competition took place at the complex Grădiștei Keys - Fundata, on the Biathlon track of a private investor, Ovidiu Gârbacea, made with his own funds.

II.2.3. Tourist development and transport infrastructure

II.2.3.1. Transport infrastructure

Getting into the Piatra Craiului National Park area and The Bran-Rucăr Corridor can be done either by railway transportation (underdeveloped - railways only reaching around the area), but mostly by road access.

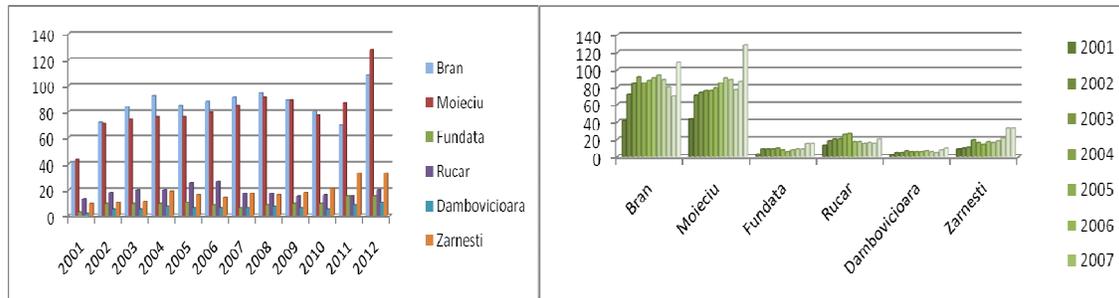
In terms of county and municipal roads, there are three main access points, according to the flow of tourists passing through them, and the distances to the main tourist attractions.

Thus, from the north, a first gateway is through Bran village on the 73 National Road Brașov-Pitești, on the route Brasov - Rasnov - Sohodol - Bran - Moeciu - Rucăr, from the south, on DN73 Pitești-Brasov, through

Podul Dâmboviței village. This area is heavily circulated due to the attraction exerted by Dâmbovicioarei Gorge and can be traversed by car which can lead (when it comes to the crest tracks) to the village Ciocanu, from the north, through Zarnesti.

II.2.3.2. Tourist accommodation structure

In the studied area there is a general upward trend, with a decrease marking the start of the economic crisis, but with a quick turnaround noted last year, in all localities. Bran and Moieciu cover most accommodation facilities, their number reducing as we move towards the southern area, as shown by the following figures:

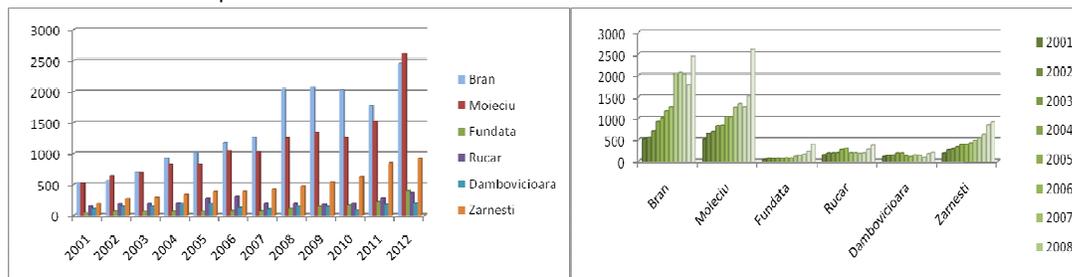


Number of Accommodation structures (2001-2012), Source: DJS Braşov and Argeş

Pensions with one and two daisies are the most numerous and have a narrower range of services, but meet the tourist's need by the ideal location at the bottom of Piatra Craiului, with outstanding views.

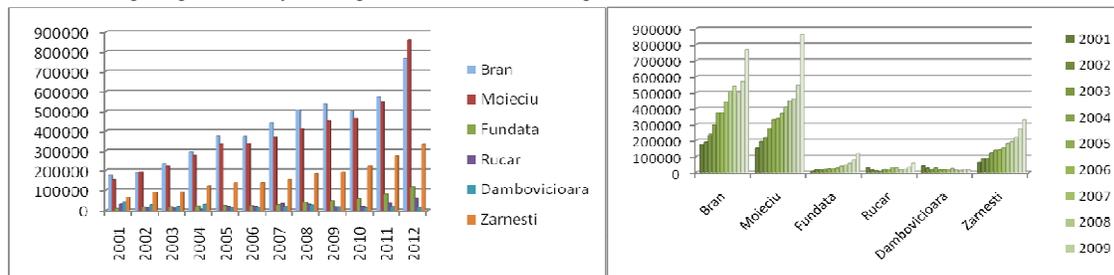
Typological, most units are the agro and rural hostels and tourist areas, just a few with maximum confort , hotel style, chalets or restaurant-chalets, cabins, mountain refuges.

As in the case of accommodation, the number of places available experiences a significant increase, the existing accommodation units maintain a positive trend, increasing in 2012, with major differences between northern, central and southern parts of the area:



Number of places in accommodation structures (2001-2012), Source: DJS Braşov and Argeş

Regarding tourist accommodation capacity in service there is similar to previous results, raising maintain a positive trend, increasing in 2012, with major differences between northern, central and southern parts of the area, turning negative only during 2009-2010 following the economic crisis:



Number of tourist accommodation places in service (2001-2012), Source: DJS Braşov and Argeş

II.2.3.3. Land management for tourist activities

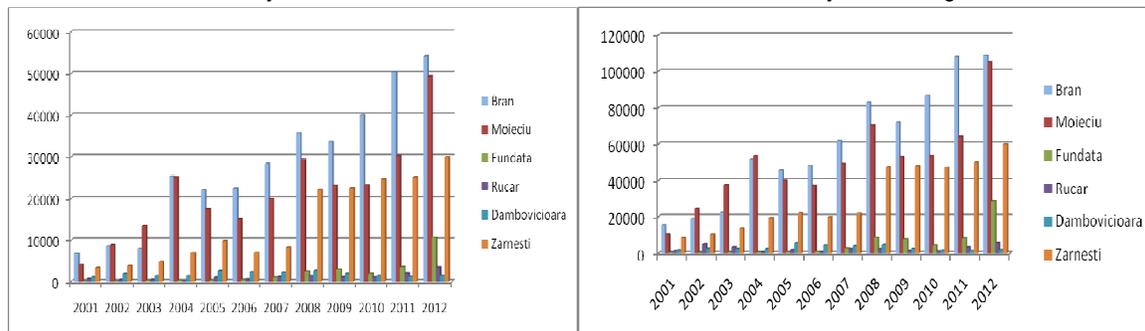
Leisure related to winter sports plays a very important tourist activity in the Rucar-Bran Corridor and Piatra Craiului area, considering that active tourism in the hivernal season often outweighs the summer season, as a touristic demand.

The only ski slopes are: Zanoaga ski slope, located in Bran, the small ski slope from Sirnea and the ski slope located near the Gorges Gradistei-Fundata.

Taking second look at the Entertainment Complex Gradistei-Fundata Gorges, which brings a plus to the area, being renowned for skiing especially free-ride skiing, ski fond and biathlon. Many famous Romanian skiers come from the area of Bran-Moieciu-Fundata, ensuring good publicity for this territory.

II.2.4. Circulation and tourist demand

Tourist arrivals and overnight stays increased continuously, with a small negative inflection during the economic crisis (2009-2010), and the positive trend immediately after. The increase relates to the whole area, with a constant tendency in the south to Dâmbovicioara, as demonstrated by the two figures below:

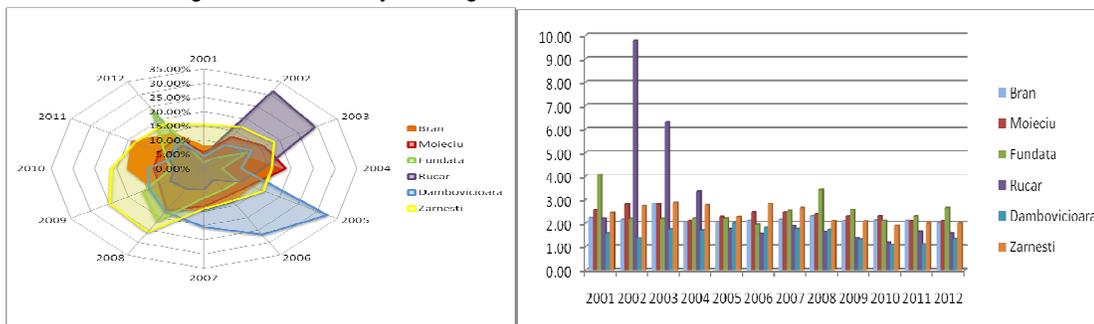


Number of Tourists arrivals (left) and overnights stay (right) (2001-2012), Source: DJS Braşov and Argeş

According to statistics, the used capacity index, would not even reach the threshold of economic viability therefore would not justify any increase in the number of units or places.

For the studied area, the statistics do not confirm what was noted by field trips or by calling and questioning about the availability during weekends, the summer or the winter time when there was no availability for accomodation.

Regarding the average length of stay, the chart based on data obtained from the county statistics, confirms fewer overnight stays, but reflects a strange situation and we believe inaccurate for Rucăr that would be recorded an average duration of stay of 9 nights in 2002:



The used capacity index (left) and theaverage lenght stay (right), Source: DJS Braşov and Argeş

II.2.5. Types and forms of tourism

II.2.5.1. General tourist typology

For our area of study, we propose an integrative way of approach, which, however, takes the patterns exhibited by the authors mentioned above and includes them inside their own vision, adapted to the mountain area of Piatra Craiului and the one of the Rucăr Bran corridor's knolls.

The typology we suggest is based on a systemic approach and includes categories, sub-categories, types, types of tourism, and rode their current trends when it comes to sustainable tourism.

Tourism in rural areas is characterized by:

- Clear predominance of a static and stationary form of tourism, characteristic to the Bran-Rucăr Corridor ;

- The "invasion" of secondary-residence types of constructions, typical for weekend-tourism, on one hand and longer stays on the other;

- The large number of school trips aimed mainly towards visiting Bran Castle. They often occur in groups that reach the size of a minibus or coach, the groups being led by a teachers, the group accommodation is in made villas and pensions, poorly classified or even unclassified, having extremely low rates;

- When it coems to incoming, tourists emitting countries are : Germany, Hungary, Serbia , Austria , Israel , and more recently Spain and Greece;

- In terms of distance we may observe three types of tourism in the area : tourism on short, medium and large distances. Short distance tourism provides favorable conditions for small remote for the population in urban areas near the corridor settlement. Therefore the area is frequently visited by tourists from the proximity: Brasov, Pitesti and Campulung. Medium distance tourism refers to tourists coming from more distant locations in the country, but, as we mentioned, most of them are from Bucharest and Constanta. Long distance tourism refers to tourists from other regions, emitting countries being mentioned above;

- Tourists' age criteria (we invoked the analysis of tourists flows visiting Bran Castle) after statistical analysis for 2010, the percentages for different age groups of tourists are: 68.19 % adults, 4.49 % seniors, 8.35 % students, 18.97 % pupils. So youth tourism summarizes a consistent rate of 27.32 % of the tourists visiting the area .

Tourism in the natural environment includes a unsportsmanlike component and a sports, mainly in the area Piatra Craiului National Park, being included in adventure tourism and ecotourism: hiking, climbing, free-ride skiing or downhill skiing. It has the following features:

- Length of stay: 17% of tourists stay a day or less, 44% two to three days, 30% are between four days and a week. Only 9% of tourists stay longer than a week;

- Tourists from countries like Poland, Czech Republic, Hungary, and Austria, Belgium, Switzerland are present. They arrive at the base of Piatra Craiului by coach – in Plaiul Fcii or at Gura Râului Cabin, making short hikings, or even alpine trails amongst the most visited being: Plaiu Fcii – Spirlea Refuge – Umerii Pietrei Craiului – The Great Scree - Cerdacul Stanciului and Fântâna lui Botorog – The Curmătura Cabin – Turnurile Dianeii – The Turnu Tip;

- In terms of age, the European eco-tourist profile fits, usually less than 35-40 years old, most preferring accommodation, usually arriving in large groups of about 20-40 people; when talking about the dimensional criteria (number of tourists participants), tourism is practiced in family and small groups when it comes to local tourists, but we also get intrusions in contrast with rural tourism of another category, the solitary tourist, which are usually organized tourist groups when considering the incoming segment (travel agencies as intermediates, not to mention mountain clubs and associations from the issuing countries).

II.2.5.2. Typology of sustainable tourism and the pathway towards eco-responsibility

By choosing the voyage, their behavior and activities, visitors have an important responsibility for environmental sustainability and global destinations, and therefore qualities and sensitivities of destination must be accurately known by visitors.

This responsibility, filtered through tourism ethics (ethics during the journey respectively, ethics for which is responsible the organizer), equitable tourism (transparent payment of all those who contributed to the creation and delivery of tourism products) and solidary tourism lead to eco-responsibility.

Ecotourism is "responsible travel to an area that naturally contributes to preserving the natural heritage and the well-being of local people" (The Ecotourism Society).

It is an activity "of observing the the fauna and flora of protected areas and provides important biological diversity, activity that respects the natural and human environment of the area visited, education, initiated in respect of the environment and overall understanding of the site visited" (Permanent Centre of Initiation in Environment, Vercors Park, 1992).

Normally associated with ecotourism is adventure tourism, nature tourism and agro tourism. It is important to note that the forms mentioned above are not necessarily forms of ecotourism, but only when they meets the conditions specified in the definition of ecotourism.

Eco-responsible tourism and sustainable act as trend is characterized mainly by (after Lamicie, 2008, p.179):

- transparency of travel's fee;
- prior and objective information, free from the effects of fashion and clichés;
- information on the origin of the offer (the tour operator as its author);
- taking into account the carrying capacity of the territory;
- indication of the size and intermediaries of local host;
- requesting skills and diplomas to providers and especially to the tourist guide;
- objective and verifiable information on the distribution of income from the supply of tourism products;
- double the commitment of payment of all those involved and unused trainees;
- a clear report submitted by the organizer, containing the values of carbonic gas resulted from the tour.

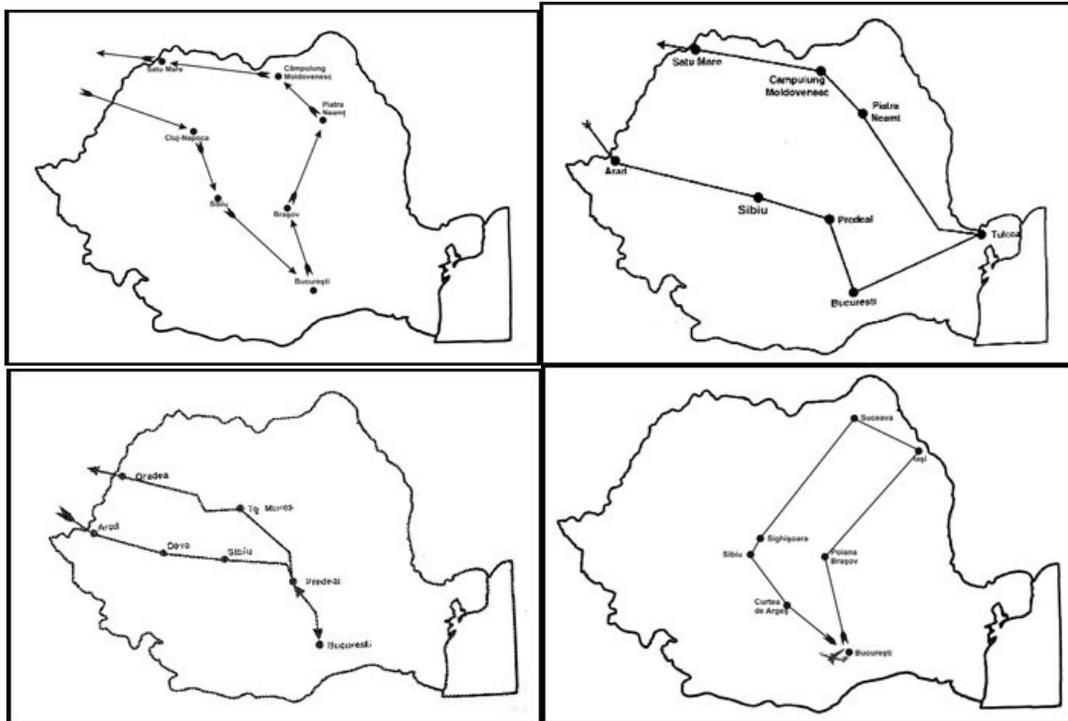
All these points must be met the in initial phase of building the tourism product.

II.2.6. Specific tourist product

We believe that one of the most important aspects to guide the complex tourism demad towards sustainability through tourism lies in its design based on the principles of marketing, but coordinated towards towards contemporary society values: eco, responsibility, closeness to nature and rural civilization.

At the same time we can not conceive the lack of appreciation of Dracula brand in Romania, in general, and in our area, too. Otherwise tourists come to Bran (and in Romania) "uncalled" because "the marketing was done a lond time ago by Bram Stocker"!

After analyzing the incoming tour-operators products, we draw the areas passed by foreign tourist tours in Romania.



II.2.6.1. Tour-operators and re-sellers of tourist product

Usually the foreign tour-operators are providing their products through Romanian travel agencies, (e.g. Visit Romania is the local representative for the big tour-operator Cosmos-Globus). Some Romanian travel agencies collaborate with foreign associations, foundations or NGO's, providing tours for a category of tourists (VIP, doctors, friends); there is another type of travel agencies, those providing their tours by their own (Dracula Tours – Germany: caravan tours).

II.2.6.2. Types of tourist products

Touristic products are focused on three components very clear in our area, namely:

- Rural tourism throughout the Rucăr-Bran corridor;
- Nature related tourism in the Piatra Craiului National Park area;
- Historical cultural tourism, having the main focus on Bran Castle and its association (miraculous in terms of tourism) with Dracula.

Regarding addressing, touristic products that are based rural tourism target especially the local tourists, tourist packages that include Piatra Craiului National Park are almost entirely dedicated to foreigners, while the cultural-historical products address both categories.

As a typology, touristic products are: on one hand thematic (especially the National Park: photography, wildlife observation, hiking, climbing, etc.) the circuit type (those targeting foreign tourists and youth groups) or stays addressing the Romanian rural tourism market.

Usually, groups of foreign tourists that are interested in culture are just in transit and are seldom staying overnight in the area, while the tourists who come to the Piatra Craiului National Park are usually accommodated in Măgura, Zărneşti or Plaiul Fcii.

Interestingly, the foreign audiences and tour operators for the incoming market seem to refer to a completely different area than the one accessed by the Romanian public.

In other words the entire area subject to the study is internationally promoted, promoting, as shown above, a strong counterbalance between the strong legend that continues to bring tourists and the bio-geographical branded elements of the Carpathian Empress.

II.2.6.3. The importance of the tourist guide in creating the tourist product and handling the tourists

The importance of the tourist guide is about its type: the national or local guide deal with the foreign or romanian tourist and the mountain guide provides hiking tours in Piatra Craiului National Park or in Bucegi Natural Parc. From this poin of view, the Din această perspectivă, both profesional and personal training are are completely different.

II.2.7. Tourist division of the area of Piatra Craiului National Park – Bran-Rucăr Corridor

The assessment of natural and anthropogenic potential and the landscape aspects, but also due to the statistical information relating to the accommodation and tourist traffic, we identified four distinct areas in terms of tourist division, each with its own subdivisions: Bran region, central region, the region of Rucăr and the mountain region.

Chap. III. ASSESSMENT OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH TOURISM IN THE AREA OF PIATRA CRAIULUI NATIONAL PARK AND BRAN-RUCĂR CORRIDOR

The study on tourism capitalization allows a smooth slide to the third chapter, which is organized to carefully assess the current tourism context, allowing drafting guidelines that outline the final and concluding chapter. Concrete observations made over ten years with regular trips to the area of study help us draw conclusions about the development of the tourism in the area. If a few years ago, the situation was quite confusing, the development trends unclear, the systematic and extended concrete analysis for a sufficient period of time, although seeming far-fetched, contributed to the reliability and the possibility of a relatively complete and comprehensive analysis of territory.

The difficulty and novelty of the study are the distinctive features approach, a strong practical and tangible and concrete analysis of the directions that can lead to sustainable development of the area through tourism. Thus, after the current tourism status analysis, we can refine the general issues when it comes to tourism, issues that partially overlap the evolution and typology of rural tourism in protected areas in Romania and even Europe. But they claim their specificity of an area involved in tourism for over half a century, as a result of tradition in rural tourism, of the position, accessibility and especially through the attractiveness of the landscapes and social-human aspects. The analysis of the current concrete situation highlights some trends in local tourism, which induce differences in the offer and production of the area's tourism.

The factors favoring tourism, grouped in literature into three parts (attraction, accessibility and tourism planning), are supplemented by two other factors, which, in our view, create an integrative analysis of sustainable tourism background by emphasizing the active characteristics, the “living” ones, of the touristic product. These are leisure expressed through touristic animation and image and appearance of the area created through infusion of materials on tourism perpetuated by the media and the internet. Linking the created image of the tourism destination with the pronounced seasonality determines the tourist flows overlap, creating the need for destination marketing. This analytic journey ends naturally with the analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats, as well as extracting the strategies that create an outline for the evolution of durable development through tourism.

In the third chapter we will also try quantitative assessments through landscape evaluation, the degree of attractiveness concerning the touristic areal and a brief thematic analysis based on indicators of sustainable tourism, aiming to deepen the quantitative and qualitative aspects (shaping the concept of the touristic fingerprint) that can orient to: maximizing social and economic benefits of tourism for local

communities, reducing the negative impact on the cultural heritage and the environment and to sustainable tourism planning. The following is an opening for a more complex further analysis.

III.1. DIFFICULTIES AND PROBLEMS GENERATED BY TOURISM FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

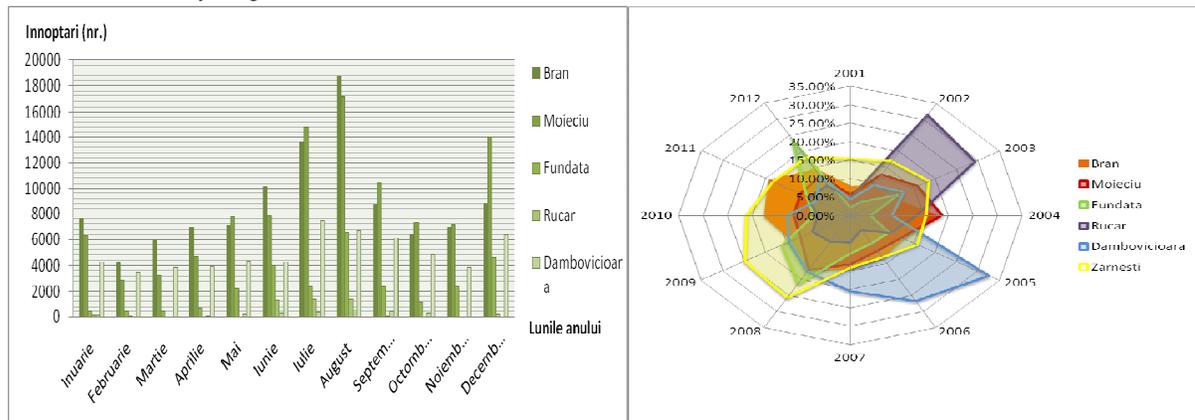
III.1.1. Seasonal periods marked by saturated periods and III.1.2. Extra-season and sub-exploitation

A series of parameters have profound influences on tourism: the distribution of free time during the year, school holidays, climate and weather, economic fluctuations and purchasing power of the population, the effects of fashion, natural or geopolitical disasters.

These factors are elements that, through their variation can cause an alternation of favorable or difficult situations in this sector littered with obstacles, tourism.

And when we talk of sustainable tourism, the whole combination determined by these parameters should be considered, each representing an important brake against whom you have to work and fight.

Some parameters come from a mindset of habits, habits, publicity, media and mostly from the behaviour of every single one of us.



Seasonality during 2012 (left) and occupancy rates (2001-2012), Source: DJS Braşov and Argeş

III.1.3. Weather as concentration factor

Coverage of meteorology is an enormous loss for tourism generating the concentration of trips during good weather. Although often the weather is not as favorable / unfavorable as it was announced.

III. 1.4 Concentration in space

The main result of this situation is the building of heavy and oversized tourist complexes, out of the place, that are designed to accommodate the influx of tourists arriving in a certain period of the year and during the weekends

III.1.5. The impact of the political and economical matters

On one hand, in the political context before 1989, as a paradox, Bran villages flourished during the communist dictatorship regime because the locals were not stripped of the land during communist collectivization as land was not an interest in agricultural terms, therefore because of the physical and geographical characteristics of the area. There have been attempts, however, to form cooperatives in the form of companionship, but it failed.

Various authors consider that this political history explains different mindset and behaviors of the locals, they are often perceived as being more individualistic and having a more entrepreneurial spirit developed. Also, people are better off as a result of longer periods of time that favored savings, but greedier,

some quotations being eloquent "about the population of Bran you can say anything, but they are not stupid or lazy", "The Bran inhabitant is an ordinary man, with the ambition to be in line with people, spiritually and materially; Romanian as a all Romanians somewhat more patriot" ("The sons and friends of Bran" Association). These statements certainly do not have scientific character, but are perfectly true since after the fall of the communist regime, the locals quickly integrated market mechanisms and a number of private, self-financed initiatives were born.

The events of late 1989 surprised the Bran area in a period of real economic prosperity, which allowed the entire area to develop apace, ending up to be one of the most popular tourist areas in Romania.

A second component addressed in this chapter refers to the economic aspects after the installation of the economical crisis, when, after 2008, throughout the analysis the county statistical database, the number of accommodation, the arrivals, overnight stays and employment decrease.

These are generated by the shrinking of family budgets, evidenced by a IRES study from 2012 which states that: "The majority of people surveyed said their family's financial situation has worsened in the last 5 years (June 2011 - 60% in July 2012 - 53%)."

As a conclusion, the sustainable tourist destination must keep an eye on the economic and political problems and adapt to new trends. As an example, in Fundata, in the new resort that represented the main accommodation for the biathlon participants, the number of arrivals and overnight stays increased as a result of the European Youth Olympic Festival, early 2013.

III.1.6. Misinformation

Not knowing some of the environments, misinformation, dissemination of clichés or prejudices, very often leads to the misuse of a country's or a region's resources.

This generates dysfunctions leading to a false spatial and temporal distribution of tourist flows.

III.1.7. Price level of the tourist product

Rates are one of the main obstacles against a harmonious and sustainable development of tourism. All "black" offers destabilize the already fragile tourism market, generating depreciation of labor and of the real cost of the services.

Overall, this "black market" causes two types of problems. While the tourist is attracted to the best price, which, moreover, he assiduously seeks, speculated offers create the baseline, favoring unsustainable tourism development. In the same time, it cuts off intermediaries, namely travel agencies, which have very few offers for the analyzed area. This is demonstrated by the results of the land investigation we have done, so well over half of the respondents buy their touristic package on the spot, or through acquaintances, friends, over the phone, or returning to the same accommodation, etc.

III.1.8. Individual tourism versus organised tourism

It is often when we look at tourism in terms of sustainability, the organized tourism (group, mass tourism) is a more harmful than the individual tourism. But this is a superficial approach. We will demonstrate this through the simple example of travelers who arrive on their own in our individual area of study. Thus, given that the vast majority of situations, the latter arrive in private or rented vehicles without having booked accommodation and or meal, without knowing the exact period of their stay or, as a Romanian saying says "arriving at a table not set", the area is taken by surprise, as it is prepared for a number of tourists known in advance. This phenomenon, overlapping periods of overcrowding caused by holidays, weather, holidays, festivals, concerts, and tourism and media releases generally causes imbalances in supply and tourism services, leading to an increasingly unsustainable tourism.

In contrast, organized groups seem impressive at first glance, the simultaneous landing of a significant number of tourists and usually, the fast purchase of souvenirs. However, through a series of known issues (length of the stay, the location chosen for board and lodging, the guide that has a well established plan and relevant information on the area), these groups align with a greater degree of sustainability in terms of tourism.

At the same time, it is important that organized group tourism determines a significant decrease in the number of holidays purchased on the black market, reducing the impossibility of the true quantification of the structures that work as accommodation bases, and the number of the tourists and stays in the area of study.

III.1.9. Quality of the environment

The main environmental problems that derive from the practice of tourism in general and particularly in the area of study is determined by air pollution due mainly to heavy traffic, the lack of alternative routes, the lack of parking spaces, the uncontrolled discharge of untreated water and storage waste.

III.1.10. Adaptation to tendencies in tourism

To answer questions about the future of tourism, computerized global distribution systems (GDS: Galileo and Amadeus) conducted studies that describe the trends in 2020: holidays will tend to multiply from two per year (summer - longer and winter - shorter) to four per year. Also, consumers will want four different experiences, thereby creators and sellers need to adapt to their products to a diversity of touristic products which will have to incorporate cultural elements, educational, personal development - related, and to answer the needs of families that include several generations simultaneously on the same trip. These trends support the sustainable development through tourism in the studied area, but mainly refers to the Piatra Craiului National Park area and the villages that are in its composition (Măgura, Peștera), but also Fundățica, yet secluded from the mass tourist invasions table.

Another strong trend is the concern for more responsible a tourism and more careful towards the environmental issues. This trend is, for our area, one that foreshadows subsequent analysis of this study and refers to promoting it as a "green" destination

On the other hand, the Future Foundation study does not exclude the mass tourism as it is the one that will characterize poorer and lower rates destinations. Making an analysis of this trend in the Bran area, we find that it is a positive trend, Bran Castle remaining, by being merrily associated with Dracula, that "call for tourists" needing to be "embroidered" to call tourists to visit the area.

The "Future Traveller Tribes 2020" report developed by Henley Centre Headlight Vision in partnership with Amadeus CRS demonstrates how demographic trends, geographic and political can influence the future tourists. Thus, this report were identified and segmented four groups ("tribes") of travelers as the most representative and challenging potential tourism trends, highlighting in terms of social, economic and demographic: active seniors, global clans, cosmopolitan commuters and global executives. Out of these, two particularly caught our attention because they seem to have an organic connection with the Bran-Rucăr area; these two components will be treated more closely below.

Due to the aging population, there will be an unprecedented number of traveling seniors.

The second group identified is the global Clans. Analyzing this trend in our area of study, statistical figures (presented in the tourist traffic chapter) indicates that the first among foreign tourists visiting Romania are Hungarian and German tourists. This entitles us to believe that the study area may experience a positive trend in increasing tourist traffic when it comes to the globalclans trend. It is obvious that, as we pointed out in Chapter II, section II.2.5., on one hand, Hungarian tourists visiting our country aim for the Secklerarea during their circuits, located 1-2 hours from the Bran-Piatra Craiului National Park. On the other hand, however,

outlining the same idea, German tourists are bound for the peasant fortresses and the fortified churches of Southern of Transylvania, Brasov and Sibiu without missing Bran, with “Dracula’s Castle” and/or Piatra Craiului National Park. Without a doubt, this type of tourism is connected to a returning to the “roots” of those who usually have left the country and the areas mentioned above in particular.

This trend is already evident in Bran area, the active seniors segment representing the predominant segment in today’s cultural circuits in Romania, visiting, inevitably, “Dracula’s Castle”, as we have shown in Chapter II, section II.2.5.

Although the other two groups identified by Amadeus report are not site specific trends, they however refer mainly to the MICE component (Meetings, Incentives, Conferencing / Conventions & Exhibitions / Events) tourism, that is, the professional component of the “people visiting for purposes related to their work” (Davidson, 1994), commonly known as business tourism in our country.

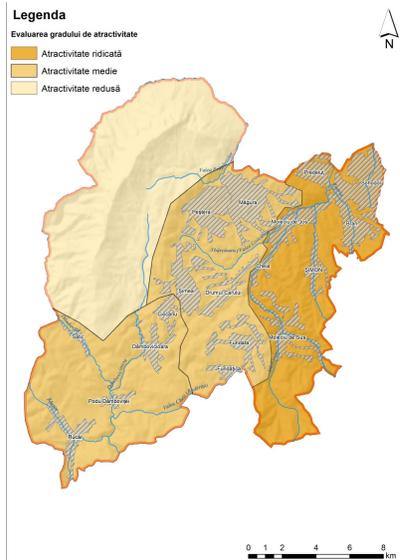
III.2. ANALYSIS OF TOURIST SUSTAINABILITY OF THE STUDIED AREA FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THE FAVOURISING FACTORS OF TOURISM (THE 5 “A”s)

The factors favoring tourism today are: attractiveness, accessibility and tourism planning of the regions concerned. To these factors, concerning Piatra Craiului National Park and the Bran-Rucăr Corridor, we added in the spirit of sustainable tourism, two additional factors, we believe, represent the engine that generates spatial-temporal sustainability: leisure and touristic animation as well as appearance or image created and promoted tourism. Coincidentally, all five terms beginning with the letter “a”, so we decided to call them: “Those 5A’s” or factors favoring tourism in the Piatra Craiului National park and the Bran-Rucăr Corridor area.

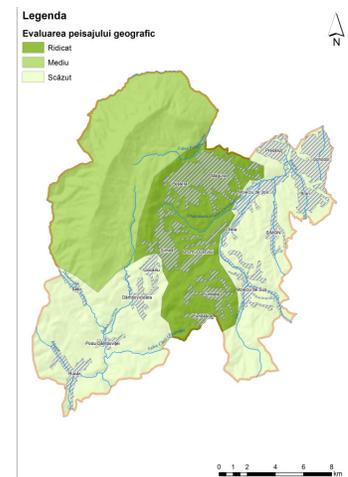
III.2.1. Tourist attractiveness of the area

III.2.1.1. Assessment of the attractiveness degree of the area

After trying to quantify these qualitative aspects, the results confirm the request and tourist traffic,



standing the major requests being on the Bran-Moeciu territory, both because of the accessibility and anthropogenic and natural heritage and also as a result of the tourism services offered by accommodation, food and entertainment structures. What is extremely important is the fact that areas that include Măgura, Peștera, and Fundata, on one hand and Rucăr and Dâmbovicioara, on the other, there are equal scores and are especially, very close to the area Bran-Moeciu, confirming that this region can receive a considerable amount of tourists, possibly redirected from Bran-Moeciu, but this process must be carefully managed within the meaning of sustainability. Regarding The Piatra Craiului National Park, once it is seen



not as a park but as a mountain, therefore excluding the valuable human component, its attractiveness will be narrowed to just certain types of travel enthusiasts.

The tourism attractiveness, seen in the context of sustainable tourism can have in the near future an opposite value scale than the current value, given the traffic intensification in the areas of high accessibility and also as a result of tourism impact (especially environmental) badly managed in areas which today have a higher density of tourist accommodation structures and record higher levels of tourist traffic.

II.2.1.2. Considerations on tourism reflection of landscapes

After quantifying the landscape, we could say that the Magura-Peștera-Fundata-Șirnea area has the highest landscape value, followed by the Piatra Craiului Massif and only then the Bran-Moeciu, great length from Podu Dâmboviței.

III.2.2. Accessibility of the area – generator of the seasonal congestion versus favourising factor of tourism

Linking Transylvania to the South of the country, the area between Bran and Rucăr and extended to the West towards Piatra Craiului National Park owes much of its tourist traffic to its accessibility.

However, the means transport is poorly well developed, and schedules are poor, not to mention the fact that the villages like Șirnea are almost completely forgotten, coaches usually leaving tourists at the crossroads leading to the village road .

We believe that better coordination and accessibility of the entire area could lead a more even distribution of tourist arrivals and overnight stays, encouraging the central areas of the corridor. The introduction of means of transport leading to Plaiu Foi would increase the number of tourists arriving in the area for hiking and climbing, but also of those who would go just to admire the scenery and consume various products. In addition, its management by the park administration could result in much needed revenue and could direct tourist flows in coordinated intervals.

III.2.3. Tourist development at the limit between area specificity and kitsch

Identifying the between traditional and kitsch can start from various studies Vintilă Mihailescu, anthropologist, performed. Therefore, analyzing the short evolutionary route of the settlements and traditional household in the Bran-Rucăr Corridor, shown in Chapter II, section II.2.2.4., we can identify some of these evolutionary stages, reaching in the end, as we can observe almost all around the country to the so-called "proudhousing" highlighted by the same anthropologist mentioned above.

Therefore, what we can find today as visible architecture in the rural and mountain landscape is structured around the following aspects

- The scarcity of traditional houses belonging to different ages and previous architectural styles;
- Rare cases of old housing renovation and giving these a modern aspects and the survival of some traditional housing next to the ones that have been newly built;
- The lack of an unitary and defining style for the area through building new structures, unconnected to the traditional architecture;
- The only constants identified are: giant housing / accommodation units, and if they are not grand, they should at least be colorful
- The recent emergence of solid wood rustic buildings, a little better integrated into the landscape, with the eternal swing and gazebo in almost every household, are substitutes for animal farming; we can say that this is a rustic style adapted to the modern times, many built with questionable taste and fit, most of the times having no connection with the designer's idea of rustic;
- Occurrence of the Austrian Alps patterns as a result of the trend inserted in the area by the first resort belonging to the local investor Gârbacea, Cheile Grădiștei; we can give as example the particular pattern copied mostly in the areas of Moieciu de Sus and Moieciu de Jos;

- The recent invasions of intrusions – landscape level – having nothing in common with the area;
- A number of new construction raised on European funds, as demonstrated by displaying banners, a large part of them exist, but are not completed;
- Clusters of structures built on a restricted area, not integrated in the landscape and mismatched;
- The invasion of the area peripheral to the Piatra Craiului National Park with holiday homes and villas as well as accommodation structures that often take Western models and are relatively integrated in the landscape;
- Survival of the PCNP hidden refuges ("mysteries") and the building of rounded-shaped ridge refuges made out offiberglass.

III.2.4. Recreation and tourist animation – strong point for the tourist sustainability

Leisure is an important element in meeting the needs of tourists, regardless of the primary motivation for vacation or the form of tourism.

One of the most common ways of making leisure possible is touristic animation. Animating a group means "putting soul", breathing life and movement into a group, in short, means creating pleasant ambience or an environment fit for rest and recreation. The French Academy defines animation as a "method of driving a group to enhance the integration and participation of group members in collective life".

Field observation and questioning tourists have demonstrated the following:

- The need to reduce the emphasis (providers, intermediaries in tourism, and the tourists) on accommodation and food and increasing the recreational side of the tourism product;
- The need for places and activities for children, especially in areas with the highest number of tourists: Bran, Moeciu;
- The need for opening and setting up locations and activities for teens and young people as a result of the age cohort is extremely large and complex and arrives in the area in an organized manner (school trips, university, practices, etc.).
- Diversification of leisure for adults who can only find in the countryside activities such as walking, sightseeing and souvenir buying;
- Diversification of leisure for seniors, Romanian (many in the area) and foreign (with higher expectations).

Thus, as a typology of tourist animation, we suggest splitting activities in the accommodation establishments, restaurants, museums or recreational into age groups, which is the easiest, but also useful and leading to actual results

II.2.5. The created or promoted aspect or tourist image

The representation that the mountain's visitors create exercises a great influence on the frequency of visits. The concept of representation, evoking all beliefs, ideas and impressions that a person has on the place of destination (Crompton, 1979, p 18-23), helps to explain the psychological attraction of a region (Hunt, 1975, p 18 -23). Voyages organizers know that it is very important to create positive images to develop new markets.

III.2.5.1. Tourist guides, tourist media and the internet

Watching the big picture, we can see an inflation of the information that concerns the mountain area and the Bran-Rucăr area in various types of advertising, and the Internet has the role of being exceptional informative nowadays, but often perverse due to incorrect or counterfeit information.

We want to emphasize the presence of guides and maps made over time, especially those relating to the accuracy of the Massif, with exceptional contributions in discovering its mysteries and uniqueness. This information is extremely accurate and yet, with few exceptions, and on one hand an extraordinary role for

mountain climbers and lovers, but also provides the appropriate framework for unsuspecting tourists who might influence the fragile aspects, especially the bio-geographical ones.

III.2.5.2. Necessity of demarketing

We believe that there are two areas that requires marketing studio in the area: on one hand Bran, with the Castle of Dracula, on the other hand the protected of Piatra Craiului National park, area of great value, through its bio-geographical uniqueness.

Thus, in Bran area, it clearly emerges that Bran is the strength and the main tourist attraction. On a closer analysis, the outcome of the survey of the tourists visiting Bran Castle, there was an important aspect to quality. Thus, as shown in the chart below, more than half of the tourists who visited the castle expected more and were disappointed by too much publicity too little attractive potential. Also, the reputation and in particular the fact that Bran Castle is located on the access road from Transylvania to the south of the country, draws an extremely high number of tourists in transit current drawn by the marketing of the touristic product. On the long run these aspects lead to unsustainable practices and decreasing tourist flow (fig. 850).

If we refer to the protected area of Piatra Craiului National Park some demarketing measures are required in order to obtain sustainable management and preservation, functional principles, promoting and selling, which consist of:

- Managing the overall level of visiting the park by encouraging or discouraging the request;
- To encourage or discourage specific types of visitors coming to the park that do not favor the development of sustainable tourism;
- Creating the basis of understanding the need for visitor management measures that strengthen protection or exclude visitors from certain sensitive areas.

The situation is similar for the Bran area, so that visitors, for reasons connected to better management could be just the preferred ones and favor sustainable development.

In conclusion, the use of demarketing instruments is required in a key moment of the complex shift of mass tourism in the spirit of sustainability, preserving the spirit of the place.

III.2.6. The SWOT analysis – foundation of the strategies of a sustainable tourist development

The analysis of the natural background, anthropogenic, socio-economic development and all the other issues related to sustainable tourism development of the area, leaks the SWOT analysis, with a few key points to address strategic directions, with "the 5A" strengths, weak points caused by differences in the distribution territory of most tourist phenomenon, threats related to the kitsch traditional component assembly and forms of pollution on the environment, the opportunities related to the context for development, in general and tourism in particular oriented towards sustainability.

III.3. QUANTITATIVE AND QUALITATIVE ISSUES OF THE SUSTAINABLE TOURSIM

III.3.1. Theoretical and methodological aspects on the indicators of the sustainable tourism

UNWTO try an adaptation of Agenda 21 for local tourism in 1995 proposing a set of indicators for tourism (www.unwto.org). Starting from this set, we identify on our territory the following indicators: degree of protection by IUCN, the number of tourists visiting the site (per year/month peak), the peak intensity of use (persons/ha) ratio tourists/locals (season and throughout the year), if there is a methodology study environment and control on land use area, the existence of a regional development plan for tourist destination in question, the number of rare or endangered species, the visitor satisfaction, the satisfaction of the local population, the proportion of the economic activity generated by tourism.

III.4. TOURIST MANAGEMENT

As noted, the site's touristic image has a major influence on individual decisions to go to a place and the choice of the company arranging the purchase. Once inside, visitors' activities are oriented through a series of information provided in hotels, cultural environments, early presentation at the beginning of the trails or in environmental centers.

III.4.1. Tourist management in Piatra Craiului National Park

One of the most effective ways to know the characteristics and structure of tourism activities in the Piatra Craiului National Park is monitoring tourism through surveys based on questionnaires. This questionnaire is addressed to tourists found in the park the completion, compilation and interpretation of the results leading to shaping the image of tourism activities and facilities in the park and local communities.

A first round of monitoring tourism activities was held at the Piatra Craiului Biodiversity Conservation Project, which sought to obtain quantitative and qualitative assessment of tourist flow in the area.

Firstly, the survey mentioned above, has shown that Piatra Craiului National Park is visited annually by about 86,000 tourists. The reasons for coming into the Park, are in order of their importance as follows: mountains, nature, escape from the city to be alone, to be with family for camping. Thus the above enumeration reveals that the most common reasons for visits are related to Piatra Craiului National Park's spectacular landscape and nature and increasingly more nowadays, the vital need for a "rehab from the urban nuisance" as many concerned tourists testify.

The key features identified are: the main entry points to the Park are in order Dâmbovicioara due to the cave visit, Plaiul Foii, Garofița Pietrei Craiului and Fântânelui Botorog; the car is the main mean of transportation, and the main activities are: relaxation and scenery, age: most are young, length of stay :2-3 days mostly with longer residence in Plaiul Foii, Brusturet, Curmătura (camping), accommodation used in order: tent camping, the relatively cabins, pensions and the relatively small number of foreign tourists.

A second round of monitoring was done in 2011, the studz sought to determine the qualitative aspects of the tourist flow in the area. The questionnaire (the same as that applied by APNPC) was applied downstream of the entrance to the Prăpăstiile Zărneștilor in the area called Fântânelui Botorog.

Regarding motivation and activities they wish to practice in the park, the changes are not significant compared to 2001, but in terms of tourist movements, the percentage of persons traveling in cars remained above 85%, and meanwhile cycling as a mean of transport appeared, which caused the percent of those who travel by foot to decrease, this aspect being particularly important when it comes to sustainable tourism.

The main differences that stand out from the round of monitoring are:

- Incomparably more tourists arrived for just a short walk in Prăpăstiile Zărneștilor, not even halfway completed, the main objective being taking photographs of nature;
- Car crowding of the area right at the entrance of the area mentioned above and the entire distance between the barrier and Fântâna lui Botorog;
- Walks in groups consisting of family and close friends;
- Conducting team building-type activities held by mountain-rescuers on climbing paths in the Prăpăstii area.

III.4.2. The issue of managing secondary residence tourism

The major consequences of tourism practitioners that own secondary residences scattered throughout the area of the Bran-Rucăr Corridor, but also Plaiul Foii can be summarized as follows:

- These foreigners are less rooted in their new places of residence, and there are few who are interested in local affairs, including resources that have attracted and leave their residences as soon as conditions degrade;

- Significantly increase the use of local resources because they spend more than other visitors at the site and have the time, spend more time in nature, leaving deep marks when practicing sports such as a skiing, motorcycling, snowmobiling, hunting, etc.

- Their role in land use is a major change in terms of both quantitative and structural; also to be noted that this change of ownership exerts negative influence on tourism office;

- they consume more, be it local or imported products, especially food, water, energy and labor, this consumption has consequences for residents forced to pay higher prices for goods and services, to give up on these or leave, thus highlighting a vacation mentality, lack of occupation

- For the time-being a person that is noticed in the area is an economic progress of the region, but without being able to quantify the environmental impact of products and local customs in a simple overview, the kitsch amount is impressing both in the construction, and marketed products;

- Cultural change, particularly in lifestyle (different from official culture) is a major problem, well described and recognized by the literature on socio-economic changes, especially in applied anthropology; as we have seen it, it describes changes related to tourism, with direct relationships with traditional mountain communities

- among the newcomers, some are interested in measures to protect and encourage tourism activities (e.g. Bubulina Pension in Magura)

- they participate in activities aware of environmental issues, especially in the surroundings;

- few are actively involved in protecting the values that have attracted them in the first place.

In conclusion, there appear to be two types of secondary residence tourism practitioners: those who want to conserve those resources and those who use them. These two types are not generally in harmony with the natives as a result of their different values and behaviors. They are often even conflict with them. Older residents complain especially about those who practice secondary residences tourism, plus tourists, the diminishing of their silence.

III.4.3. Tourist footprint – witness to sustainability and non-sustainability of a territory. Case study: Moieciu village

Sustainable tourism cannot be discussed without taking the issue of the tourism sector for a given territory, without considering the local community and environment, without placing a rigorous framework and, especially, without studying the behavior of tourists arrived in the area in question.

Whatever the style of his vacation, the tourist determines the positive and negative impacts on the economy, culture and environment of the destination they visit.

Considering the definition of the ecological footprint (Ecological Footprint, Wackernagaal & Rees), which measures the pressure that mankind has on the biosphere, depending on the productive area (land and water surface) that the planet needs in order to provide the natural resources it consumes and to neutralize the waste the inhabitants of the planet generate, we aim to establish a tourist print similar to the ecological print (Cristina, Pătrașcu, N. Ciangă, 2010 p.252-262).

A definition of the tourist print could be: the pressure exerted by a tourist on the place he visits depending on ecological, physical, social, responsive, economical, psychological sustaining capacity of the site generating similar sustainable tourism opportunities for future generations by neutralizing the current tourism impacts.

We must determine from the beginning the carrying abilities for tourism

- Ecological ability: refers to establishing the level of development of tourism activities and without strongly harming the environment;

- Physical ability: physical components require protecting the territory that can be done by investing in efficient technology and a high-quality supply of tourist services;

- Social-receptiveability: the touristic development of an area or locality must consider the inhabitants' traditional way of life and their habits;

- Economic ability: highlights the use of all available resources through tourism activities and are able to maintain the function of a given area of interest;

- Psychological ability: is related to negative perceptions of a tourist destination, following environmental degradation or inappropriate attitude of indigenous peoples.

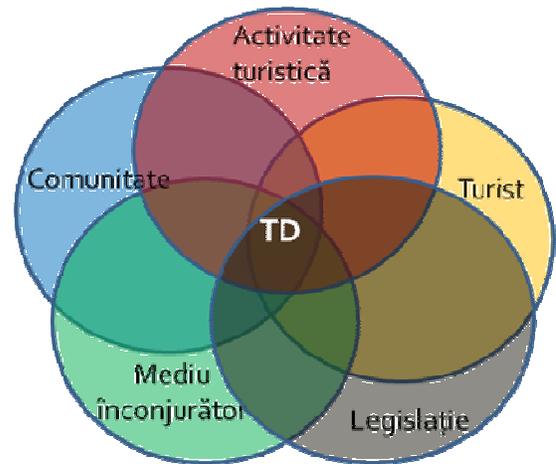
Thus, determining the carrying abilities for tourism, closely related to the tourist activities, we can discern the tangible or intangible limit, measured and unmeasured, between the possibility that future generations benefit from tourism from the touristic site in similar circumstances discussed by the ability to neutralize the impact of the current touristic activity, and transforming that site so that tourism in the area in question will generate a much too strong, changing it, its neutralizing ability being exceeded .

We believe that support for sustainable tourism a given area is give by the touristic potential and supporting the environment, the continuity of communities and respect for traditions, parallel to sustainable economic development through sustainable tourism activities, but pressing at the same time for the need of responsible tourism and even eco-responsible because, as we have seen in this study that the a tourist's impact is a major one, he is one who shapes the tourism activities, resorts adapting to his requirements and even the loss or preservation of traditions through which they manifest requirements.

We believe that this analytical model can be easily applied to any other territory, creating the basic directions of sustainable development through tourism.

Chapt. IV. INTEGRATING MODELS FOR THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH TOURISM IN PIATRA CRAIULUI NATIONAL PARK – BRAN – RUCĂR CORRIDOR

First three chapters establish the framework needed to meet the needs of sustainable development through tourism. The final chapter puts sustainability matrix study supported by three pillars: Economic, Environmental and Social pillar complete with educational but which we consider crucial in the development of sustainable tourism in the area Piatra Craiului - Bran-Rucăr, and in Romania general. Thus, we believe that the economic pillar can mean a correlated relationship in local tourism industry as a tourism cluster with sustainable trend with the main target being the innovation and diversification of local tourism product through the cooperation tourism operators and through increased competitiveness.



Protection and conservation of the environment can be supported by tourism and are based on promoting inside of an coordinated advertising campaign belonging to the constituted tourism cluster, oriented towards green tourism and even named as such, term which is considered comprehensive and clearly expressing the sustainable trend of the environmental system broadly.

In the same idea of sustainability of a highly developed area in terms of tourism, we emphasize the importance of perception in terms of its spirit of place, as it was defined by ICOMOS statement "Saving the spirit of place" in Quebec on 4 October 2008. Thus, we emphasize the importance of human community in individualizing the area as a tourist complex exception by making community-based tourism (Community Based Tourism, CBT).

Labeling *local* products as *once* or *homemade* or *produits the terroir* (the French model), represents a major opportunity for sustainable tourism development. They perpetuate the crafts, traditions and local recipes, preserving intangible cultural heritage on one hand, and obtaining substantial gains for local producers on the other. Thus, they serve as vectors of sustainability and their task in tourism is to diversify, to attract tourism demand through originality and individuality, to customize and create tourist offer opened for the sale and use of the territory.

As early as the beginning of the field study I noticed a very fine line of distinction between durable and non-durable, we consider that increased educational aspects and public awareness of respect for the environment in the broad sense, is the "key" that allows "opening the gate" of sustainable development through tourism.

Education through tourism is the basis for understanding the importance of preservation, conservation and sustainable exploitation of heritage, natural and cultural, of the analyzed territory. Thus, long-term, it aims to raise the awareness among both tourists and local communities on the importance of building a sustainable tourism. In a word, reeducation, so that nature and rural traditional aspects to be respected by the local community and tourists.

IV.1. SUSTAINABLE ECONOMICAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH THE CREATION OF THE "GREEN TOURISM" CLUSTER OF PIATRA CRAIULUI NATIONAL PARK– BRAN-RUCĂR CORRIDOR

IV.1.1. Conceptual and methodological aspects

The mission of a tourism cluster is increasing the competitiveness and the employment rate of workers by linking people, skills, competencies and knowledge. Another mission is to increase efficiency because it is much easier working in a network with customers and suppliers. The great importance of the cluster is that stimulates innovation, interaction with customers generating new ideas and creating great pressure on innovation.

Tourism clusters could be divided into: tourist services (accommodation, catering, transport, etc.) geographic clusters (regions, routes) thematic clusters (cultural tourism, rural, natural, gourmet, etc.)

The cluster proposed for National Park Piatra Craiului - Corridor Bran-Rucăr is one of thematic tourism, based on principles of sustainable development. One such cluster is likely due to the concentration in the area of tourism operators and service providers, but suppliers also.

	Travel Agencies	Tour-Operators	
Customer Service and research	↓	↓	Local sales and assurance services
Food production suppliers	Restaurants and other alimentation units	Touristic animation and	Access transports

		entertainment services	
Real estate services	Accommodation	Local transports	Souvenirs
Serving services	↑	↑	Banks, money exchange
Governmental agencies	Education Institutions	Industrial Groups	

IV.1.2. Innovation and the advantage of direct competition

The hereby approach aims to implement the theoretical concept of a cluster over a mountainous zone with a highly tourism potential. The main objective is to launch Piatra Craiului National Park area - Bran-Rucăr Corridor, on the European tourist market under the concept of Green Tourism. It was tried a practical application of the theory of clusters (M. Porter) to improve the collaboration between businesses and supply chains, all aimed at specific market segments, as compared to values that can represent a comparative advantage. The need for protection and conservation of natural resources has made this approach to a sustainable line, of sustainable tourism development.

Clusters develop and are very important because they create economic benefits outlined in three dimensions:

- Companies can operate at a higher efficiency, reaction times between companies and suppliers are smaller than in the case of isolation;
- Companies and research institutions can achieve a high level of innovation, information and interacting directly with customers creates new ideas and innovation require high pressure, while the cluster environment lowers the cost of experimentation;
- The business training tends to be higher in a cluster

Innovation and diversification are those that lead to the development of tourism and modern and innovative services to retain and attract new tourists in areas of interest like Bran Rucăr Corridor and Piatra Craiului National Park.

IV.1.3. Favourising factors of development by the tourist cluster

In this subchapter are treated the facilitating factors in cluster development through tourism: innovation and diversification of tourism products and services, increase competitiveness and quality in tourism, improving the quality of tourism services, the cooperation between providers and tourism operators, coordinated promotion of the area and contribute to regional development.

IV.2. ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY FOCUSED ON THE STRATEGY OF TOURIST PROMOTION OF THE AREA OF PIATRA CRAIULUI NATIONAL PARK – BRAN-RUCĂR CORRIDOR AS A DESTINATION FOR THE “GREEN TOURISM”

To create the form of promoting as a coordinated strategy of the area, there were analyzed first the *conservation and development strategies* that support the idea of "GREEN DESTINATION".

At the level of PCNP, in addition of sustainable tourism strategy, were conducted three major projects for more efficient protection of nature: Biodiversity Conservation Management in Romania (a real opportunity for establishing the park administration and its own management plan, many species of plants were subject to protection, thus fighting against the process of extinction, has supported local communities in conservation the local traditions and habits, integrating them into the park's policy of natural conservation), *The Project "Natura*

2000 Sites in Piatra Craiului National Park" (the impact on the habitats was higher, thus increasing the degree of conservation of screes, alpine and sub-alpine meadows on limestone, there were significant benefits on the conservation and restoration of habitats and the social impact was felt on local communities due to activities environmental education and public awareness), *The Project "Carpathian's Large Carnivores"* (main effects of the project were visible, on the one hand, in terms of habitats of wolves, bears and lynx, and on the other, has improved the relationship human-carnivore through educational programs promoted in academia and among local communities; also it has generated significant improvements on local tourism by attracting foreign tourists, for example, in 2002 in the Zarnesti area, arrived over 80 Swiss, Austrian and English groups).

In the second part were reviewed all the steps necessary for compiling a strategy to promote the area of as a Green Tourism Area, based on the eco-tourist's profile (age between 30 and 59 years old, educated and above average income, seeking only high quality services particularly excellent local guides, prefer uncrowded areas, foods derived from natural products, and are directed towards the conservation of nature).

All travelers affected by these strategies that were based on conservation and promotion of the park and the area in general are discerning travelers and represent a special type of tourists using media resources in a certain way and have certain expectations about the destination. Regarding the psychographic profile of the discerning tourist, MDTR says that it is "open-minded and tolerant, leading a healthy and active life, but seeking risks and challenges, appreciates when it receives recognition from acquaintances, it is a high-tech user that informs in detail about the travel destination but still does not forget to read more, both at home and when traveling."

In addition, this tourist respects the natural, social and cultural values and selects destinations that he understands and share. The portrait of the discerning traveler concluded by MDTR is between 25-34 years and 50-64 years respectively, but in the latter age range should be about families whose children do not live with them, have necessarily higher education and average to high income, and especially potential for higher expenses. The purposes for which such tourists travel are just to live experiences and new emotions or satisfy some special interest to learn or to engage and interact in pleasant and very safe environments.

It is clear that by virtue sustainable tourism it is necessary, first of all, tourism and ecotourism empowerment, which is the motivation behind the creation of the supporting fund to promote the area Piatra Craiului National Park and the Bran-Rucăr Corridor as an area dedicated to green tourism, which, *in our vision and broadly, covers the transition from classical to sustainable tourism, through responsible and sustainable reporting of providers, intermediaries and beneficiaries in tourism to the reality and value of the "environment" of an area especially different and opposite to the manmade environment, but with real cultural heritage values.*

IV.3. "KEEPING THE SPIRIT OF THE PLACE" – THE SOCIAL PILLAR OF THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH TOURISM

The spirit of place represents, accordingly to ICOMOS (*International Council of Monuments and Sites*): a human construction designed to serve the social needs and it exists especially in traditional communities; it is associated in the safeguarding of its memory, vitality, continuity and spirituality!, and it consists in material elements (sites, sights, buildings, objects) and immaterial (memories, written documents, rituals, fairs, crafts, values, etc.) which together serve significantly to make a place and give it spirit.

The following aspects are highly important: the alive and permanent character of monuments, sites and cultural sights and richer and more dynamic vision of cultural heritage.

The question thus arises, what and especially how to preserve so that something to evolve with the development of tourism in the area in general and sustainable tourism in particular.

The answer is simple, resulting from a simple comparison between:

- a museum (for example, the open air museum at the foothills of the castle) and a village that keeps the traditional structure (for example, the village Fundățica);
- festival costumes worn by actors on stage and the one worn on a feast day on the way to church;
- Bran Castle with empty rooms and the same castle in Queen Mary's time;
- Chinese and stuffed toys sold at the fairs and at the foothills of Bran Castle and the cheese from Rucăr bought from the superstores and the cheese from Rucăr – PoduDâmbovitei bought after tasting directly from the freshly made piece;
- traditional dances that are danced on a stage and those from a traditional wedding;
- the breakfast made from ingredients bought from the store and the one prepared from products homemade and other examples.

Practically, *the spirit of place* is the one that is transmitting the atmosphere that clogged a community and has defined it culturally and that today has to find its own resources to develop through tourism based on the following principles: preserving traditional occupations, preserving traditional dances, preserving the traditional structure of the villages, preserving traditional products, transmitting and preserving the local tales, conservation branean and rucarean spirit.

IV.3.1. Community based tourism and coordinated promotion of local products

Touristic demand in the area of study, both the Rucăr Bran Corridor as well as in Piatra Craiului National Park has grown tremendously in the past decade. This development is juxtaposed to a similar quantity to the quality development, resulting from the evaluation of responses to questionnaires tourist area.

Our research as well as the development initiatives undertaken both within the National Park as well as in rural area of Bran-Rucăr confirm that one of the ways forward for the sustainable development of the area is tourism based on local products and, moreover, entire area may be in a tourism offer based on local values, in fact the "local secrets".

We believe that the area studied has two main tourist pluses: recognition, both internally and externally as Dracula related area, recognition both at the level of the Scientific tourism and at the level of recreation tourism as an area that has unique natural items: Piatra Craiului Dianthus, virgin forests, and so on, but also a certain kind of tourist anthropogenic attractions, little known refuges created over time by enthusiasts of "Craiasa". These two arguments, which are basically the tourist traffic in this area (as demonstrated by the number of tourists to Bran Castle (figure below) and incoming tourism and the connoisseurs of the National Park), refer to the idea of mystery and / or secret. Mysteries and / or secret of the place appear in the names of local hidden shelters, called by the term "mystery" or the advertising of the area where texts like "values stored in the dowry of Romania", "this sanctuary of nature" occur ([http :/ / www.statiunea-turistica-bran.ro/](http://www.statiunea-turistica-bran.ro/)), "Castle of Dreams" (<http://www.bran-castle.com/>) etc.

All these actions allow the local providers from the area of Bran-Rucar – Piatra Craiului to grow the differences between them, marking, in the same time very clearly the characteristics of their own "territory", but also delimit themselves from other touristic destinations competing on the same customer segments, the same types and forms of tourism or near touristic areas (for example: Prahova Valley – Bucegi Mountains).

The main objectives can be synthetized as it follows:

- this kind of initiative favors local development, leaning on the diversity, quality and attractiveness of local resources of the studied area and the realization of a project based on a coherent and durable touristic development;
- this step determines the awareness of local actors over the wealth of the area Rucar-Bran – Piatra Craiului and favors the making of a range of products and touristic services capable to realize and settle down durably the image of “local” and the notoriety of Rucar-Bran – Piatra Craiului as a touristic destination;
- could guarantee the quality of local tourism through recognized certifications;
- allow differentiation of classical touristic offers from the rural areas, by proposing an offer of customized services of local tourism able to meet the expectations of tourists discovery (via local products, by knowing the information and experience of local crafts, history and natural and anthropogenic heritage sites, through the preserving of traditions, through natural and anthropogenic landscapes);
- to provide the guarantee of quality of constant and sustainability locally supplies for visitors, resulting from recognized certification;
- to lean on a network of actors and professionals animated and coordinated at the scale of the analyzed area; it would be ideal if this network would rely on the local providers.

Thus, this area can develop into a complex test that may contribute to the development of a methodology of "local secret" to other areas of our country that can grow sustainably through tourism.

Thus, only through a rigorous process coordinated locally and regionally based on local initiative and quality of provision of tourism services that preserve the tradition and spirit of the place, bringing at the same time income, promotion and fame for the providers, it builds the social pillar of sustainable development through tourism.

IV.3.2. Keeping the secret of the Carpathians “Queen”

Besides the outstanding issues related to the morphology, landscape, unique bio geographical, varied tourist typology, the mystery of Piatra Craiului links particularly to the existence of so-called *unmarked trails* or “hățașe”, as well as the mystery of the hidden refuges that enables overnights in order to traverse the paths free of carrying a tent in the back or without requiring the steep descent of "Craiasa". These routes were marked only for connoisseurs and shelters were built by enthusiasts of the mountain and especially of Piatra Craiului.

IV.3.2.1. Unmarked tourist tracks

Inside of Piatra Craiului National Park can be found four categories of touristic trails: *marked trails getting near the mountain*, *marked trails for ridge access*, *marked trail for the ridge* and *unmarked trails near the steep zone* (west slope) (adaptation of: E. Cristea, 1984 and The Touristic Map of Piatra Craiului National Park, author D. Lipan, 2002).

Regarding the unmarked trails the approach is more complex and more complicated both at the practical and theoretical level. These are basically, those situated on the western slope of the mountain, are hard to reach and extremely dangerous for those who do not know the rules of the mountain and the rules of the mountain weather, this is why there were a number of deadly accidents, attempting to complete them.

In the same time, the trails offer a wild beauty, with the possibility to observe and photograph protected plants (the endemism Piatra Craiului Dianthus and the well-known edelweiss), to meet the famous chamois, to discover hidden meadows between the rocks, to practice rock-climbing; common sense prevails everywhere, the ecological spirit and respect, it prevails a spirit that can be found at the foundation of creating

expertise to address the needs, cultivates attitudes, motivations and commitments resulting in making informed decisions and responsible approach to actions.

Environmental education components are:

- awareness regarding the environment and environmental ambitions;
- knowledge and understanding of the environment and environmental requirements;
- interest on environmental attitude and motivation to improve or preserve its quality;
- ability to identify and support in dealing with environmental demands.
- *IV.4.2.Ethical codes, behaviour laws and models of education curricula*

Mason and Mowforth (1995, cited by MihaelaDinu, 2005, p 26) identified four main areas of codes of conduct: carrying out the monitoring and the efficiency, the use of codes, the need for coordination, the use of self-regulation.

Models of educational programs

Regarding educational programs in Grand Teton National Park, "U.S. Alps" an extremely interesting aspect is that all products sold are approved by the National Parks Service and must serve educational functions, so each time when someone purchases a product from the library park that person supports educational programs, interpretive and scientific.

Thus, our goal is to imagine a perfect model of tourism throughout the park, taking account of the American strategy. The model will be analyzed according to its applicability so as to satisfy one of the main objectives in this study required that is to achieve a balance between excessive tourism and environmentalism exaggerated by implementing educational programs in the National Park.

IV.4.3.Eco-responsible activities in Piatra Craiului National Park

Public awareness activities have been developed in PCNP through the projects that it has undertaken, respectively "Biodiversity Conservation Management in Romania", completed in 2006 and "Natura 2000 sites in the Piatra Craiului National Park", completed in 2007, with the support and experience of international organizations, through a participatory process involving key target groups PCNP.

A major tool of public awareness was expected to be in Zărnești the *Visitor Center*, which wanted to host permanent and temporary exhibitions belonging to the park administration (on different topics related to biodiversity conservation, local traditions and customs, etc.), classrooms where they could hold meetings with pupils and visitors and a conference room that could provide support in organizing national and international events related to environmental protection. The project proved to be very (or too) ambitious from the start, and this will be demonstrated below. First, the plan involves the construction of two visitor centers and three tourist information centers. Information points were to be installed in Bran, Curmătura and Plaiul Foii and visitor centers would be located in Zărnești and Rucăr. Judging by the insufficient funds, the idea of other centers still remains in the shadows, until obtaining any other funding.

Basically, environmental education emphasizes five objectives: *awareness, knowledge, attitudes, skills, participation.*

Educational activities conducted PCNP are currently few and scattered: *Environmental educational trail in National Park* (opened in 2003 and comprises a total of six panels that provide information on the major ecosystems in which they are located, having both an educational aspect as also informational), *Small Rangers of Piatra Craiului* (framework for carrying out activities on the one hand entertaining and educational on the other hand, allowing the younger generation to respect the natural values also, especially, to form it in the spirit of nature protection and sustainable development), *Eco-education camps* organized by various travel clubs in conjunction with the Park Administration.

Evaluation of educational tourism in PCNP

Currently, there are not many educational programs within the park, although efforts are underway to diversification. We believe that the solution is not to implement programs abundant copied without them adapt to natural anthropogenic conditions of the mountain. Rather, it requires an in depth knowledge of the root of the problem, namely to identify the shortcomings, the tourist and the local community for activities that may be contained in these educational programs.

The assessment of current situation of tourism educational based on *athematic questionnaire* applied in the same form the two major segments PCNP: tourists and local communities generated the following main results: *the locals are sensitive to the need to implement educational programs under the strategy of respect for nature*. Unlike tourists, that only pass through the area, the local communities do not relate to the natural frame just as touristic, but as a primary support for the usual activities. *Visitors wish to participate more actively in the proposed programs*, but the gaps in this area do not offer too many possibilities.

Therefore it takes a revitalization and diversification of eco-educational activities, especially oriented towards the younger generation, starting with the smallest, in order to establish accurate behavior and environmental attitude.

Perfect model of tourism education in PCNP according to strategies for achieving educational programs Western - "Sustainability through Education"

The idea to implement some educational strategies after Western models would bring real benefits to Piatra Craiului National Park.

Actions such as *encouraging volunteering in the park, renewal of the concept of "Visitors Center", diversification of youth educational programs, camps for students* to learn about both the mountain and what it means respecting the nature, covering *environmental educational pathways*, as well as *a better involvement of the Park's administration in this regard* will restore the close link that existed from the earliest times of man and nature, according to the motto of Natura 2000 "*Nature Conservation along with people.*"

In Romania, the idea of multifunctionality of a visitor center would significantly reduce the cost of achieving that goal, but at the same time can reduce the quality of service provided to beneficiaries of the park. In this sense we notice that always the first step is *an accurate and realistic assessment of the resources available at a given time* to decide starting the project, for then, to develop other additional services such as:

- focusing on exposing some aspects of *traditional occupations and work tools, costumes, ornaments and other aspects of village life in local communities* representing the anthropogenic factor of Piatra Craiului National Park;
- *a mini botanical garden* holding replicas of protected flora species from PCNP;
- *an exhibition or a museum* with protected species of fauna and flora in PCNP;
- *a module dedicated to up-to-date informative materials* for tourists, that can be able to offer *complex or thematic maps of the mountain, brochures, trip planners*, that will offer multiple choices to the tourists to plan their visit to the park in advance; also some *auxiliary materials* used for promoting the image of an protected area: *calendars, badges, signs, personalized agendas*;
- *the need to establish an association* (modeled on European national parks), enabling *effective and active collaboration with PCNP Administration* and at the same time *to constitute the financial support of the visitors center* by selling promotional materials;
- the introduction of *certified specialized guides*, to whom tourists can turn to upon their entry in the visitor center, designed to ensure a *safe and interesting hiking*, representing a *measure*

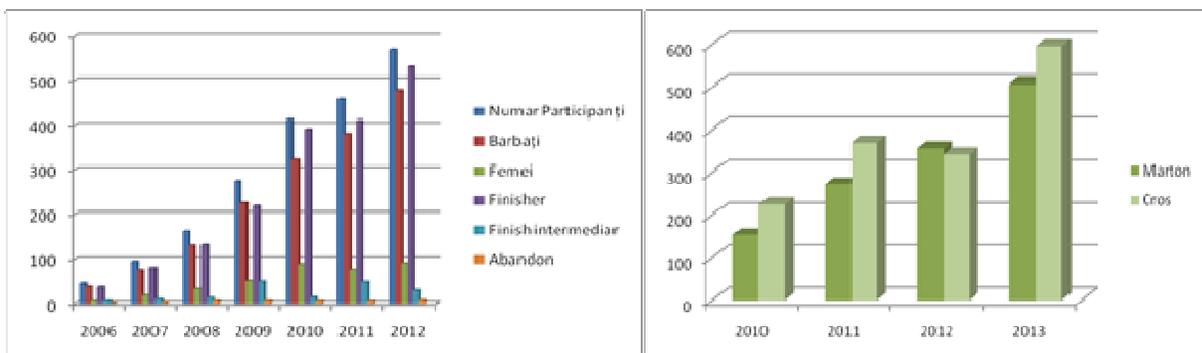
against visiting unorganized by choosing risky routes unmarked; however, the existence of guides uni-specialized could diversify motivation, and also tourist groups coming to the park starting with informative tours that focus on education and ending with the scientific ones, using depth information;

- more active involvement of school communities near the park (Zărnești, Măgura, Dâmbovicioara), not only in regard to the introduction of environmental education textbook but intense collaboration with PCNP designing approved educational programs involving organized groups of pupils. This will produce a more effective partnership between the Park and local schools, which will complete the proper implementation of environmental consciousness of students, forming them appropriate behavior towards nature and, not least, turning them into eco tourists responsibility.

IV.4.4. Education for a sustainable tourism through sports – the MPC and the EcoMarathon

Although they seem to reach only a niche tourism, mountain marathon activities type are clearly sustainable for tourism from at least four perspectives, both in the studied area and for the entire Romanian Carpathian area:

- they take place in natural areas extremely popular and visited, however, taking place in an organizational framework that not only limits the environmental impacts, but also leads to a measurable increase in tourist traffic with a responsible character;
- favors through the media impact that determines, the responsible local perception of the nature and the importance of preservation the traditional aspects;
- integrates coordinated with other competitions and activities contributing to the promotion and mutual support of organizers, giving a responsible attitude on both the activity itself and the promotion of destination areas associated with them, respectively the respect for nature and traditions and obviously, the movement;
- motivates participants arriving with the family and tarrying for more than an overnight stay in the area in which the competition takes place (for e.g. promoting children EcoKids marathon);
- the participants do not travel alone, but accompanied usually by family and friends and remain in area 1-3 nights;
- is key in promoting responsible eco-tourism!



Evolution of Piatra Craiului Marathon (2006-2012) and EcoMarathon Moeciu de Sus (2010-2013)

CONCLUSIONS

The study named *Geographical study of a sustainable development through tourism in Piatra Craiului National Park and Bran-Rucăr Corridor* represents the materialization of a new vision of tourism geography approach at local level, following bidirectional, the effects of global decisions that create the frame, and those local that propagate all the way to the global level. Thus, the study defines in territory, choosing a case study, in the attempt to model local development through tourism in accordance with the general laws and principles of sustainability.

Thus, we identify a number of possible local responses that through the sustainable manner modeling the territory can meet global challenges, understanding at the same time as the global coordination of local efforts paves matrix integrating sustainability through tourism development. All this is subject to systematic laws of integrative levels, integrating that "*constant back and forth between these levels*" (Edgar Morin, 2012), which we announced in the motto of the paper.

Therefore, we believe that the qualitative approach is far superior to the quantitative general outline of studied area's tourism, especially specific framework, embroidered on real issues on the ground, sustainable development through tourism. This dual approach with qualitative trend is especially relevant as often quantitative information does not provide true and accurate picture of the extent that tourism has in this area. The qualitative interpretation plays a crucial role, especially when the analysis is found in the center of the space-time durability.

The geographical study of development through tourism is defined as a line of tourism geography which, however, the study broadens its outlook introducing innovative and integrative structure. It follows the classic approach (having as its object a geographical entity with a high complexity tourism planning, evolutionary and functional, using geographic and touristic arsenal of techniques, tools and methods are directed towards characterizing tourism phenomenon resulting current directions and perspectives approach), but this proposal is backed by a new vision of tourism geography research approach, the multi-dimensional, which is a geographical perspective integrated into a more comprehensive philosophical and tints to transdisciplinarity, economic, environmental, anthropological-sociological.

We consider that the perspective models proposed following the complex and multi-criteria analysis of the touristic aspects constitute the culmination of research. The objective this study proposes is rendered by the following assertion: "*The adaptation of the tourist realities in Bran-Rucăr Corridor in Piatra Craiului National Park to the global tendencies of tourist evolution through the necessity of a re-thinking and creating integrating and functional patterns based on the principles of a sustainable development and on the models of tourist sustainability from the similar rural areas and national parks.*"

The study constitutes a support framework for the evolution of the area as a whole, even if belonging to the two districts, respectively, two parts of different growth is compact due to the similar conditions to evolve over time. Also, this support purely qualitative framework have enriched quantitative depth analysis, so working with Piatra Craiului National Park Administration, joining as a backbone the two corridor units (Bran and Rucărean) is one of the operational objectives of the thesis under construction that desirable unitary concept of development and sustainable development through tourism in the Piatra Craiului National Park area and the Bran-Rucăr, GREEN TOURISM.