

CONCEPTS OF TOURISM REGIONALIZATION AND ANALYSIS OF CONTEMPORARY TRENDS OF TOURIST MOVEMENT IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

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Abstract: Tourism regionalization is a methodological procedure of determination and classification of homogeneous spatial tourism structures for the purpose of regional and general socio-economic development optimization, as well as rational, sustainable and functional spatial organization and adaptability form the aspect of contemporary trends in tourism. According to geographical concept, tourism region is supposed to emphasize certain motive territoriality (tourism resources) and eventually functionality of tourist traffic, depending whether it is a potential or an activated tourism area. Tourism region is than a spatial unit with potential or activated tourism motives (attractive resources), in which tourism is one of dominant economic activity that has unifying function, while the spatial physiognomy is generally adjusted to that function. In contemporary period, conceptualism in approach to tourism regionalization of national territory inclines toward wide spectrum of approaches, which is a consequence of non-harmonized and separate vision of development of tourism activity in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Predominant cause should be sought in political and administrative division of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is recognized as crucial limiting factor that affects on multiple problems for more dynamic development of tourism sector according to existing resources and potentials. Besides the review of tourism regionalization concept, this paper deals with issues of certain elements of tourist traffic in contemporary context, through the quantitative parameters of dynamic and static indicators, by application of comparative analysis of temporal series.

Key words: tourism, Bosnia and Herzegovina, regionalization, trends in tourism.

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Concepts of tourism regionalization are primarily focused on the determination of spatial peculiarities of tourism potentials, on basis of which we perform the adequate planning regional organization of tourist activities. By doing so, the concept of spatial and territorial organization of the region is observed from three aspects:

- Tourism regionalization is carried out in accordance with the limits of administrative and political units;
- Tourist regions are differentiated independently of administrative and political boundaries within the national territory and
- Tourist regions are defined on the territory of the whole country, but they do not coincide with the boundaries of territorial-political organization. (Blažević, B., Peršić M., 2009.)

Each mentioned approach has its advantages and disadvantages, which in principle can be generalized in terms of the impact on the creation of tourism development through the problems of jurisdiction in multilevel state organization (such as Bosnia and Herzegovina) and the mechanisms of the organization of the sole touristic offer. Due to the specific administrative and political structure of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the lack of integrated mechanisms in the strategic planning of tourism development at the state level, concepts of contemporary tourism regionalization are necessary for reasons of necessity of functional, science-based regulation in this strategically important sector.

In the modern period, this problem was addressed by multiple authors, and few of them are mentioned in this paper. Taking into account the specificities of tourism, authors S. Musa and A. Korijenić (2006) performed the differentiation of the area of Bosnia and Herzegovina on tourist zones of the landscape where in addition to the transitional units, they distinguished the Peri-Pannonian brim of Northern Bosnia, Dinaric-basin Bosnia and Herzegovina and Herzegovina and the zone of low Herzegovina. In the same paper, the authors distinguished three major tourist regions that are isolated by regionalization on the principle of predisposition for certain types of tourism:

- Peri-Pannonian Bosnia – eco-tourism with rural elements and landscape features, as well as spa and health tourism;
- Mountainous-basin Bosnia – spa, religious, ski and recreational tourism and
- Low Herzegovina – religious, hunting, fishing and recreation (Musa S., Korijenić A. 2006)

In the process of drafting a tourist-geographical regionalization of Bosnia and Herzegovina, author A. Bidžan (2011, 2016), using the method of assessment of tourist products of A. Stasiak (2005), and the method of determining the average value of tourist traffic, performed the differentiation of national territory on 13 tourism-geographical regions. The borders of tourist-geographical regions in a given draft

respect administrative division on the municipalities with the fact that they are grouped into a single entity that has one or more tourist centers. (Bidzan A., 2011) In this draft of tourism regionalization, the administrative and political division at higher levels (cantons and entities) was not taken into consideration, which is in function of observing the situation, the organization and function of tourism on the whole territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

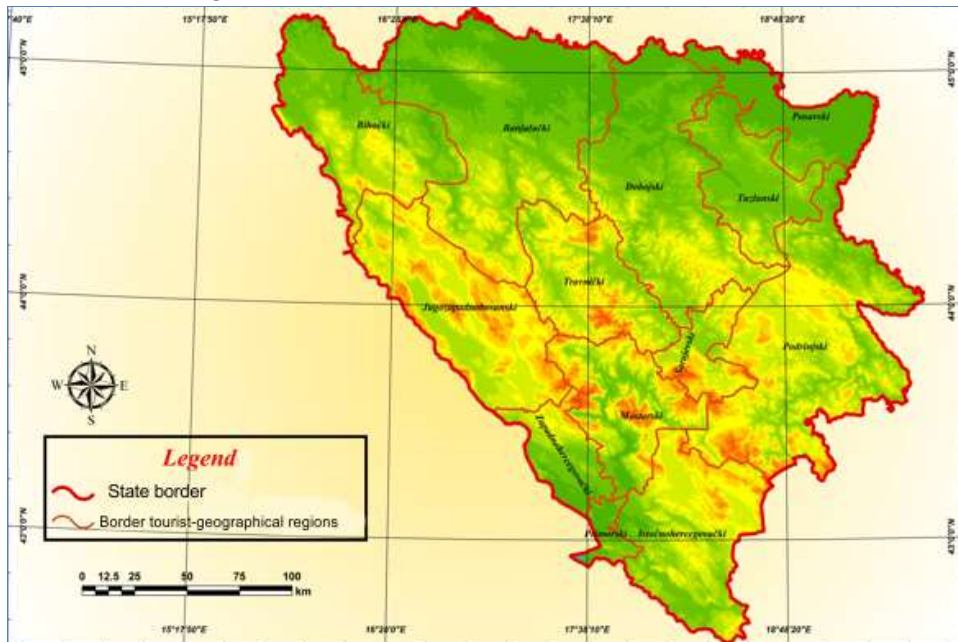


Fig 1: Draft of the tourist-geographical regions of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Source: A Bidzan, 2011, 2016)

In Bosnia and Herzegovina, due to the very complex and asymmetric political and geographical structure, in this paper we applied the concept of a combined definition of tourism territorial units for several reasons: In the Republika Srpska, decentralization at the municipal level as the only lower units of local government, with certain management mechanisms in the tourism sector. In this concept, the strategy of tourism development of Republika Srpska was developed for the period 2011 – 2020, which identified six tourist regions. Featured spatial units on a large scale (the exception is the Sarajevo tourist region) coincide with the developmental planning regions that are the part of the approved Spatial Plan of Republika Srpska, or territories with specific functions (judiciary, health care);

In the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the functions of tourist regions, are with legal mechanisms in the jurisdiction of the cantons, whose bodies and institutions create their development and management (Ministries, tourist associations and others).

Statistics of tracking tourism trends in the RS applies to municipal level and in F BiH to the cantonal level (with exceptions at the level of municipalities, which are insufficient for understanding the analyzed indicators at the local level).

To get the reference indicators of trends in terms of tracking tourism trends analyzed in the paper, the authors apply a specific approach of the combination of administrative and tourist determination or regions, through which on the basis of official published data, a certain trends can be derived.

The tourist regionalization of Bosnia and Herzegovina is determined, to a large extent, by its administrative structure. On this factor depends the ability of management of tourist content of regions, tourism planning, as well as statistical analysis. The regions defined in this way have a formal and functional character, as well as clearly defined boundaries in geographical terms. In this way, asymmetrical territorial division of Bosnia and Herzegovina had its impact on the formation of tourist regions.

Within the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, a clear regionalization principle has been enforced – each canton (a total of ten) is a separate tourist region. These are: Una-Sana region, Posavina region, Tuzla region, Zenica-Doboj region, Bosnian Podrinje region, Central Bosnian region, Herzegovina-Neretva region, West Herzegovina region, Sarajevo region and Livno region. This is due to the fact that the cantons have, in their own jurisdiction, among other things, the management of their own tourism development. For this purpose, each canton has its own tourist association. Also, the Statistical Office of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina publishes data on tourist traffic solely at the cantonal level.

The Republika Srpska, an entity that does not have an intermediate level of government in the form of Canton, defined its tourist regions through its spatial plan. There are six regions – Banja Luka region, Doboj region, Zvornik-Bijeljina region, East Sarajevo region, Foca region and Trebinje region. Although the Republic Statistical Office publishes statistical data on tourism on the municipal level as well, for the purpose of methodological comparison, this paper considers only the figures on the mentioned regional level. And finally, it should be emphasized that the Brcko District, the only part of Bosnia and Herzegovina which is outside the entity jurisdiction, constitutes a separate, 17th region.



Fig. 2. Map of tourism regions in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Authors)

For the analysis of tourism trends in Bosnia and Herzegovina, we used the temporal period between 2005 and 2014. Despite the global economic recession, which slowed down the tourist movements in the second half of the past decade, in general it can be said that the mentioned period was the most dynamic in terms of the development of tourism in this country, since the number of tourist within this period was almost doubled. The number of registered tourist arrivals in 2005 was about 430,000, while in 2014 this figure was close to 850,000. A similar trend was also recorded in the category of overnight stays. Namely, during the 2005, slightly more than one million of overnight stays was registered, and at the end of the observed period, this number jumped to over 1.7 million. On the other hand these data indicate the trend of decreasing of the average number of overnight stays on one single tourist. This can partly be explained by the growth of the share of foreign tourists, who accounted for 63.4% in the total tourist traffic of Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2014.

However, when the above mentioned data are analyzed at the level of regions (Table 1), a large regional disparity can be determined, between several regions that are the real carriers of tourism of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the one hand, and touristic passive areas on the other. Based on the total number of tourists and the share of foreign tourists, we can distinguish four categories of tourist regions in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The category of leading tourist regions includes Sarajevo, Herzegovina-

Neretva and Banja Luka region. They have more than 100,000 tourists annually, most of which are foreigners. In the group of medium-developed regions with slightly pronounced inland tourist traffic belong: Una – Sana, Tuzla, Central Bosnia, Doboј, Zvornik-Bijeljina and East Sarajevo region. The third group consists of below average developed tourist regions, which however have more pronounced international tourist traffic. These are: West Herzegovina, Trebinje, Zenica-Doboј, Foca and Brcko region. The most passive tourist regions are: Livno, Posavina and Podrinje.

Table 1. Data on tourism traffic by regions in Bosnia and Herzegovina

REGION	NUMBER OF TOURISTS			TOTAL NIGHTS			NIGHTS / TOURIST	FOREIGN TOURISTS	
	2005	2014	Index	2005	2014	Index		Total	%
Una Sana	17622	30140	171	29634	44914	152	1.49	12183	40.4
Posavina	2667	6842	257	3500	11614	332	1.70	1992	29.1
Tuzla	37479	35432	95	63940	65729	103	1.86	14302	40.4
Zenica Doboј	8747	19242	220	17904	38758	216	2.01	10966	57.0
Podrinje	1543	2467	160	4565	5563	122	2.25	450	18.2
Central Bosnia	15777	36137	229	26828	68057	254	1.88	11568	32.0
Herzegovina Neretva	70883	135538	191	200867	267859	133	1.98	104006	76.7
West Herzegovina	1376	3972	289	2267	5913	261	1.49	2655	66.8
Sarajevo	116326	301319	259	245113	579553	236	1.92	253043	84.0
Livno	1492	4477	300	2067	7023	340	1.57	1442	32.2
Banja Luka	59619	101856	171	123666	175151	142	1.72	53350	52.4
Doboј	26605	43338	163	114711	194514	170	4.49	15724	36.3
Zvornik Bijeljina	17097	29141	170	34392	51384	149	1.76	12391	42.5
East Sarajevo	25818	42366	164	75034	94439	126	2.23	12480	29.5
Foča	12512	15860	127	28869	39423	137	2.49	7990	50.4
Trebinje	8875	27599	311	20297	43754	216	1.59	16327	59.2
Brčko	9778	10855	111	22722	17826	78	1.64	5485	50.5

Source: SY FB&H 2006-2015, Stat. Yearb. of Rep. Srpska 2006-2015, and the Agency for Statistics of Bosnia and Herzegovina - statistical Bulletin of Brčko District 2006-2015.

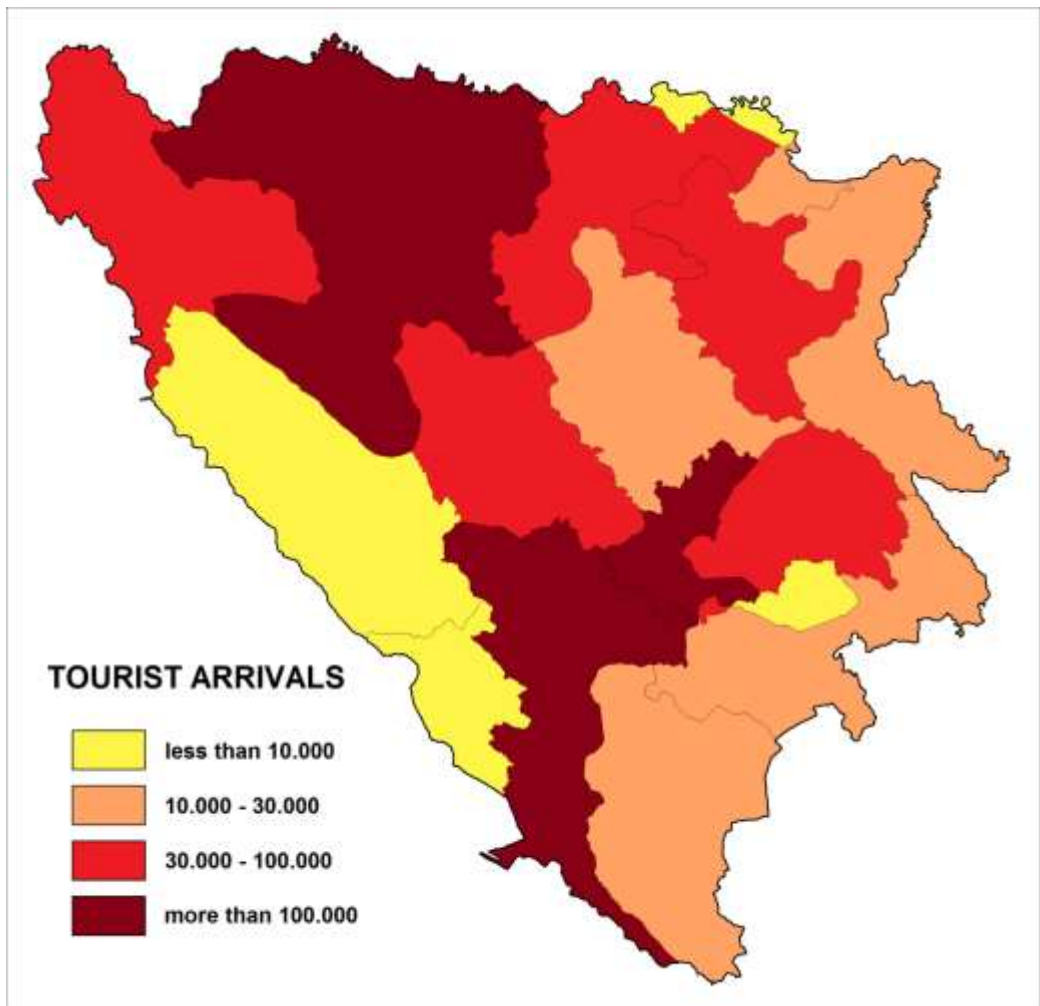


Fig. 3. Number of tourists by regions in 2014 (Authors)

Sarajevo is by far the most visited region in Bosnia and Herzegovina, given that it accounts for more than one-third (35.6 % in 2014) of all registered tourists in this country. Sarajevo leads also in the percentage of foreign tourists, which is as high as 84%. In addition, this region recorded the fourth highest increase in tourist arrivals in the observed period, and in front of it are only three small regions, whose tourist activity was almost negligible in 2005. The reason for the dominance of Sarajevo in terms of tourism is the fact that this is the capital and, internationally, by far the most famous city, the location of the largest airport in the country, a rich cultural and historical heritage, and its recognition of its multicultural image. Sarajevo's additional value is added by the natural attractions in its immediate vicinity, among which are the most famous the Olympic Mountains. Tourism importance of Sarajevo is in conflict with a relatively small territorial scope of this tourist region, and its extension from the geographical aspect is more than justified.

Besides Sarajevo, based on existing indicators, developed in terms of tourism can be considered Herzegovina-Neretva and Banja Luka regions. Mentioned regions also have more than 100,000 registered visitors annually, with the difference that the Banja Luka region has an even number of domestic and foreign tourists, while in the case of Herzegovina-Neretva region, three quarters of the tourists are foreigners. Here, we emphasized the importance of Mostar and Banja Luka as important centers of urban, cultural and historical tourism. The fact that these cities have airport helped their tourism development. The most important difference between these two regions is the fact that Banja Luka has a higher level of centralization, as the city itself accounts for about 70% of tourist traffic of the whole region, which is spatially the largest region in the whole of Bosnia and Herzegovina. On the other hand, the Herzegovina-Neretva region, except for the Mostar, has a number of other important tourist centers and attractions such as: Medjugorje, Neum, Stolac, Konjic, Hutovo Blato, Vjetrenica and so on. In addition, this region is significantly leaning on Dalmatia, a very developed region in terms of tourism in neighboring Croatia.

In the group of medium-developed tourist regions, which have between 30 and 50 thousands of tourists annually, leads the Dobož region whose tourist traffic is predominantly based on Vrucica spa resort next to Teslic. Three-quarters of the approximately 43,000 tourists who are registered in the region in 2014 have stayed in this spa. The rest of the Dobož region is generally not focused on tourism, but rather on other economic sectors, such as transport, industry and agriculture. The situation is similar with the two neighboring regions – Tuzla and Zvornik-Bijeljina ones, where the accent is put on industry, agriculture and mining as the backbone of economic development. However, thanks to the fact that Tuzla and Bijeljina are among major cities in Bosnia and Herzegovina and that they're located within the dynamic areas in social terms, these regions are classified as middle-developed regions from the tourism aspect. However, Tuzla region is the only region in the whole Bosnia and Herzegovina which registered the decrease in the number of tourists during the observed period.

Una-Sana, Central Bosnia and East Sarajevo regions are somewhat more oriented to tourism, but due to the fact that they're still not succeeding in attracting a large number of foreign tourists, those regions are also considered in the category of average developed ones. Due to their favorable geographic position and the possibility of differentiation of the tourism offer (mountain hiking on Mount Vlasic and Vranica, cultural and historical tourism in Travnik and Jajce, religious Tourism in Prusac, spa tourism in Fojnica, shopping tourism in Vitez, etc.), Central Bosnian region has the potential for much higher level of tourism development in relation to its present situation, but the problem is inadequate transport and tourism infrastructure, and also the absence of a planned approach. The backbone of tourism development of the Una-Sana region is the river Una with the city of Bihac, and in the case of East Sarajevo it is the mountain Jahorina, the most famous ski center in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The potential for further tourism development of these regions lies in cooperation with neighboring areas.

The third group includes regions with underdeveloped tourism offer and built accommodation capacities, so there is a lack of interest of local tourists for long-term stays in these areas. Therefore, they have a slightly higher number of foreign tourists, and this was brought upon by the fact that these sites are mainly located in the border regions (West Herzegovina, Trebinje, Foca and Brcko). The only exception is the Zenica-Doboj region, which lies in the interior of the country. It has a very large transit, but not the tourist importance. Here, its industrial function is primarily expressed. However, it would be a mistake to say that there are no significant tourist potentials in all these regions. A number of natural, cultural and historical attractions can be identified and potentially valorized here. Some regions have become aware of this fact in recent years. As a result, Trebinje region, for example, tripled the number of tourists in the mentioned period. Similar success has been achieved in the West Herzegovina and Zenica-Doboj region. On the other hand, Brcko region was the only one that had a decrease in the number of overnight stays between 2005 and 2014.

The group of tourism passive regions includes Livno, Posavina and Podrinje regions, which have less than 10,000 tourists a year. This is from the population aspect of small region. These regions don't have enough of their own resources to start own tourism development, so it would be necessary to either include them in, or at least co-operation with neighboring regions, in order to achieve significant results in this field. Only the Livno region as the spatially large region has a slightly higher potential for independent tourist development, but its unfavorable demographic structure and economic peripherally is a big problem. In the observed period, the number of tourists in this region has tripled, while the number of overnight stays increased by as much as 3.4 times, which is a record high growth in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This is primarily a result of tourist activation of Kupres Ski center, but for tourism to become a relevant industry in this area, it is necessary to activate the other municipalities in the region. In particular this applies to Livno as its center, whose natural and cultural diversity represents the greatest tourist potential of the region.

CONCLUSION

Results of analysis of tourism trends on the level of regions can represent a contribution not only to the systematization of spatial units in Bosnia and Herzegovina from the tourism aspect, but also to the process of tourism planning, since the different regions require different approaches in the evaluation of their tourism potentials. For this purpose, we used the statistical data on the tourist's arrivals, the number of overnight stays, the movement dynamics of these numbers, as well as the simple structure of tourists (a division on domestic and the foreigner ones). The collected data was a very good basis for assessing the level of success of the tourism industry in certain regions. Based on it, it can be concluded that Sarajevo, Herzegovina-Neretva and the Banja Luka regions are on a significantly higher level of tourist valorization compared to the rest of the country, which is understandable because these regions are the ones in which

the large urban centers are located, that are more suitable for mass forms of tourism. Although, some other regions have exceptional natural, cultural and historical potential, their lag behind said leading regions is much emphasized, which is a clear indication that in these cases the issue of inadequate tourism infrastructure and management plays a critical role.

The obvious disparity in the size and indicators of tourist trends between the tourist regions indicated the need for different spatial organization of tourism development strategy in Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, this in effective terms cannot be reached without changing the political-territorial division of the country. Political structures are those that substantially direct the directions of tourism development and statistical data are collected in accordance with the current administrative division. Therefore, some other type of tourism regionalization cannot completely fulfill its practical function. Nevertheless, it is clear that the number of 17 tourist regions in Bosnia and Herzegovina is too large. Particularly problematic are small regions, which have neither geographic, nor the population or resource potential to create their own tourism development. On the other hand, certain tourist centers are in need of enriching the tourist offer with motives and attractions from a wider area than the spatial coverage of the region to which they belong (e.g. Sarajevo). Also, there is an obvious need for inter-regional, inter-entity and even the cross-border strategic cooperation in the field of tourism.

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