

Review paper

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ECO TOURISM DEVELOPMENT BASED ON NATURAL AND ARTIFICIAL SURROUNDINGS IN SEMBERIJA AND MAJEVICA AREA

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ABSTRACT

Tourism is one of the most developed industries in the world that is continuously growing. It has many different shapes and types with many different factors that affect its success. Over the years, tourism has changed. The new era of tourism is trying to put focus on present environmental problems such as the amount of waste, the use of natural resources and the pollution that it produces as a result of different activities.

In this paper, the effect of natural and artificial resources on the development of three types of eco-tourism is observed on the area of Semberija and Majeвица in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Types of tourism that were researched are: cultural and heritage tourism, spa (healing) tourism and recreational tourism. All these types have a great presence on the observed area.

The distribution and attendance of the three types of tourism mentioned above is largely dependent on natural elements, such as water and forest areas, which can have both a positive and a negative effect on its development. On the area of Semberija and Majeвица, types of tourism largely depend from the location and its surrounding.

Keyword: *eco-tourism, protected areas, cultural and heritage tourism, spa tourism, recreational tourism*

INTRODUCTION

When we talk about the progress of certain parts of the world, some countries or regions, we often come across data that indicates that tourism, as the main industry of that area, has led to the improvement of the living conditions of the population. Today, in the world of migration, internet and developed air traffic, most places are a click away from reality. Nevertheless, it is still a special experience to visit a new place in person. As trips are no longer limited to the rich strata of society, the offer has become more diverse. In order for a location to attract tourists with its content, a lot of investment, marketing and data monitoring is required [1].

Various factors such as natural potentials, history, social status, infrastructure, competitiveness, etc. influence the development of tourism in an area. Tourism itself can have an impact on the economy of the area, through other sectors: construction, transport, agriculture, hospitality, marketing, etc., which affects the growth of employment and increases the standard of living. The combination of historical

and natural factors, as well as the good geographical position of Semberija and Majevisa in the entity of Republic of Srpska, give a great opportunity for the development of tourism in this area [1].

The area of Semberija and Majevisa in the Republic of Srpska entity is viewed from the aspect of tourism that has minimal environmental consequences and also provides tourists with rest, recreation and entertainment. It should be emphasized that a lot of locations that were intended for this type of tourism have become commercialized and urban, which has lost their original purpose, and that is an escape from urban life. It is crucial not to allow tourism to become an instrument for environmental degradation [2]. Precisely because of this, it is necessary to create a plan with goals that go to the limit of sustainability, and not beyond.

The term ecotourism was formulated by Hector Caballos - Lascuren, a Mexican architect, according to whom ecotourism is an ecologically responsible trip and visit to relatively preserved areas, in order to enjoy nature (and accompanying cultural features - both from the past and present) while improving nature protection, small negative impact of visitors and beneficial active impact on the local population. His definition of ecotourism was officially adopted by the IUCN at the 1st World Congress held in Montreal in 1966 [1,3].

Tourism in the Republic of Srpska entity is regulated through several laws. Those are: Law on Spas [4], Law on Tourism [5], Law on Hospitality [6] and Law on Tourist Tax [7]. There is a single cadastre of tourist sites of the Republic of Srpska on the website www.turizamrs.com [8] under the jurisdiction of the Tourist Organization of the Republic of Srpska. The lower level consists of tourist organizations of cities and municipalities [1].

Despite the existence of laws and a unified online network, tourism in the Republic of Srpska is not aligned in terms of functioning, due to the inadequate involvement of all municipalities. In this way, it is very difficult to determine the percentage of tourists and their ecological footprint, because their movement paths, as well as their stays and visits to localities, are not fully known. Research on that side is scarce and requires a more specific and detailed approach. Thus, the explored area for most foreign tourists is only a passing point to other, inner parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina such as Mostar or Višegrad, which are the most visited cities in the country [9].

On the researched area, tourism has recorded a growth in the number of visitors, overnight stays, accommodation capacity and tourist catering facilities with various activities since 2010 [1, 10,11,12,13,14].

LOCATION AND NATURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE AREA

The researched area is located in the northeast of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in Republic of Srpska entity, at the crossroads between Serbia, Croatia and internal Bosnia and Herzegovina. Due to good traffic connections, the first type of tourism that began to develop in this area was transit tourism. This type of tourism was dominant until the early 2000s [8], when other types of tourism started to develop.

The researched area consists of two natural units, plain Semberija and mountain Majevisa and three municipalities, Bijeljina, Ugljevik and Lopare. It belongs to the southern part and the rim of the Pannonian basin and is characterized by the heterogeneity of the relief. From a geomorphological point of view, the researched area can be divided into three parts. These are: the lowland part, the mountain (foothill or transition) part and the mountain part (figure 1). On the whole, it slopes towards the northeast, with the Majevisa mountain descending, reducing the altitude to the Semberija plain, which is slightly inclined towards the river mouth of the rivers Drina and Sava. The whole area is intersected by smaller rivers [1].

Deciduous forests have the greatest distribution in the researched area. The presence of forests increases with elevation (figure 2). In the entire researched area, the largest area is covered by forest

communities of *Quercus petraea* and *Quercus cerris* and *Quercus robur* and *Carpinus betulus*, There are also large expanses communities of *Fagus* and *Quercus petraea* forests [1].

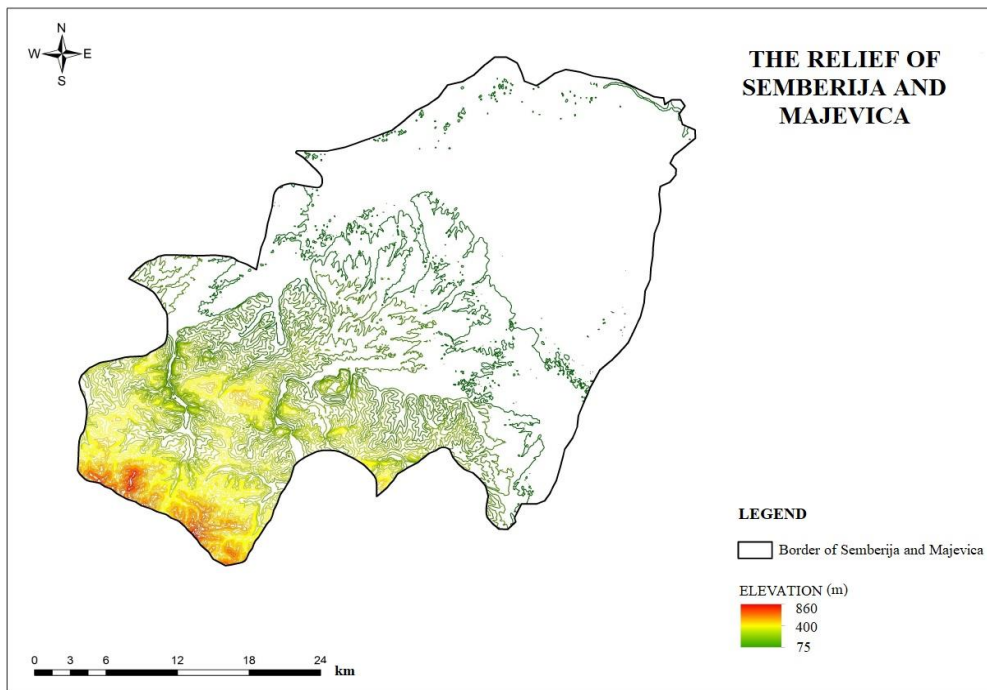


Figure 1. The relief of researched area

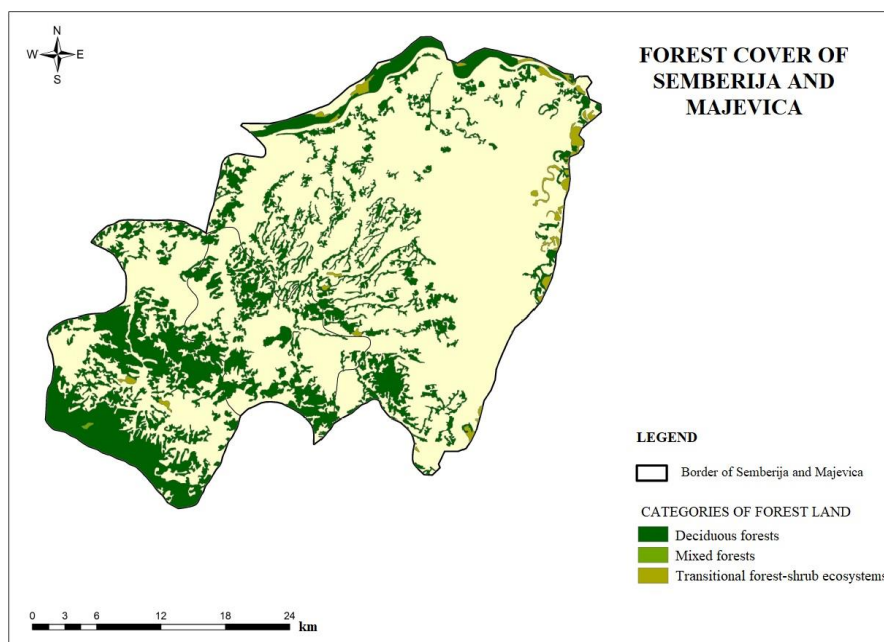


Figure 2. Forest cover of researched area

The researched area belongs to a moderately continental climate, with the presence of a Pannonian (steppe) climate in the part of Semberija. It is characterized by four seasons with equal presence. The main features are hot summers, with maximum temperatures that can sometimes exceed 40°C and cold winters, with temperatures sometimes falling below – 15°C. During the spring, the temperatures rise sharply, while during the autumn they gradually and suddenly drop. The area of Majevica also belongs to a moderately continental climate, with milder summers and slightly harsher winters, with more of snowfall [1].

Despite the most favorable climatic conditions that are present in this area during the spring and autumn months, the number of tourists for all forms of tourism is the highest during the summer months [10,11,12,13,14].

METHODOLOGY

Research included tourist objects and localities that are part of the observed types of tourism: cultural and heritage tourism, spa tourism, recreational tourism. All three types of tourism were observed as eco tourism that have minimal effect on the environment, or can have minimal effect on the environment if used sustainably.

Cultural and heritage tourism type of tourism includes the most visited cultural and historical objects, to which we mostly associate religious objects and historical monuments. The interest of religious buildings, in addition to their spiritual and historical significance, is reflected in the presence of all three faiths, Orthodoxy, Catholicism and Islam, at a short distance, which makes this area very rare in the world. Religious tourism has experienced great growth in the last ten years [1]. Besides religious tourism, for this type we relate also tourist movements motivated by cultural and artistic resources, values and content. Some of the most visited objects and localities of this type of tourism on the researched area are Monastery Tavna (figures 3) and Monastery of Sveta Petka.

Spa tourism in the researched area is linked to Dvorovi Spa (figure 4). The basic form of this type of tourism is reflected in the recreation and health role. The geoecological evaluation carried out for the purposes of the doctoral dissertation on the topic Geoecological problem of Semberija and Majevisa in the Republic of Srpska [1] showed that the entire researched area is favorable for the development of health, i.e. spa and recreational tourism.

This type of tourism represents ecologically acceptable tourism that has minimal consequences for the environment and surroundings. Banja Dvorovi has geothermal water that is sodium-calcium hydro carbonate chloride, which makes it possible to treat a wide range of diseases in this institution [15].



Figures 3 and 4. Monastery Tavna (left) and Spa Dvorovi (right)

Recreational tourism includes all types of nature visited tourism, with the basic characteristics of walking or hiking. This type of tourism is relatively new in the researched area and is becoming increasingly popular. In the last 10 years a large number of people have joined various associations that carry out recreational types of tourism, such as walking, hiking, cycling, camping etc. In terms of location, this type of tourism is characteristic for forest areas, so the walking paths, viewpoints and other locations that are visited are mostly at higher altitudes.

Objects and localities that were included in this research are: Orthodox objects, Islamic objects, other cultural objects such as monuments, lakes, waterfalls, spa, caves, viewpoints, camps, picnic areas, restaurants, ethno village and mountain lodge. Location of all objects and places of above described types of tourism in the research area, are observed in the terms of their position relating natural elements, especially water and forest. Their evaluation grade was given based on data from Statistical bulletins from 2015 to 2019 [10,11,12,13,14] and also on subjective effect of the authors and their longterm observation of tourism development on the researched area of Semberija and Majejica, in all three municipalities. The grade included the presence of natural and artificial elements as their surroundings.

RESULTS

On figure 5 are shown the locations of the most visited touristic places on the researched area of Semberija and Majejica. In the tables 1, 2 and 3 are given the lists of all places shown in figure 5, with the evaluation of their visiting rating, from 1 to 5 (1 being the least visited and 5 being the most visited) and the description of surrounding area and closeness to the natural elements.

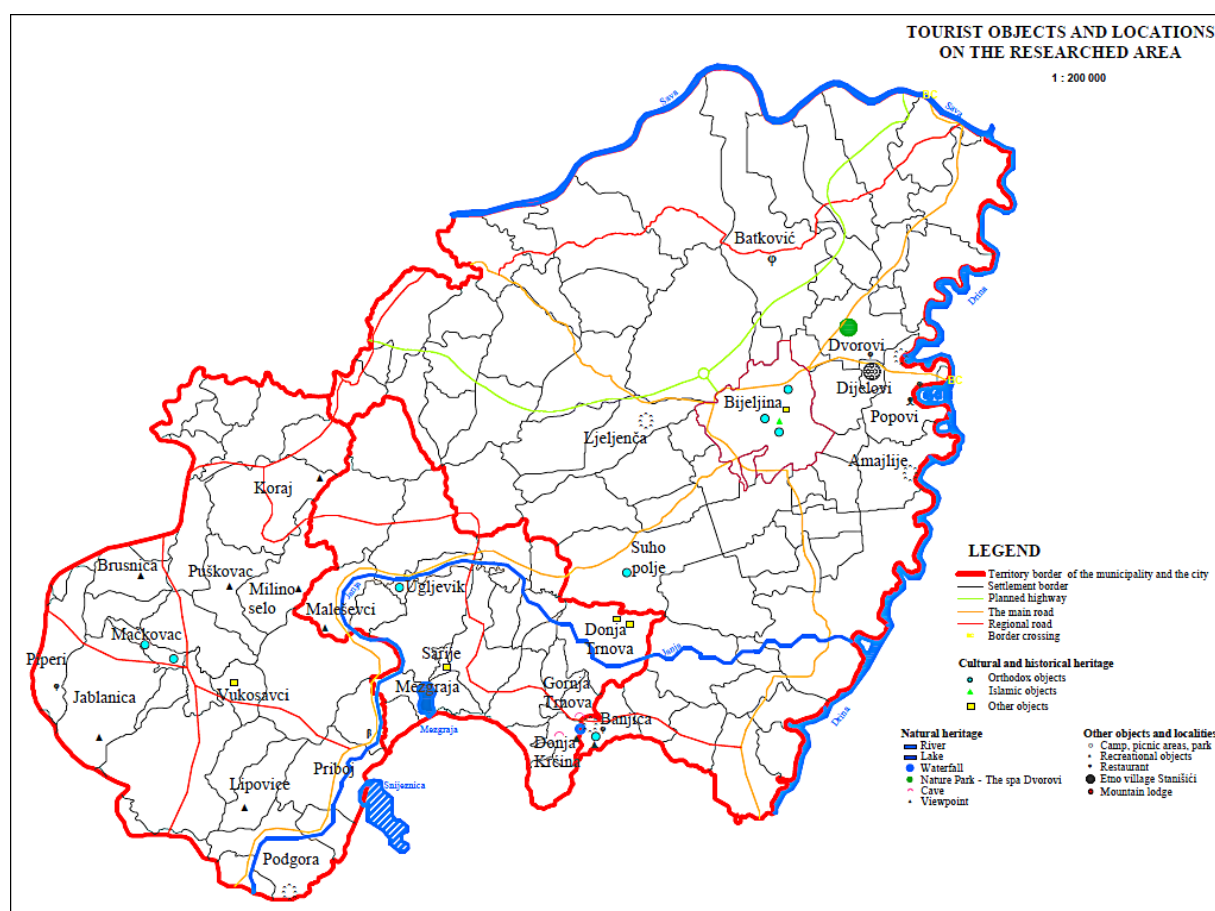


Figure 5. Touristic objects and localities on the researched area

Table 1. List of observed touristic objects and places in the Bijeljina municipality

No	Name	Location (settlement)	Surooundings (natural or artificial)	Visitation grade
1	Eco camp Amajlije	Amajlije	natural/artificial	4
2	Tavna monastery	Banjica	natural	5
3	Starine Novaka lodging	Banjica	natural	4

4	Banjica waterfall	Banjica	natural	3
5	Viewpoint	Banjica	natural	3
6	Eco camp Tavna	Banjica	natural	3
7	Imperia tavern - a small museum of antiquities	Batković	artificial	1
8	Saint Georgije church	Bijeljina	artificial	5
9	Saint Petka monastery	Bijeljina	artificial	5
10	Saint Vasilije Ostroški monastery	Bijeljina	artificial	5
11	Atik mosque	Bijeljina	artificial	5
12	Church of the Immaculate Heart of Mary	Bijeljina	artificial	4
13	Dvorovi spa	Dvorovi	artificial	5
14	Semberski salas	Dvorovi	artificial	5
15	Etno village Stanišići	Dijelovi	artificial	5
16	Picnic area	Ljeljenča	natural/artificial	4
17	Ranch Tanasić	Popovi	natural	4
18	Drinska ruža restaurant	Popovi	natural/artificial	2
19	Eco visitor center The lakes	Popovi	artificial	2
20	Monastery of the Holy Cross	Suho Polje	natural/artificial	2

Table 2. List of observed touristic objects and places in the Ugljevik municipality

No	Name	Location (settlement)	Surooundings (natural or artificial)	Visitation grade
1	Novak cave	Gornja Trnova	natural	3
2	Hollow rock cave	Donja Krćina	natural	2
3	Viewpoint Orlović	Donja Krćina	natural	2
4	Memorial complex	Donja Trnova	natural/artificial	4
5	Memorial house Liberation	Donja Trnova	natural/artificial	4
6	Viewpoint Brezovaca	Maleševci	natural	1
7	Mezgraja lake	Mezgraja	natural/artificial	4
8	Jablan city	Sarije	natural	1
9	Russian orthodox church Aleksandar Nevski	Ugljevik	artificial	3

Table 3. List of observed touristic objects and places in the Ugljevik municipality

No	Name	Location (settlement)	Surooundings (natural or artificial)	Visitation grade
1	Viewpoint Volujak	Brusnica	natural	1
2	Memorial park Vukosavci	Vukosavci	natural	3
3	Viewpoint Međednik	Jablamica	natural	1
4	Viewpoint Čitluk	Koraj	natural	1
5	Viewpoint Vratilovo	Lipovice	natural	1
6	Church of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary	Mačkovac	natural/artificial	3
7	Church of Venerable Sisoje Great	Mačkovac	natural/artificial	3
8	Viewpoint Molitvište	Milino selo	natural	1
9	Etno resort Marusa	Piperi	natural	1
10	Eco picnic area Viva natura Busija	Podgora	natural	3
11	Lake Sniježnica	Priboj	natural/artificial	5
12	Viewpoint Udričovo	Puškovac	natural	1

In total were observed 41 objects and location on the researched area of Semberija and Majevisa, 20 in the area of Bijeljina municipality, 9 in the area of Ugljevik municipality and 12 in the area of Lopare municipality. Their evaluation was based on the visitation, and was graded from one (1 – least visited) to five (5 – most visited). Evaluation of visitation of observed objects and locations for the purpose of development of eco tourism, depending on their surroundings, showed different results.

Grade five (most visited) was given to 9 places, 8 from which are on the area of Bijeljina municipality. This can be associated with the most urban part of the researched area that has dense and developed traffic network. Therefore, observed objects and locations are easily accessible.

Grade four was given to seven places, five on area of Bijeljina municipality and two on the area of Ugljevik municipality. Surroundings of most of the locations with this grade are natural and artificial. Grade three was given to nine places, three in the area of Bijeljina municipality, two in the area of Ugljevik municipality and four in the area of Lopare municipality. Different types of objects and locations were given this grade.

Grade two was given to five places, three in the area of Bijeljina municipality and two in the area of Ugljevik municipality. Surroundings of all places are natural or the combination of natural and artificial. The lowest grade, one, was given to ten places, one in the area of Bijeljina municipality, two in the area of Ugljevik municipality and seven in the area of Lopare municipality. 7 out of 10 places are viewpoints that are difficult to access.

Closeness to water elements has a great role in the development of touristic objects in all three types of researched tourism. This is notable in all parts of researched area, in the plain and on the mountain, and in all three observed municipalities. Even if the viewpoints do not benefit from the water elements, they are definitely an important asset as the areas close to water elements have the greatest visitation.

Observed by the types of researched tourism, cultural and heritage tourism show little to none connection between natural or artificial surroundings and visitation grade. This can be seen in comparison of Tavna monastery that is completely in natural surroundings and far away from the city and Saint Petka monastery that is in artificial surrounding near the city and the main traffic road. Both have high evaluation, grade five, for visitations. The same goes to other cultural and heritage places, whose visitations mostly depend from the content and less from their surroundings. This type of tourism does not depend from natural or artificial elements.

Spa tourism is related to only one location, Spa Dvorovi. Its surroundings are mostly artificial. Its location had a great impact in the past on the development of this area and transit tourism. Even though spa tourism is one of the main types of tourism in the researched area when we talk about eco tourism, its surroundings and elements are all artificial. Its natural component is based on geothermal energy and its use in health and recreational purposes. Spa Dvorovi is also relatively close to the city center and to the most visited complex in the researched area, Ethno village Stanisici.

Objects and places that belong to recreational tourism record the least visitations, due to their remote locations, high altitudes and a lack of any type of passable roads. They do benefit from natural elements, especially forest presence that gives a silence and peaceful areas suitable for walks, cycling and other types of recreation. However, lack of infrastructure has a great impact on the lack of visits. On Majevisa mountain the relief often suddenly changes from cultivated land on slopes to thick, impassable forests. This type of tourism depends from natural elements, but needs adequate infrastructure in order to be passable.

CONCLUSION

Eco tourism largely depends from natural elements. It is seen that way due to the importance of effects that generally tourism has on environment. However, research on the area of Semberija and Majevisa

showed that tourism is largely dependent from artificial elements, especially infrastructure. Natural elements are important as they represent the peace oasis that is necessary for researched types of tourism – cultural and heritage, spa and recreational, but they are not sufficient for the object or location to be visited.

Recreational tourism is the one that has the greatest potential from natural surroundings, especially forest and water elements. Those are mainly paths, viewpoints and some objects such as Jablan city. All of them were evaluated with the lowest grades, two and one, mostly due to the lack of artificial elements.

Therefore, natural elements, especially forest has no impact on the development of eco tourism, in obserer types of tourism. Artificial elements, like railroads, are necessary for the development of these areas and also tourism locations. Also other artificial elements, such as catering facilities are necessary for the area to be attracted for visiting.

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