

**CULTURAL HERITAGE AS A POTENTIAL FOR
RURAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN SREDAČKA
ZUPA NEAR PRIZREN¹**

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ABSTRACT

This paper aims to show the influence that tradition has on the development of rural tourism in SredackaZupa near Prizren. In this paper we highlighted the importance of the cultural heritage of a society for the development of rural tourism in that region and how important it is to preserve the identity of a society. Tourism, as a new tourist activity, did not appear as a need for new tourist capacities, but as a need to preserve, revitalize and give additional value to inherited heritage and to authentically promote traditional knowledge and skills through the organization of an attractive and original tourist offer. Rural tourism is based on its tourist attraction using heritage, that is, tradition as a basis for creating a tourist offer.

Keywords: rural tourism, cultural heritage, Sredacka Zupa, Prizren

¹ professional paper

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary study of tourism development in the world, rural tourism appears as a very important and growing segment. The rural area is the basic resource for the development of rural tourism, that is, the tourist activity relies on the need of urban residents for peace, clean air, healthy food, entertainment, and the outdoor recreation area. Rural tourism destinations have a rich array of anthropogenic values and an attractive traditional ambience, surrounded by the natural resources of a region. This tourism is closely connected with cultural tourism, their unification and interdependence combined with domestic catering and the environment of natural beauties, various traditional events provide a unique holiday and recreation. Therefore, it is important to emphasize that a particular rural area is characterized by a small population, dominantly using land, forests and traditional customs as a source of income and survival.²Some theories emphasize that there is a difference between urban and rural behavior.³ National customs and costumes are best shown through various manifestations held in rural areas, with the aim of preserving tradition and national consciousness. The need for resting in a rural environment is largely due to the increasing influence of the contemporary way of life and the influence that has on the life of a modern man. The specificity for the development of rural tourism is the tendency to provide personal contact, feel for the physical and human environment to the visitor, or tourists, and to participate in the rural activities, tradition and lifestyle of the local population. The cultural heritage of one nation is one of the factors for the development of rural tourism. In the paper we emphasized that the cultural heritage of the people of Sredacka Zupa near Prizren can influence the development of rural tourism in that region.

CULTURAL HERITAGE OF SREDACKA ZUPA NEAR PRIZREN

Most people in the Zupa are Bosniaks, so, in this work, we will only talk about their cultural tradition. The cultural heritage of Bosniaks represents a whole series of peculiarities and specialties developed throughout history, with

² Kantar, S. (2016): Razvoj održivog ruralnog turizma : Potencijal Koprivničko-križevačke županije. Doktorska disertacija. Filozofski fakultet, Zagreb.,

³ Pivčević Smiljana, Mandić Ante, (2012.): Potencijal turizma u revalorizaciji ruralnih područja u zavoju i valorizaciji zavojne bastine

which Bosniaks differ and are recognized among other nations. First of all, due to the fact that Bosniaks are an indigenous European nation, who largely subscribe to the Islamic tradition, which is rather unusual, in a positive sense, in the colorful, yet quite uniformly cultural scene of Europe. The Bosniak cultural heritage encompasses all those cultural goods- material and immaterial, which the Bosniaks consider to be their own, with which they identify themselves, and which is important for their identity in a certain space.

By this means, everything that the Bosniaks created during the thousand years of existence in this region under certain social conditions collectively form the basis of the culture of such a vibrant ethnicity. This cultural heritage through historical times has changed and developed some concepts or objects from the sphere of everyday life into a more symbolic sense, and thus gained a new meaning and role in society. As ethnos went through transformations, so did many aspects within the Bosniak culture, such as: accepting certain social norms, creating new ideological matrices, certain cultural phenomena and goods were rejected, aligned with the new ideology, changed function, and some new things were accepted and fitted into the already existing social order.

The cultural heritage of Bosniaks in SredackaZupa is divided into material and immaterial.

SREDACKA ZUPA

At the foothills of the Sar Mountains, in the vicinity of the town of Prizren there is SredackaZupa, in which there are fifteen villages, mostly of Bosniak ethnicity. The central Župa in geographical sense represents the basin between Prizren and Brezovica.



Sredacka Zupa is the area in the vicinity of Prizren, representing a small and separate geographical area under the crown of the Sar Mountain. It has a shape of a small basin, edged and squeezed by hills, through which the river Bistrica flows its upper course. Many are called Prizrenska Zupa or only Zupa.

It is not only a geographical unit, but a larger ethnographic and linguistic complex. It covers an area of 162.82 km², with an average altitude of 2600 meters above sea level.⁴

The dialect of the locals of these villages in Zupa is specific, belonging to the so-called transitional (border) dialect. In addition to the Slavic basis (the Bosnian language has a great influence from the Macedonian language as well as parts from the Bulgarian language), according to which these dialects belong to the South Slavic group of languages, there is also a large fund of words that are so-called orientalisms (Arabic, Turkish and Persian words) that are adapted to the local phonetics.⁵

IMMATERIAL CULTURAL HERITAGE OF SREDACKA ZUPA

The cultural heritage and traditions of Bosniaks are mostly linked through their religious heritage and customs. The complete culture of Bosniaks relies on Islamic culture, with a mixture of the culture of related Islamic nations as well as backward Pagan elements from the ancient past.

The Bosniak community in Kosovo is rich in its cultural heritage and shares some of these aspects with other communities in the surrounding areas.

When we talk about the cultural heritage of Bosniaks in Kosovo, we are mainly referring to the immaterial aspects of their cultural heritage. These aspects provide a sense of identity and continuity within this ethnic group, and thus encourages respect for cultural diversity and human creativity.

The immaterial cultural heritage of Bosniaks consists of:

- Men's and women's wedding costumes
- Traditional wedding
- Wedding flag

⁴S.Jankovic, *Nasaskola*, Sredcka 1994

⁵ www.info-ks.net

- Ljubinje bride
- Village circumcision

WEDDING COSTUMES

The Bosniak people's costumes in the municipality of Prizren have great artistic value and beauty. The costumes can be recognized as belonging to the Balkans, and some elements are seen in more everyday-wear. However, the wave of modernization, in terms of fashion, has certainly affected this region, although traditional costumes are still worn and well maintained. More attention is drawn to women's costumes due to their highly unique qualities which are characteristic for this region in particular. You will not be able to find such a wedding costume anywhere else. On the other hand, men's costumes have elements which are almost identical to the Albanian male costumes. The national costume of Bosniaks in Kosovo, is weaved from a multitude of colorful, woolen threads covered with gold. It was part of everyday life in our region until about fifty years ago. The only type of clothing that men and women carried⁶.

Opening a museum featuring old and newer costumes of all the villages in SredackaZupa would contribute a lot in development of tourism in this region, where tourists would be able to see how costumes looked then and how they look now.

TRADITIONAL WEDDING

The wedding ritual in SredackaZupa has lost many elements of a former, more traditional wedding. Only the elderly people remember that the weddings previously lasted for several days. Young people now mostly know only about wedding ceremonies that have been reduced from their former state to the extent that they now reflect, as with other people in the area, more modern living conditions, as well as contemporary values and cultural principles. Today's inhabitants of Zupa do not remember weddings that lasted for a week. The oldest memories they remembered were those of weddings that lasted at most for

⁶FehmijaMurati, *Tradicija i običajiBošnjakaŽupa, Podgora I Gora, Prizren, 2011*

three days. These three days, in short, contained some of the most important wedding customs of the Bosniak people.

LJUBINJE BRIDE



Ljubinja bride is a special look of a bride which is completely different from the modern look now typical of brides today. The look of the Ljubinja bride is unique, and in conjunction to being dressed in a costume that has been specifically created for this occasion,

the bride authentically and completely encompasses what a traditional Bosniak bride looks like. First, she combs her hair and binds it with white scarves. The bride's hands are colored. It is done the previous night at her girls' night, the last night when she is staying in the home of her parents. "Kana" on the hands of a bride shows that she is a true bride who respects religion and religious customs. Painting the face of a young person is a special art that requires the knowledge and skills of a person who is coloring.⁷

This look of the bride can rarely be seen. An organized research shows that the Ljubinja bride is being promoted a lot recently, which arouses the interest of many to stay in this part of the country and to see the traditional look of the bride, which has been maintained for many years, during the weddings. Only with the promotion and maintaining the tradition we can contribute to the development of tourism in this region, which would certainly make a positive impact on economic development.

⁷SemahataSadiku, „Običaji i tradicijaobilježjejednognaroda“, *Alem*, br. 183. 2011

COLLECTIVE CIRCUMCISION - WEDDING IN ZUPA

This tradition in the Zupa dates back to the time of the rule of the Ottomans in this region. This unique collective tradition, therefore, according to some sources, dates back well over a hundred years and was derived for humanitarian reasons. Most importantly, in the distant past, it was easier for those families who were financially unable to circumcise their children to participate in this particular ceremony. In this way, all families of little children become equal, with minimal investments.

Now in Zupa, the village circumcision is held every five years. In these ceremonies, hundreds of children are being circumcised, especially those who are from poor families who do not have the financial ability to perform this fine Muslim duty.

Since this is one of the rare manifestations that take place in this region, it arouses a lot of attention and interest from both domestic and foreign tourists, which are currently in very few numbers. The population of Zupa who live as diaspora strive to be present in their hometown during those days. Based on research, they came to the conclusion that the diaspora should be used in bringing the foreign tourists, who would visit this manifestation, and their arrival would have a positive effect on the development of tourism and the economic development of the region. This type of event is an attraction for both the local population and the tourists. That is why it should be used for positive purposes for the development of tourism.

CULTURAL HERITAGE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF RURAL TOURISM

Based on a conducted research, in which the inhabitants of this region participated, it came to the conclusion that the rural tourism is the developing strategy of rural regions which helps the local population to get jobs, helps the demographic picture of rural regions to improve, and helps the business of existing subjects to expand. Based on that, the research shows that the employment of the local population and expanding the existing businesses would contribute to the stabilization of income and to the increased inflow of financial resources. Expanded financial resources would contribute to the improvement of the look of the local environment and infrastructure, and it

would allow the maintenance and improvement of the look of objects which are of cultural importance. Research showed that the development of tourism would have a significant social role, because the rural population often feels marginalized and this would bring back the sense of pride and self-awareness. As it can be seen from the previous sentence, Zupa region has huge potential for the development of tourism, but people are still turned towards the traditional agriculture and still cannot see the opportunities. With nearly 10,000 inhabitants in Zupa, and many more in diaspora around the world, it is one of the most interesting natural and geographical complexes of the Municipality of Prizren. Based on the research of the local opinion, the current material and immaterial cultural heritage of Zupa can contribute a lot in the development of tourism in this region, but investments are needed. This can be done through various donations, either by the municipality of Prizren itself, or by donations from the inhabitants of Zupa living in the diaspora.

After we have minutely presented the immaterial cultural heritage elements which are very significant in the Zupa region, we can conclude that their role in creating a tourism destination is large enough, but still undetected to some extent. Also, based on the research, it was concluded that the promotion of tourism in this region is very small. The destination can have a very developed touristic appeal, however, if its promotion is not sufficiently advanced on an international level, then the Zupa region as a tourist destination will not be able to show its overall potential and touristic capacity. Promotion is one of the key factors in the development of tourism and more resources and funds need to be invested in order to better promote the destination to the public. Promotion should be done through the media, online advertising, etc. The events we have listed above can be included in the package arrangements of some travel agencies and thus contribute to the development of tourism in the region, and therefore the economic development of the region itself.

Based on a poll which was conducted during the summer months, because during this time there is the largest influx of tourists in this region due to the fact that during these times the above mentioned cultural events are held, it was determined that the visit of foreign tourists in this area is very small. It is necessary to work on attracting the foreign tourists with different types of promotion, which can be greatly contributed by the inhabitants of Zupa living in

the diaspora. They can bring their foreign friends to this region first, which may represent the beginning of a chain in the arrival of foreign tourists. Foreign tourists would have a positive impact on the economic development of the region.

This work focuses on the cultural events, which play one of the leading roles in attracting tourists to the destinations where these events take place. In addition, in order to develop rural tourism in the Zupa region of Prizren, it is necessary to define together for the whole region on which potential events would be most attractive to tourists so as to work on improving it in order to develop tourism in the area, and then determine the advantages and disadvantages of this . We need to make a SWOT analysis and find out what are the pillars that can be worked on, or that some goal that we are striving for should be set.

As we have mentioned several times, the organization and marketing as well as the promotion of the events of this region have a very big role in the final tourist offer and further development of the tourism of that destination.

CONCLUSION

In addition to the great natural wealth that this region has, and which can be used for the development of rural tourism, traditional weddings represent a significant potential primarily for the preservation of the tradition of this region which is slowly losing itself under the influence of globalization, and for the development of tourism that can contribute to the economic development of this region

Tradition and customs in the life of a nation, in addition to language and religion, are probably the most serious influence on the creation and preservation of the ethnic identity of this community. A continuous race for time and profit, as well as the era of globalization, destroy many specialties of nations, often replacing them with universal and somewhat impersonal values. Often people do not know what the true folk customs of their region are. Although many cultures interweave and evolve under the influence of other cultural patterns, each of them retains a significant portion of their authenticity. The essence of the spiritual development of one nation is best understood by studying the customs and cultural traditions.

Customs from the earliest times fulfill one of their most important roles, that is to preserve the identity of the people. It is difficult to determine when exactly

some custom originated, but it certainly was in the earliest past. They were created to satisfy the most diverse human needs, and as these needs developed and changed, so did customs. The Bosniaks of the Sredacka Zupa are a people with a rich tradition, who, due to a variety of circumstances, are confronted with the great temptations of its preservation. Many customs of the Bosniaks of the Sredacka Zupa for a long period of time are lost, or suppressed. Today there is a more pronounced tendency for many forgotten customs of renewal and pervading the context of modern life.

In order to preserve their identity, the Bosniaks of the Sredacka Zupa are trying their best to resist the influence of time and everything that they carry and preserve their tradition mainly through the performance of traditional weddings.

In recent years, the special importance of traditional weddings for the development of tourism in this rural area is emphasized. Special emphasis is given to the so-called Ljubinje bride, that is, young people specially chosen for the act of marriage. There is an increasing number of tourists visiting this region to attend a traditional wedding. In recent decades, modernization has entered the big door to this end, which is reflected in the very act of the wedding. But in the last few years, the young people have expressed their desire to preserve tradition, and more and more often we meet Ljubinje brides who get married on horses. With this tradition it is necessary to continue, but also to use for the arrival of an increasing number of tourists who would attend such an event, and in addition would also get to know the natural wealth that this region offers. The development of rural tourism in this region would also contribute to the economic strengthening of this region.

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