

# DO MEMORIAL SITES FROM THE SECOND WORLD WAR POSSESS POTENTIAL FOR TOURISM DEVELOPMENT – EXAMPLES FROM CROATIA AND BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

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**Abstract:** This paper researches memorial sites built in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina in a planned manner to mark the Second World War sufferings or military operations. Most of the analysed sites were planned, designed and built following an urban-architectural competition. All of these sites were designed by the best local planners and artists of the time. Nearly all of them are located in protected natural areas (of varying degrees of protection). Depending on the significance of a particular memorial site at the time, it was planned and constructed as a memorial, educational and/or tourist centre with numerous recreational and accommodation facilities, restaurants and other facilities. This paper examines the role memorial sites played, the current state of memorial sites as a whole, the state of the natural heritage, the state of the cultural heritage, the state of buildings and infrastructure and the present possibilities for tourism development. Memorial sites from Croatia included in the analysis are: Jasenovac, Podgarić, Kalnik, Petrova Gora, Kumrovec, Brezovica, Korenica, Matić Poljana etc. Memorial sites located in Bosnia and Herzegovina and included in the analysis are: Sutjeska, Kozara, Jablanica, Makljen, Sanski Most, Konjuh Planina, Drvar etc. Taking into consideration that planned memorial sites from the Second World War lost their political significance, the conclusion summarizes the state of memorial sites by site, country and the potential for tourism development.

**Key words:** memorial sites, Second World War, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, cultural and natural heritage, tourism

## INTRODUCTION

Most of the monuments of the anti-fascist battle, which were built during the sixties and seventies in all of the former republics of Yugoslavia, have gone into oblivion. The monuments were built on the sites of significant historical battles in World War II or in places of large civilian and partisan casualties and all of those are the works of skilful local sculptors and architects, such as Dušan Džamonja, Vojin Bakić, Bogdan Bogdanović, Ivan Sabolić, Svetislav Ličina, Vojin Stojić, Vanja Radauš, Gradimir Medaković, Miodrag Živković, Jovan Grabulovski, Janez Lenassi, Petar Krstić, Vuk Bombardelli, Boško Kućanski and Marko Mušič.

The subject of this paper are memorial sites from Second World War in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina which were big part of tourism from sixties all the way to nineties. All these memorial sites in both countries mark the locations of military battles, camps,

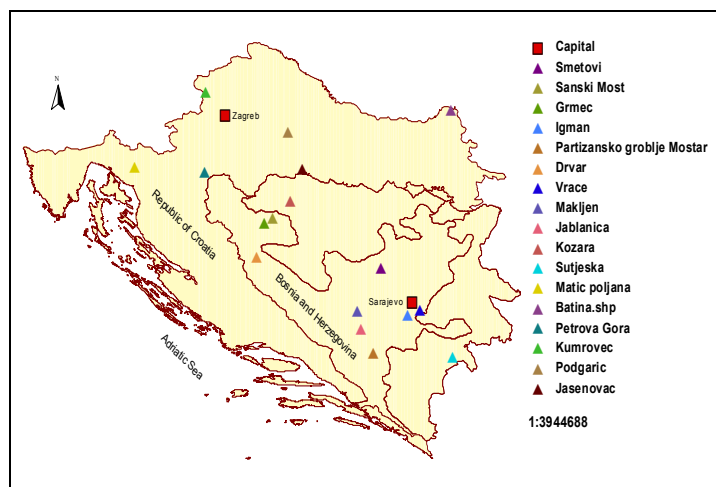
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cemeteries and other forms of suffering during World War II. Larger memorial complexes per year toured between four and five million visitors, which was reason enough for them to be treated as a tourist site. The important fact is that this work has grown out of an extremely precious experience: field work of author together with students in the last twenty years has consisted from visits to these memories, with efforts to include them in fostering a tradition of anti-fascism, tourism, memories and inexpensive destination.



**Fig.1.** Memorial sites in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina  
Source: Authors

Considering increased importance of memorial tourism in Europe and the world this paper aims to verify:

- whether or not memorial sites in socialist period had the same touristic, memorial, educational and political role
- whether or not memorial sites of World War II have the potential for development of special interest tourism such as memorial tourism/dark tourism/thanato tourism

Incentive for research was the fact that the memorial areas of the Second World War such as France are still very attractive for tourism and growing number of visitors. Only location for Normandy landings of Allied Army known as "D-Day" in Normandy in 2014 had 5,926,409 visitors, which is 1.3% more than in 2013.

The location in 1995 had a little more than 3,000,000 visitors ([http://ctn.pro-normandie-tourisme.com/content/media/document.php?id\\_document=4971&id\\_format=1](http://ctn.pro-normandie-tourisme.com/content/media/document.php?id_document=4971&id_format=1;);

17.7.2015.) which proves that the said location has memorial, educational and touristic meaning. Memorial areas in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina during socialist period were systematically designed, almost everywhere marked by artistic sculptures, sometimes built with museum and other structures necessary for selective forms of tourism. Most tourists or visitors were: school children, participants in the war, politicians and others.

Without going into detail of historical and military facts, here is revalued their value for the restoration of the memorial tourism or restoration of selective forms of tourism, and eventually designing and shaping a common theme routes of dark tourism.

Overall observing, certain memorial areas from that period have emerged as the best works of artists of Yugoslavia, and besides memorial have certain artistic value. According to some foreign researchers, it is incredible how the artists of the time were talented and what kind of messages they were sending to the world. One of such researchers is a Belgian artist Jan Kampenaers, Associate of the Royal Academy of Ghent who carried out the project "Monuments: end of an era" in which he emphasizes how impressed he was with "abstractness of Yugoslav monuments, their futuristic looks and artistic quality untypical for socialist realism as it raged in those years eastern Europe ". For many European architects those monuments are more museum sculptures in the open, rather than the usual war memorials, but unfortunately they are little known in the world. Same situation is in both of these countries as no one wants to know about these monuments.

Most of these monuments are located in areas with different levels of protection of nature, and if nature is preserved that does not mean that monuments are in the same category. All this shows also that the subject memorial areas in both countries are located outside of cities and often in protected natural areas.

On some locations there have been set megalomaniac monuments/statues as symbols of suffering which were designed by some of the best artists of the former Yugoslavia. As artists were not bound by economic indicators, their work was dedicated to contemporary design. After socio-economic and political changes in the 1990s, systematically arranged memorial areas today are abandoned and largely devastated and have not been included as a part of tourism offer.

Regarding the special interest tourism forms that indicate the location of military operations, death, disaster, cemeteries and other events in recent years have received increasing attention of researchers (Sharpley and Stone, 2009; Stone 2012, Stone 2013, etc.). Putting the location and / or events related to the topics listed in touristic offer is increasingly the subject of research, and less attention was given to the motivation of visitors (Dunkley, Morgan and Westwood, 2001) and to the visit of authentic locations (Cohen 2011).

## **Methodology**

For research purposes, it was necessary to carry first out the so-called mapping of locations of memorial areas from World War II. At the beginning five most important memorial areas in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia were determined. After that there was also determined their state of conservation of cultural and natural heritage, and whether there are resources to rebuild the memorial tourism.

To be able to analyze and evaluate mutually memorial areas, the goal of this paper is, in the first stage, making the records of the above areas i.e. mapping in order to determine their status for the purposes of tourism. It had also been made a comparison of relations between the memorial and areas of tourism in Europe, especially in France and the mentioned countries.

## ANALYSIS OF THE CURRENT SITUATION IN DARK TOURISM OFFER

Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia are not recognized as countries that offer memorial tourist areas of World War II of international importance. Primary research has identified unique destinations of memorial tourism from the period of World War II in both countries and their connections can represent a variety of projects. Each state for itself will not achieve international significance of these sites unless a common platform is created that will include touristic offer and tourist cooperation of memorial significance. It is necessary to rebuild the devastated areas and put them in the function of tourism, so as to modernize the presentation of the above scope.

In the tourist offer should definitely be included organizations engaged in tourism but also as in France schools, civil associations and so on.

**Tab. 1.** Memorial sites in Croatia

Location	County	Municipality	Have spatial plan	Built Yes/No	State of location today	Protected natural area	Protected area of cultural heritage
<b>Jasenovac</b>	Sisak – Moslavina	Jasenovac	Yes	Yes	Good	Park of nature	Yes
<b>Podgarić</b>	Bjelovar – Bilogora	Berek	Yes	Yes	Bad	Yes	Yes
<b>Kumrovec</b>	Krapina - Zagorje	Kumrovec <sup>4</sup>	Yes	Yes	Medium	Yes	Yes
<b>Petrova Gora</b>	Karlovac	Vojnić	Yes	Yes	Devastated	Significant landscape	Yes
<b>Batina</b>	Osijek – Baranja	Draž	Yes	Yes	Good	No	Yes
<b>Matić poljana</b>	Primorje – Gorski Kotar	Mrkopalj	Yes	26 of stone sculptures	Good	Yes	In 1976. protected as historical route

Source: Authors

The memory of war or war memories in the words of Tamara Banjeglav<sup>5</sup>, have resulted in the destruction of heritage memory of the Second World War on the territory of Bosnia

<sup>4</sup> Ethnographic Open-Air Museum

<sup>5</sup> In her research in the work of RE: VISION OF THE PAST, official politics of memory in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia since 1990, Alumni Association center for interdisciplinary Postgraduate Studies (ACIP S), Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

and Herzegovina and Croatia. In early nineties in both countries occurred changes in the policies of memory that in a way changed the attitude towards World War II, which was characterized at the beginning of the 1990s by anti-communism and the new nationalist interpretation of the partisan movement, which caused many changes in commemorative practices and official policies of memories today. The focus of this study were also the policies of memory of World War II through the condition of cultural heritage and memorials. So it turned out that all the complexes were equipped, containing the museum complex, the memorial rooms, trails, hotel accommodation. Tourism memories lived there through school trips, youth gatherings, schools and other forms of self-management.

**Tab. 2.** Memorial sites in Bosnia nad Herzegovina

<b>Location</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Have spatial plan</b>	<b>Built Yes/No</b>	<b>State of location today</b>	<b>Protected natural area</b>	<b>Protected area of cultural heritage</b>
<b>Sutjeska</b>	Republic of Srpska	Foča	Yes	Yes	Devastated	National Park	Yes
<b>Kozara</b>	Republic of Srpska	Prijedor	Yes	Yes	Good	National Park	Yes
<b>Neretva</b>	Herzegovina – Neretva County	Jablanica	No	Yes	Medium	No	Yes
<b>Igman</b>	Sarajevo County	Hadžići and Ilidža	No	Yes	Devastated	No	Yes
<b>Drvar</b>	Canton 10	Drvar			Good	Yes	Yes
<b>Makljen</b>	Herzegovina – Neretva Canton	Prozor-Rama	No	No	Devastated	No	Yes
<b>Šušnjar, Sanski Most</b>	Una – Sana County	Sanski Most	Yes	Yes	Good	No	Yes
<b>Grmeč</b>	Una –	Sanski			Medium	No	No

	Sana County	Most	No				
<b>Smetovi</b>	Zenica – Doboj County	Zenica	No		Good	No	No
<b>Vraca</b>	Sarajevo County and Republic of Srpska	Novo Sarajevo and Istočno Novo Sarajevo	No	No	Devastated	No	Yes
<b>Partisan Memorial Cementery</b>	Herzegovina – Neretva County	Mostar	No	No	Bad	No	Yes

Source: Authors

After socio-economic and political changes in the 1990s, memorial areas today are abandoned and largely devastated and have not been included as a part of tourism offer. Given the increased importance of memorial tourism in Europe and the world, this area could have a significant share of these special interest tourism forms as well. Although in the past it suffered great damage, some even complete destruction, they still represent places of gathering of those living participants of the war, like Sutjeska or places where young people gather for low-cost tourism, but very rarely tourism memories.



**Fig. 2.** Mined monument to Makljen, near the settlement Prozor Rama

Photo: Authors

**Tab. 3.** Built accommodation capacities in Croatia before the last war

Location	County	Municipality	Hotels	Number of beds	Motels	Pavilions and depandanschalet	Inns
Sutjeska	RS	Foča	Sutjeska B Mladost B	134 123		292	210
Kozara	RS	Prijedor	Hotel „Kozara“ (871) on Mrakovica; B-category;  <i>Settlement for youth „Bratstvo-jedinstvo“, on Mrakovica,</i>	171 500  200			

			with 500 beds  Prijedor: Hotel „Prijedor“ (200), B- category				
Neretva	Hercego vačko neretvan ska	Jablanica	Hotel „Jablanica“ (88 1), B- category;	160			
Drvar			Hotel „Beograd“ (60), B- category; Motel „Bastašica“ (14 ), Inn „Turist“ (21 ),	120 25 40			
Sanski Most			<i>Hotel</i> <i>„Korčanica</i> <i>“on</i> Korčanica, B-category; caffee, restaurant; <i>Hotel</i> <i>„Samusu“</i> in Sanski Most; B- category; <i>Motel in</i> <i>Luška</i> <i>Palanka</i>	70  70  12			
Vraca	Sarajevs ka/RS	Novo Sarajevo, I. NS	Many hotels				
Partizan sko groblje	Hercego vačko neretvan ska	Mostar	Many hotels				



Although before the war during the disintegration of socialist Yugoslavia these sites were visited by millions of visitors today those numbers are negligible. Given the level of construction, incorporation, ambience and even the need for anti-fascist education, the memorial areas of World War II have the potential for the development of special interest forms of tourism, especially memorial/dark tourism, or thanato tourism.

Modern education and upbringing of young people does not know this kind of memories and that void is felt the most by empty accommodation capacities in these areas. The fact is that such memorial areas even during their construction during socialism had the purpose of being touristic, memorial, educational and of course political centres.

**Tab. 4.** Built accommodation capacities in Bosnia and Herzegovina before the last war

<b>Location</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Municipality</b>	<b>Hotels</b>	<b>Number of beds or rooms</b>	<b>Motels</b>	<b>Pavilions and depadans-chalet</b>	<b>Inns</b>
Jasenovac	Sisačko-moslavačka	Jasenovac	Sava	98B	-	-	-
Podgarić	Bjelovarsko-bilogorska	Berek	Garić	180 rooms	-	-	-
Kumrovec	Krapinsko-zagorska	Kumrovec	Dom boraca	140	-	-	-
Petrova Gora	Karlovačka županija	Gvozd	None	-	-	-	-
Batina	Osječko-baranjska	Draž		-	-	-	-
Matić poljana	Primorsko-goranska	Mrkopalj		-	-	-	-



**Fig.3.**Partisan Memorial Cemeteryin Mostar

Photo: Authors

The reasons for the occurrence of this form of tourism, according to the findings of sociologists, are found in the so-called de-sacralization of public life and the extrapolation of death in the zone of privacy. "Dark" tourism therefore represents, according to that, reasoning of sustainable acceptance and coping with death. On the territory of South Eastern Europe this type of tourism has been present for a long time. It is woven in Christianity, so "dark tourism" registers its beginnings through visits of Jesus tomb, numerous graves around the world, memorial service, and in the Balkans it is especially popular from the steps of Gavrilo Princip in Sarajevo, across Sutjeska and all the way to Potočari.

## **CONCLUSION**

Memorial areas from the Second World War during their designing in 1960s and 1970s during socialist period had touristic, commemorative, educational and political role. Unfortunately, their existence is tied to the period of socialism, which has a negative connotation among politicians but also part of the population.

Memorial areas from the Second World War on the territory of both countries undoubtedly have the potential for the development of selective forms of tourism such as Memorial Tourism / dark tourism /thanato tourism.

Although in this case we are about memorial sites from the Second World War, it can be concluded that these potentials in contemporary Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia are not recognized enough as an attraction for the development of dark, memorial or thanato tourism. Regardless of that these exist as potentials for the development of not only the memories but also education, and therefore the spaces for the development of "black" or thanato tourism.

Because of these findings, the paper concludes that the memorial areas of the Second World War in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina are under-utilized for the development of the memorial, dark or thanatos tourism. At the same time we want to point out that this form of tourism in both countries is not recognized and is positioned in the system and strategies for tourism development.

The meaning of the above areas would certainly have contributed to the design of dark tourism trails from the Second World War. They might be associated with sites of suffering from the last war (1990s) that claimed many lives.

The memories of socialism in the former Yugoslavia in the media usually have negative connotations. Facts about the horrors of the last war, is mostly linked to the cause and effect of just this type of socialism, so memories of suffering in Croatian and Bosnia and Herzegovina are very much alive, the horrors of war are not forgotten, and should not be, but in the culture of memory and the construction of tolerance there is still no place for the development of thanato tourism.

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