

Actors, premises and dysfunctions in the development of tourist activities in Suceava

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ABSTRACT: Urban tourism can become an engine of urban regeneration of central areas and not only, but also a coordinate of their economic development. In Romania, along with Bucharest, the country's capital, other urban tourist destinations recognized internationally are Sibiu, Cluj-Napoca, Brasov, Oradea, Iasi, Timisoara. However, beyond this category of cities - regional metropolis, with a rich heritage and an effervescent cultural life, and smaller cities, possibly county residences located in the vicinity of established tourist regions, aspire to the development of the tourism sector and Suceava is one if these cities. This article aims to analyse the situation of Suceava from the perspective of tourism development, insisting on the existing general context, highlighting the role played by various factors in tourism development (tourism potential, accessibility, attitude of authorities and community); the analysis of the degree of capitalization of the existing potential by means of some indicators that characterize the infrastructure and the tourist circulation represents another objective of the present study. Finally, in response to the dysfunctions found from the perspective of capitalizing on the tourist potential through the intervention of the various actors involved, some suggestions for future action will be formulated.

KEY WORDS: urban tourism, capitalization of potential, Suceava.

1. Introduction

From time immemorial, the city has been an attractive place for travellers who wanted to enjoy architectural beauty, cultural ambiance or various events organized in cities, from trade fairs to sports competitions. Travel assimilated to today's tourism has existed since antiquity to the

landmark cities (Athens, Rome, Izmir, Miletus, Ephesus, Damascus etc.) and continued in subsequent periods, even if mitigated by instability in the early Middle Ages or the fashion of returning to nature in the nineteenth century. Thus, on the criterion of the development space, urban tourism was outlined, with numerous forms, generated by different motivations: cultural tourism, business tourism, sports tourism, shopping tourism, etc. The relationship between the city and tourism has changed permanently, as the demand is growing more refined and the tourist offer is more diversified (Origet du Cluzeau, 1998; Ashworth & Page, 2011). A real explosion of urban tourism can be talked about since the 1980s, as a reaction to the economic crisis that European cities had gone through and as a consequence of a favourable demography (Kadri, 2009). Urban tourism has become, especially for the cities of Western and Southern Europe, an engine of urban regeneration of central areas and not only, but also a coordinate of their economic development. In the case of smaller cities and / or with a rich heritage, the development of tourism has become even more threatening and tourists feel more and more acutely the burden of overcrowding tourist sites, as indicated annually by the European Travel Monitor. In this context, the protection of the architectural heritage was the subject of important regulations that appeared especially in the second half of the twentieth century (Venice Charter - 1964, Convention for the Protection of Cultural and Natural Heritage - UNESCO, 1974, Granada Convention - 1985, Convention from Florence - 2000) and which have a double role: on the one hand it contributes to the conservation of some valuable elements that suffer as a result of the development of cultural tourism, especially urban tourism, on the other hand, through these actions of protection and conservation, provide the necessary resources for the development of these forms of tourism.

Eastern European cities later entered this circuit; nevertheless, some of them with real success. The European Union's initiative to designate two European cultural capitals annually (initially only one city enjoyed this title), one of which was a former communist bloc, also contributed to the development of urban tourism. In Central and Eastern Europe, urban tourism initially developed in large cities, most often capitals, holding a special historical and architectural heritage (Prague, Budapest, Warsaw) (Dumbrovská & Fialová, 2014). Later, however, medium-sized cities, but which harnessed a conjunctural or other kind of advantage, relied on the book of tourism development. In Romania, along with Bucharest, the country's capital, other urban tourist destinations recognized internationally are Sibiu, Cluj-Napoca, Braşov, Oradea, Iaşi, Timişoara (Ibanescu et al. 2016; Rusu et al, 2020). In the case of all these cities, their urban and architectural attributes are capitalized through tourism, as well as the cultural life they are usually animated by or on the occasion of large-scale events, such as UNTOLD in Cluj-Napoca or the International Theatre Festival in Sibiu. City-break tourist products are accessed by both Romanian and foreign tourists and represent an interesting and profitable form of capitalization of the tourist potential of these cities.

However, beyond this category of cities - regional metropolis, with a rich heritage and an effervescent cultural life, and smaller cities, possibly county residences located in the vicinity of established tourist regions, aspire to the development of the tourism sector; some of these cities are still looking for their identity after losing the industrial one before 1990 and hope to find it again in tourism; others have either reactivated older functional mechanisms or benefited from heritage rehabilitation actions and capitalize on the results through tourism; some simply do not rule out the development of tourism as a complementary activity, trying to capitalize on an advantage of geographical position. For these cities, including Suceava, the residence of the homonymous county in the NE Region, the development of tourism is still a challenge and the success of this action depends on several factors and will be confirmed or denied in the future.

This article aims to analyse the situation of Suceava from the perspective of tourism development, insisting on the existing general context, highlighting the role played by various factors in tourism development (tourism potential, accessibility, attitude of authorities and community); the analysis of the degree of capitalization of the existing potential by means of some indicators that characterize the infrastructure and the tourist circulation represents another objective of the present study. Finally, in response to the dysfunctions found from the perspective of capitalizing on the tourist potential through the intervention of the various actors involved, some suggestions for future action will be formulated. The development of tourism in Suceava and its peri-urban area was only partially analysed, either from the perspective of potential elements (Cocerhan, 2006; Lupchian, 2010a, 2019b; Arionesei et al., 2015,) or from the perspective of capitalizing on this potential (Costea, 2017; Stanciu, 2017). The aspects related to the development of tourism at the level of Suceava municipality were only rarely approached in the numerous studies focused on the analysis of the tourist activities from Bucovina and, implicitly from Suceava county.

2. Methods

The present study is based on the synthesis of the information included in various bibliographic sources regarding the natural and anthropic tourist potential in the municipality of Suceava and in the neighbouring communes. This information is supplemented by that provided by the authorities through documents that include aspects related to the tourism development strategy of the municipality and also by information taken from the websites of institutions with competences related to the development of Suceava tourism: Suceava City Hall, Tourist Information Centre, Bucovina Museum, Suceava Airport etc.

The analysis of the capitalization of the tourist potential through indicators related to the infrastructure and the tourist circulation was performed based on the data provided by the TempoOnline database of the National Institute of Statistics (INS), data corroborated with those existing on the website of the Ministry of Economy, Energy and Business Environment (MEEBE). In order to obtain more pertinent results and to correctly appreciate the importance of tourism in Suceava, we chose to analyse the statistical data both in the context of the North-East Region (by comparison with the situation of county residences in this region) and in a wider, national context (by comparison with several cities of comparable size and which have at least a similarity factor with Suceava, from the perspective of tourism development. The cities chosen for comparison were Baia Mare, Alba Iulia, Pitești, Drobeta Turnu Severin, Sibiu, most of them being comparable cities in size, county residences, with recognized historical importance, but marked by the industrialization policy from 1950 to 1990. The choice of these cities is justified by the following arguments: all are county residences and their population varies between about 73000 inhabitants (Alba Iulia) and 172000 inhabitants (Pitesti), so comparable to Suceava - 125000 inhabitants in 2020. Baia Mare, Pitesti and Drobeta Turnu Severin are cities that had a well-defined industrial profile until 1990, have a relevant historical past and are located near established tourist areas (Maramureș, Danube Boilers Gorge). Alba Iulia, although smaller in terms of demographics, has developed in recent years its tourist function as a result of the restoration of the city of Alba Carolina. The city of Sibiu was chosen for comparison due to its success in capitalizing the tourist potential, as a desirable standard for other cities in Romania.

3. Results

3.1. The tourist potential exists, its capitalization is limited

Despite its antiquity and historical importance, not many testimonies of this glorious past have been preserved in Suceava. The communist period brutally and significantly left its mark on the city, much of old Suceava being replaced by the standardized landscape given by collective housing and institutions without personality.

However, the past has not been completely lost and in recent years his testimonies have been rehabilitated and valued. From the category of material heritage elements we mention the Citadel of Suceava, recently restored and arranged mainly from European funds, in the period 2011 - 2015. The Citadel, dating from the 14th century and being linked to the glory period of the city, former capital of Moldova, is today a major tourist attraction and is an integral part of the city's image. According to the data provided by the Museum of Bucovina, the fortress was visited in 2019 by over 200000 people, which means an increase of over 4 times the number of visitors compared to the period before the restoration and modernization works.

From the same period, the ruins of the Royal Court, located in the city center, are not yet a tourist attraction, given their state of degradation, but on the agenda of Suceava City Hall there is a restoration project that seems to materialize in the near future. Also testimonies of the medieval history of the city are the places of worship dating from the XIVth- XVIIth centuries, most of them located in the central area of the city or near it: Mirăuți Church (XIVth century) - metropolitan cathedral pit, Church of the Resurrection, Church of the Ladies, St. Dumitru Church, St. Nicholas Church, St. George's Church of St. John Monastery. Among them, the church of St. John's Monastery is on the UNESCO world heritage list, as well as the church from Pătrăuți, located a short distance from the city.

From the same period (the 17th century) dates the oldest civil construction in Suceava - the Royal Inn -, located in the city center and which now houses the Ethnographic Museum.

Testimonies of the presence and importance of the Armenian community in the city of Suceava, the Zamca monastery, founded in the 17th century, the church of St. Simion - Turnu Roșu and the church of Holy Cross delimit the area inhabited by Armenians in Suceava, marked today by the name of the street connecting the places of worship mentioned - Armenian Street. In fact, in the area of Armenești Street, several houses from the 18th - 19th centuries have been preserved, which today have the status of historical monument and create a special residential landscape. To these is added the Hagigadar Monastery (16th century), located in the village of Bulai in the commune of Moara, 3 km away from the city of Suceava, which is currently an important pilgrimage center of the Armenian community in Romania.

From the 18th - 19th centuries, which partially coincided with the Austrian rule over Bukovina, of which Suceava was a part, several monumental buildings have been preserved that today house administrative institutions (the Administrative Palace - headquarters of the Prefecture and the County Council, the Palace of Justice, the Forestry Department), cultural (the Museum of History, the Museum of Natural Sciences, the County Library), educational (the "Ștefan cel Mare" National College, the "C. Porumbescu" Art College). To these is added the building of the Station from Itcani, which is in the process of restoration after a long period of agony that almost destroyed it; from the same period dates its pair from the Kingdom, Burdujeni Railway Station,

renovated in the early 2000s. Unfortunately, the mentioned objectives have a scattered location in the urban fabric and fail to constitute a cultural landscape that can be exploited in its entirety. An example of good practices supported by the city's water plant built in 1912 is the transformation of this space, dysfunctional and derelict, into the Center of Architecture, Urban Culture and Landscape, at the initiative of the Order of Architects – NE Branch in partnership with local authorities. Thus, an unconventional, functional and aesthetic space was obtained at the same time, place of numerous artistic and cultural manifestations, the most famous being the Days of Urban Culture, with annual periodicity.

The cosmopolitan character of the city from 1775 to 1918 is reflected in the places of worship and culture of various communities, preserved to this day: the Roman Catholic Church, the Polish House, the Gah Synagogue, the Evangelical Church, all located scattered in the central area or in its immediate vicinity.

The testimonies of Suceava's past are also kept in the Bucovina Museum Complex, which includes, along with the Citadel, the following institutions: the Village Museum, the History Museum, the Museum of Natural Sciences, the Ethnographic Museum. The History Museum was recently (2012 - 2016) the subject of an extensive modernization project with European funds; the modernization of the museum has contributed to the significant increase in the number of visitors and to the increase of its importance from a tourist point of view (Table 1).

Table 1 The evolution of the number of visitors of the Museum of Bucovina, by components.

	2008	2012	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Bucovina Museum	163000	119193	91941	133937	223000*	304467	389437	376033
the Citadel		49155				181000	193524	210308
the Village Museum		18200				49000	59359	72647
the History Museum		25972				45000	66894	61294
the Ethnographic Museum		4100					4637	7719
the Museum of Natural Sciences		18200					13764	11752

* until November 2016

Source: Museum of Bucovina

Although the period of the communist regime meant for Suceava, more than for other Romanian cities, the destruction of its identity, it still left its mark on the city and through a valuable construction, that of the House of Culture, the work of architect N. Porumbescu; the architectural value of the building was also recognized by its integration in the cultural route ATRIUM, which has as its theme totalitarian architecture. The Astronomical Observatory from Suceava, now under the administration of the "Ștefan cel Mare" University, represents another tourist objective built in the totalitarian period (1982).

After 1990, the industrial city of Suceava gradually disappeared and the commercial function seems to have replaced, at least initially, the industry of the past (Lupchian, 2010). From this perspective, the city reached at one point to have the largest commercial area per capita and the Suceava Bazaar has become nationally recognized for its size and diversity. Under these

conditions, the idea of transforming this commercial capital into tourist capital appeared (Costea, 2017), through the development of shopping tourism. The development of the “Ștefan cel Mare” University and the increase of its role in the life of the city (both through the students it attracts, through the events it hosts and through the direct involvement in the cultural life of the city) imposed the idea of considering the University as an element of tourist potential for Suceava (Arionesei et al. 2015).

The intangible cultural heritage is represented in Suceava by several events that already have a tradition. The “Ștefan cel Mare” Medieval Art Festival, which takes place annually since 2007, in August in the Citadel, attracts more and more visitors: the 2019 edition was attended by almost 27000 people. Other important events from a tourist point of view are: the Bucovina Rock Castle, the Suceava Blues Festival, the “Ciprian Porumbescu” European Arts Festival, “Suceava Days” and Sânzieni Fair of folk craftsmen, the Fair entitled “Produced in Bucovina”, Bucovina Motor Fest, Winter Habits Festival, Matei Vișniec Theater Days.

The recent transfer to the administration of the local authorities of Șipote Park and the project for arranging the leisure area in Lunca Sucevei create the premises for enriching the tourist offer of the city. Also, on the territory of the neighboring communes (most of which are components of the Suceava Metropolitan Area) there are several nature reserves (Ponoare, Frumoasa, Crujana, Dragomirna) to which are added the forests of Ilișești and Adâncata, as well as the ponds on the territories of Moara, Bosanci communes, Ipotești, Mitocul Dragomirnei, which allow the practice of leisure and recreational tourism.

We should also mention the facilities that allow sports and leisure activities and that complete the tourist offer of the city: Little Dolphin Pool, Capitol Garden Pool, Civica Sport Pool, Sporting Ramiro Pub, Civica Sport Center and others.

The brief enumeration of the most well-known elements of tourist potential in Suceava and its surroundings indicates that the tourist potential exists, but a series of dysfunctions associated with it can be mentioned. Most of the listed objectives, with a few exceptions, do not benefit from a minimum presentation in the form of an information panel or otherwise. Although it is objectively included on the UNESCO world heritage list, the church inside St. John’s Monastery does not offer guidance services of any kind, and the presentation information is brief and bland. Given the dispersed nature of the location of the mentioned objectives, there is no integrated presentation of them, in the form of a thematic map that would benefit from a visible, central location. Access to these objectives is not facilitated by public transport and there is no tourist route that can be traveled by public transport.

3.2. Accessibility - an important comparative advantage

The municipality of Suceava benefits from a good accessibility in relation to the capital and other big cities of the country by being located at the intersection of two important European roads, which connect the north and south of the country, respectively between east and west; its position on the railway line no 500 is also important for the city. However, the city is still part of the general landscape of the North-East Region, completely devoid of motorway connections with the rest of the country and Europe. Despite its good location on the roads and railways, the long distance travelled on these roads discourages travel from more remote regions and hinders the wider development of weekend tourism.

However, the modernization of the “Ștefan cel Mare” airport located at only 12 km from the city of Suceava and the operationalization of a significant number of domestic flights, and especially

international ones, is an important step in increasing the accessibility of the city and region. Under normal conditions, from Salcea airport you can fly to several destinations in Italy, Great Britain and Germany and there are several weekly flights to Bucharest. To these are added seasonal flights to tourist destinations in Greece and Turkey. The evolution of the number of passengers who used the airport “Ștefan cel Mare” was spectacular after the modernization that began in 2013, and it is mainly due to the large number of people from Suceava who went to work abroad, temporarily or permanently (table 2). Tourism has contributed less to this evolution but the development of the airport is an advantage for Bucovina as a tourist destination, now and in the future. Even some of those who have gone abroad temporarily or permanently from Suceava County can be either a vector for promoting the destination of Bucovina or even a component of the flow, over the years, in the case of those who have settled permanently outside the country. Their children (many born abroad) can become potential tourists to practice a form of tourism called “remembrance”, ethnic or “finding roots”, a form similar to that practiced today by Jews, Canadians, Americans etc. (Origet de Cluzeau, 1998).

Table 2 Evolution of the number of passengers on the airport “Ștefan cel Mare” from Suceava.

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Passengers	12766	20792	23398	32561	34437	27208	25143
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Passengers	20054	219	2359	57226	262165	353280	430123

Source : www.anna.aero, www.airportaar.ro, wikipedia

Also, the location of Suceava near the border with Ukraine (they is only 100 km to Chernivtsi) and relatively close to the border with Moldova is another advantage that could be used for tourism development in Suceava, not only in Bucovina, as already suggested (Costea, 2017).

However, the most important comparative advantage related to the geographical position of the city remains its location in Bucovina, a well-known tourist region, which experienced, especially after 2000, a significant positive dynamic from this point of view. The integration of the city in Bucovina tourist destination is still quite weak, often the city being even avoided by those who choose Bucovina coming from the east (Iași) and south (Bucharest); they often choose the route Fălticeni - Gura Humorului in order to avoid the congestion of the city of Suceava, which they do not consider a transit tourist destination.

3.3. The role of the authorities and the community in the development of tourism

The degree of involvement of local and county authorities, their vision of the place and role of tourism in the local economy and the attitude of the community towards the possibility of developing this activity can determine differences in attractiveness between destinations with similar features (potential, accessibility). In the case of Suceava, there is strong support, at least at the declarative level, from the authorities for the development of tourism. The modernization of the airport, the Citadel, the History Museum, as well as the rehabilitation of the central area of Suceava, to which is added the large number of events organized with the support of the authorities had as main or secondary motivation to increase the attractiveness of the city / county from a tourist point of view. Granting the title of “European destination of excellence” to Suceava in 2017 for tangible cultural tourism within the EDEN project, the submission of application documentation for designating the city as European Capital of Culture (although unsuccessful) is evidence of existing concern at the level of tourism development authorities and

they contributed to increasing the city's visibility. However, the authorities' efforts are mainly focused on the development and promotion of the Bucovina tourist destination, in which the city of Suceava has a peripheral, marginal role. This is visible by analysing the content of the website of the Tourist Information Centre in Suceava (www.visitingbucovina.ro); the presentation of the destination Suceava is brief and marginal especially in the chapters dealing with events and experiences. At the level of local authorities, tourism benefits from a service-type structure within the mayor's office, subordinated to the European Projects, Tourism, Culture and Transport Directorate. Within the Integrated Urban Development Strategy of Suceava 2016-2023, tourism development is considered a priority, the analysis of the tourism sector at the municipal level correctly highlights a large number of weaknesses and dysfunctions, and the vision underlying the strategy focuses on transforming the city in the regional tourist centre. Unfortunately, most of the interesting and valuable projects provided in the field of tourism mentioned in this strategy were in the stage of "project idea" or at most benefited from a "project file" and it seems that they remained so because for some of them the deadline for implementation had passed.

The analysis of the results of a survey conducted by Suceava City Hall in 2016 both at the level of the city's inhabitants and the business environment highlights the existence of an important support for tourism also from the community. Regarding the business environment, its representatives consider that the high tourist potential of the area is the main strong point that should be taken into account in the development of the city, and tourism is the first investment option if it had financial resources; the activities in the field of "Hotels and restaurants" are considered to be on the 2nd place as development potential in Suceava municipality and on the 3rd place as current development level. As for the city's inhabitants, they consider tourism as the main resource on which the development of the city can be based, and the "Hotels and restaurants" sector is indicated on the third place in terms of contribution to the economic development of the city.

3.4. Capitalizing on the tourist potential

Suceava County concentrates almost half of the number of accommodation structures in the NE Region, which highlights a significant positive evolution in the last 30 years, given that in 1990 it concentrated only a quarter of the structures, ranking 2nd, after the county Bacău. However, in Suceava, there are only 5% of these structures, which indicates a strong decline compared to 1990, when the share held by the municipality in the county was 12.6%. Comparing the situation of Suceava with the other county residences in the Region of NE, we find that its situation is very similar to that of Piatra Neamț, Vaslui, Bacău and only the city of Botoșani has a significantly smaller number of accommodation units, while the city of Iași is clearly detached from all other county residences. The comparison with a series of county residences at national level, similar to Suceava in terms of tourist potential and accessibility, shows a very similar situation, which is far from Sibiu, city which is considered a landmark for the development of urban tourism in the cities of medium size.

The analysis of the evolution of the existing accommodation capacity reveals a more favourable situation of the city of Suceava, especially at regional level, where, from this point of view, it was in 2019 on the second place, after Iași; the comparison with the cities of Sibiu, Pitești, Baia Mare, Alba Iulia and Drobeta Turnu Severin places Suceava closer to Alba Iulia and Drobeta Turnu Severin, cities with a less diversified and dynamic economy than Pitești and Baia Mare, which

outperform them; however, all the analysed cities are at a great distance from Sibiu (Fig. 1a, Fig. 1b).

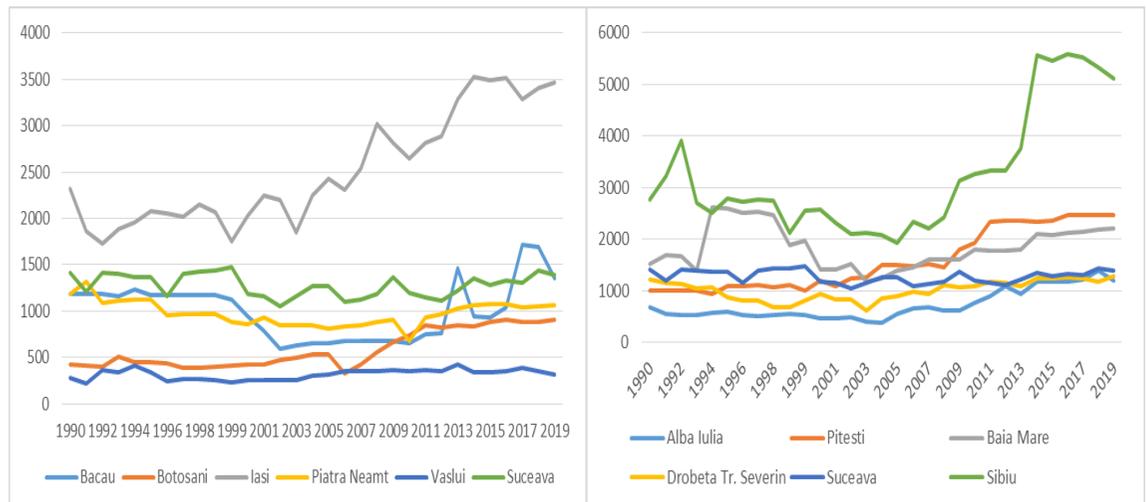


Figure 1a Evolution of the existing accommodation capacity – county residences from NE Region.

Figure 1b Evolution of the existing accommodation capacity – other cities.

In general, the accommodation structures have become diversified since 1990 (when hotels were predominant) until now, when they generally represent about a third of the total urban accommodation units. In the case of Suceava, there are accommodation structures within 4 comfort categories, located both in the central area of the city and on its outskirts. It should also be mentioned that there are numerous accommodation units in the neighbouring communes, especially in the communes of Șcheia (11) and Mitocu Dragomirnei (5), units that practically complete the accommodation infrastructure of the city. The updated situation in December 2020 existing on the website of the MEEBE indicates a higher number of accommodation structures both for the municipality of Suceava (32 compared to 23 according to INS) and for the neighbouring communes - Șcheia 18, Mitocu Dragomirnei - 8. According to the same source, almost 80% of the accommodation units in the municipality are classified in the superior comfort categories - 3 and 4 stars.

The catering units support the tourist activity and can even represent an element of potential when they have a local specificity or when they get involved in events addressed to tourists (gastronomic exhibitions, fairs, etc.). In Suceava, there are, according to MEEBE, 35 public catering units, 3 more than in 2015; although most of them offer dishes related to local gastronomy, none of them specialize exclusively in this respect. From this point of view, the city of Suceava is on the second place after Iași in the NE Region, and by comparison with the other county residences analysed, it is about the same level as Alba Iulia and Pitești, but at a great distance from Sibiu and Baia Mare.

The values of the occupancy rate related to the accommodation capacity in operation indicate for the municipality of Suceava a growth trend and place it above the average of the values registered in the county residences in the region, except for Iași; and in relation to the other

cities analysed, the occupancy rate of accommodation structures in Suceava is high, similar to that of Sibiu. (Fig. 2a, Fig. 2b).

The value of the occupancy rate of accommodation structures in Suceava was, in 2019, slightly below the average value of county residences in Romania.

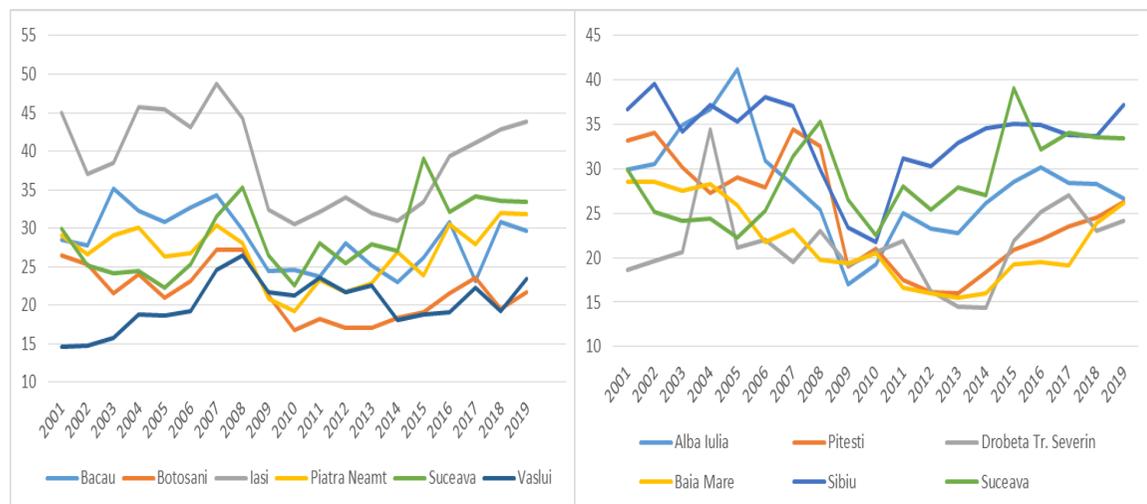


Figure 2a Evolution of the occupancy rate related to the accommodation capacity in operation - county residences from NE Region.

Figure 2b Evolution of the occupancy rate related to the accommodation capacity in operation - the other cities.

The tourist traffic, reflected by the number of arrivals and overnight stays indicates the same weak capacity of tourist polarization of the municipality compared to the county of which it is part. Of the over 1350000 tourists who arrived in 2019 in the NE Region, in Suceava County, almost 35% arrived, i.e. over 465000; however, less than one of them reached Suceava (21.2%). It is the lowest tourist polarization capacity at county level among all the analysed county residences, whose tourist polarization capacity varies between 33% (Pitești) and 72% (Sibiu). In the NE Region, the tourist polarization capacity of Suceava is close to that of Piatra Neamț (25%) but very far from that of Iași (90.9%) and Botoșani (78.7%) (fig. 3a). These values are a consequence of the rich and varied tourist potential of Suceava and Neamț counties, but they can also be interpreted as an insufficient enhancement of the urban tourist potential. In absolute values, the city of Suceava is, through the almost 100000 tourists it received in 2019, on the second place between the county residences in the North-East Region and on the third place (after Sibiu and Baia Mare) among the county residences analysed. However, the dynamics of the number of tourists in the period 2001 - 2019 places Suceava on the 4th place among the county residences in the region and on the last place among the other analysed cities, which expresses the same lower interest for tourism development in the municipality (Fig. 3b).

The duration of the stay currently has low values in all the analysed cities, below 2, a situation specific to urban tourism. Against this general background, the duration of the stay in Suceava was, in 2019, the smallest of the cities analysed at national level and the second shortest in the NE Region, after the one in Vaslui (Fig. 4a, Fig. 4b).

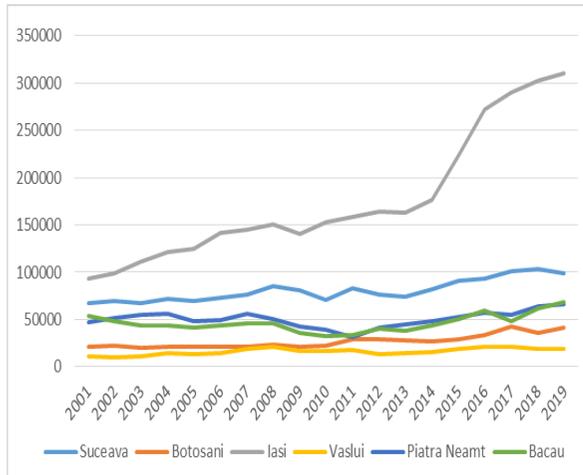


Figure 3a Evolution of the number of tourists arrivals - county residences from NE Region.

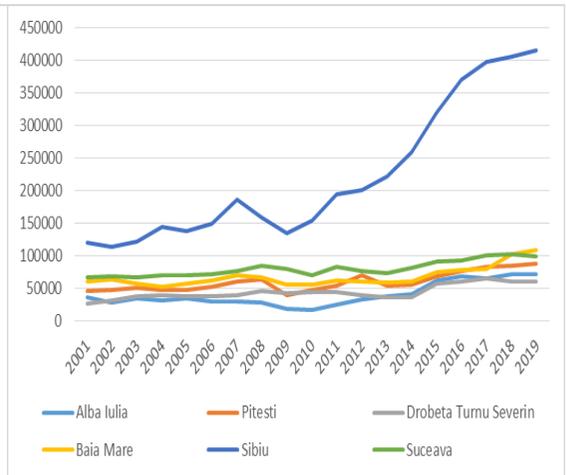


Figure 3b Evolution of the number of tourists arrivals - other cities.

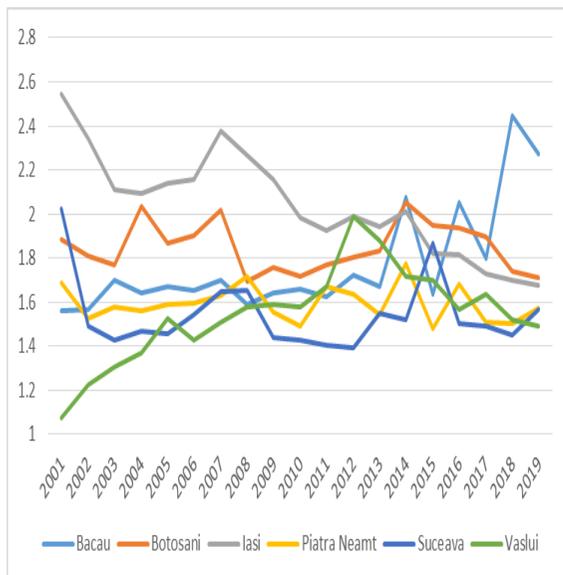


Figure 4a Evolution of the duration of the stay county residences from NE Region.

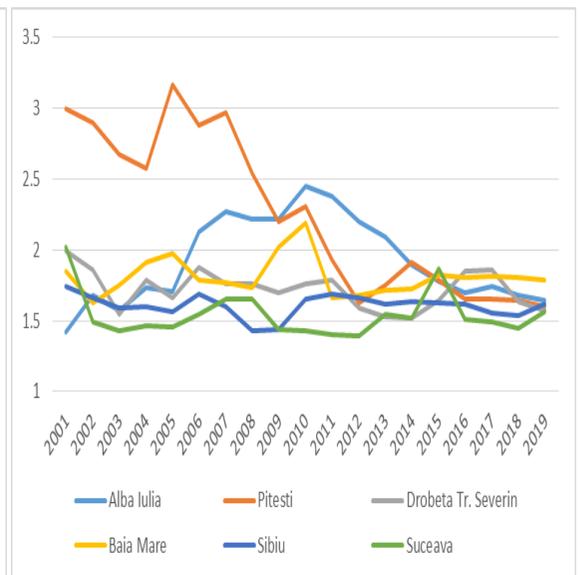


Figure 4b Evolution of the duration of the stay – other cities.

A composite indicator (of tourist vitality) that combines the standardized values of indicators related to accommodation capacity and tourist traffic (Lupchian, 2019) places the city of Suceava on the 2nd place in the NE Region and on the third place among the cities analysed here (after Sibiu and Alba Iulia) and in the first half of the ranking of all county residences in Romania (without Bucharest and Constanța).

The analysis carried out on the elements favourable to the development of the tourist activities in the municipality of Suceava and the extent to which they are capitalized demonstrates an insufficient capitalization of this potential and allows the identification of some dysfunctions that could be corrected. In addition, the tourism development of the municipality should also take

into account the trends that are currently manifested in urban tourism: emphasis on experiences, urban ambience, local spirit; selective tourists who do not have much time, always looking for something new (unlike tourists who choose the sea or the mountains and for whom the repetitive nature of the tourist experience is not an inconvenience), even capricious, subject to the currents that dominate society (Ashworth & Page, 2011). In shaping the tourist profile of Suceava, the profile of the tourist who chooses Bucovina as a holiday destination and who is, most likely, a potential urban tourist should also be taken into account. In this context, we consider that the following aspects could be taken into account in a future strategy regarding the tourist development of Suceava municipality.

- Presentation of potential elements both in an integrated form (interactive map, information panel with QR codes, mobile applications for presenting and locating tourist attractions), visible and accessible, and individually, in their immediate vicinity.
- Accessibility of tourist objectives by public transport and, possibly, implementation of a tourist transport line through which various objectives in the city can be accessed.
- Associating the elements of attractiveness in the municipality with those existing in the peri-urban space within an integrated tourist product. Also, the association with nearby cities, bidders as potential but less favoured by accessibility (Botoșani) or too small to constitute itself as tourist polarization centres (Fălticeni) could be beneficial for increasing the length of stay in accommodation units from Suceava.
- Imagining and promoting thematic tourist products to address a diverse audience.
- Establishing partnerships with accommodation units in the municipality to promote the tangible and intangible tourism potential of the municipality.
- Making, at least seasonally, a calendar of artistic and cultural events that take place periodically or occasionally in the municipality, calendars that are distributed through the accommodation units in the city and in the county.

4. Conclusion

The city of Suceava was not and certainly will not become a tourist city, and the last 30 years have shown that its development trajectories are different. However, its location and even its presentation as a “gateway” to Bucovina should be better exploited by developing activities that complement the economic profile of the city. The analysis highlighted both the strengths (valuable material and intangible potential, favourable attitude of the authorities and the community, high accessibility, favourable economic and social context) and weaknesses (development in the shadow of a well-known tourist region, which polarizes almost all attention the actors involved, the insufficient valorization of the existing potential, the peripheral position at the level of Romania and in the conditions of the non-existence of fast transport routes), which could be corrected. An integrative vision on tourist activities, focusing on the creation of a complex and flexible tourist product, the result of the partnership with neighbouring settlements and even with settlements located a little further away (Botoșani) could be the key to an upward evolution, even if not spectacular, of tourist activities in Suceava.

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