UDK: 338.48-44(497.751:23)

THE ANTHROPOLOGIC POTENTIAL AS A FACTOR FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN THE SHARA – POLOG REGION

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ABSTRACT

The complexity of tourism as an economic and social activity requires that planning and managementof tourism development to be specific and demands separate organization at all levels.Actually planning of the tourism developmentis a process based on research with the purpose of gettingoptimal potential contribution of tourism to the welfare of people and the quality of the livingconditions and the environment.The subjects of this research are the anthropogenic motifs that can be put into function of tourism in thenorthwestern part of Macedonia, particularly in Shara – Polog region. This region has all the features fortourism development from tourist-geographical position to natural resources. This region is famouswithin the southern Balkans for its winter sport tourism. With its culture – historical, ethno-socialand event motifs this region exceeds the regional framework. The diversity of these motifs are nfluencedby various historical events, mixing of civilizations. In this way it preserved specifics from the past especially in thevillages situated on the ground of quality and healthy environment are irresistible offer for the moderncivilization and the present lifestyle.

Key words: Shara-Polog region, culturo-historical, ethno-social, event motifs.

INTRODUCTION

Anthropogenic values have a great influence on the satisfaction of human cultural needs. A large number of tourists join tourist movements motivated by the desire to satisfy their own cultural cravings, more precisely, to discover the historical and cultural heritage of some countries and regions, as well as the achievements in different historical, architectural and artistic fields.

Since the createdvalues infiltrate in every aspect of human life and serve various purposes, being large in number and type, we will illustrate only the ones which are most noticeable, attractive, interesting and typical for our region. As such we have: cultural-historic, ethno – social and event motifs.

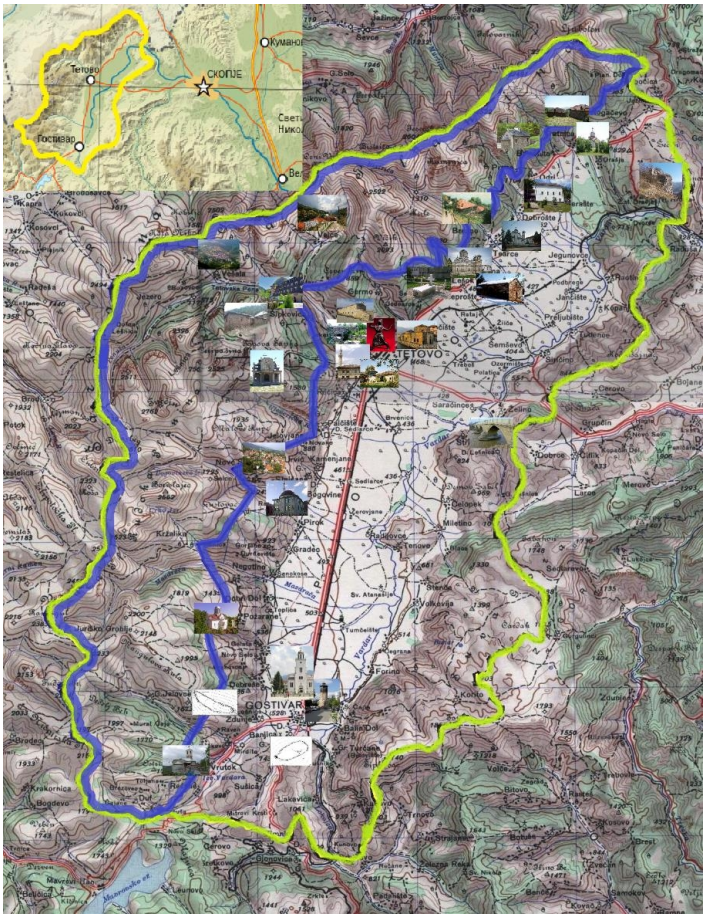


Figure 1:The Shara-Polog region.

1. ANTHROPOGENIC MOTIFS

1.1. Cultural-historic motifs

Cultural-historic motifs represent an eternal proof for the culture and existence of a nation during different historical periods, that is, a representation of a century long striving to preserve the spiritual continuity without which human existence would be unimaginable. Each of them has a different meaning and value for the development of tourism. The most significant are the ones dating from distant past, that is, the tourist value of such objects is inversely related to their date of origin, in other words the further back the given object dates, the more its touristic and other values increase(Panov, 1998, 76). As a consequence of the geographical location, the natural surroundings and the creativity of the numerous peoples who lived in these regions, lots of material evidence has been left behind, dating as far back as prehistoric ages. However, considering the countless motifs we will accentuate the ones which are most representative and most likely to be attributed a touristic function.



Figure 2: Menada of Tetovo.

As such we mention the monumental tomb from 6th century B.C, in the immediate centre of Tetovo, near the Balezova drinking fountain on the street "Shtipska". It is, built from very precisely carved blocks of travertine. At the end of 19th century, while digging up foundations for a new house, the owner of this land broke through the grave's arch, gathered the burial gifts and sold them in Istanbul. His nephew disinterred the tomb again in 1932, hoping to find hidden treasures. At that point a bronze helmet and a shield were found, fragments of bronze vases and the most significant piece - a bronze statue, 9.4 cm tall, and 4 cm wide. The statue represents a girl who is dancing with her hands held up. She is wearing a chiton with parts of the clothing corrugated into wavy lines. The mentioned statue is the Menada of Tetovo and is one of the rare archaic sculptures created between 520-530 B.C, which holds a great value as evidence of the art in this region at that time.A late Mycenaean sworddatesfrom the mere end of the bronze era, the same representing the most northern site which offers findings in the Mycenaean - Greece area (Mikulikj, 1970, 75). Today the Menada form Tetovo, as well as the sword can be found in the Archeological museum in Skopje.

The remains of the Roman Empire hold agreat significance. The greatest tourist value is attributed to the countless churches and monasteries in this region. According to Jovan Trifunovski, there is hardly any village without a perceivable church or monastery, and according to his data there are approximately 162 sites where there had been churches, out of which 17 were monasteries(Trifunovski, 1976, 44).

The monastery complex with the most significance is the one situated in the village of Leshok, at the end if the Gornoto Leshocko Maalo (neighborhood in Leshok). It consists of the following churches: the Church of the Holy Virgin and St.Athanasius, the old monastery inns, the newest church, the commercial buildings and other monastery facilities.

The Church of the Holy Virgin (St. Mary Mother of God) is mentioned for the first time in the first half of the 14th century, more precisely in the chrysobull belonging to the king Stefan

Dechnski from 1326. In 1818, following the arrival of Kiril Pejchinovikj the Church of the Holy Virginbecomes a monastery where monastic life begins to flourish. In its basis, the church is shaped as a triconch, so that the concha has three sides, further on a narthex, wider than the naos, was added to the construction from the west side. Three layers of fresco paintings have been preserved in the church, which can be seen in the altar-niche from the right side. The oldes layert dates from before 1326. The second was created during the time of the bishop Nikanor, who renewed the church in 1641, and the fresco paintings in 1646. The third layer was painted in 1879 by Mihail Gjurchinov, a painter from Galichnik whose work includes most of the icons from the iconostasis (Balabanov, 1980, 208).The church St. Athanasius of Alexandria originates from the era of the foundation of the first Episcope of Polog. According to its architectural construction it belongs to the type of buildings with a free cross, with a dome build on four pilasters. On the back side it has a supplementary narthex which is wider than the naos. A bell tower can be found above the narthex. The building is built in Byzantine style, combining stone, calc and brick, and the floor is covered in marble slabs. Judging by the remains of the lead slabs that have been found, it is thought that it was covered in lead (Balabanov et al., 1980, 207). The church has a marble iconostasis and only a few marble pillars have been preserved, decorated with human and animal heads, which can be found in the museum in Tetovo. On the inside walls of the church traces of fresco painting can be seen. Several compositions have been preserved, some representing Old Testament scenes, as well as a few saints in full length in the bottom area (Kjornakov, 1995, 94, 95). The new monumental church St. Athanasiusof Alexandria was built in 1924. In 2001 it wasdemolished and rebuilt again in 2007.



Figure 3: St. Athanasius- Leshok.

The monastery inns are near the churches built by the Macedonian enlightener and revivalist - the monk (jeromonah) Kiril Pejchinovikj from Tetovo (Tetoec) (1771 – 1845). The first monastery building mentioned by the biologist Grizebah, who stayed in Leshok in 1839, was very modest and it did not differ from the village houses by anything except for the bigger number of rooms; in one of which there was a cross, a chair, several icons and pious dictionaries

written in Slavic and Greek that could be seen on the walls (Grisebach, 1841). Apart from the monasticism, he was devoted to gathering books and he opened the first monastic library, he conducted lectures for young people and spread the literacy of the Macedonian nation. He left behind a few written works, the most significant ones from Kiril Pejchinovikj being "Ogledalo", printed in 1816 in Budapest and "Uteshenie greshnim", printed in 1840 in Thessaloniki. On the 4th of July 1967 a memorial museum was opened in the monastery complex in his honor.Numerous photographs, entries and writings by Kiril Pejchinovikj are gathered in the museum's memorial room. The exhibition includes three paintings representing Kiril Pejchinovikj, made by Arsenie from Tearce, with whom he often worked together. The portraits of the Pashas from Tetovo are also displayed there: Abdurahman Pasha, who approved the renovation of the monastery St. Athanasius initiated by Kiril, as well as the portrait of Abdurahmans's son, Redzel Pasha. His two printed works can be found there, and documents containing the history of the Monastery in Leshok.

Kiril Pejchinovikj's tombstoneis alsolocated in the museum, whose epitaph is written by his one hand, ten years prior his death. The epitaph holds great value for the history of Macedonian literacy, being the first Macedonian writing in verses.

Near the village of Leshnok there are eight ruins from old monasteries and churches. Concerning their use, the monastery inns are opened to tourists and they have the entire necessary infrastructure. The rare objects with ethnological significance, the food prepared in the monastery's kitchen, as well as the springs with high quality, curative mineral waterare especially interesting. Furthermore, there are also the walks along the mountain Shar Planina. Amongst the people Leshok becomes known as the cultural site with healingcharacteristics, consequently becoming more and more popular amongst all religious communities. The monastery complex Leshok, the enormous value and the picturesque beauty of this monastery, located in the natural setting of Shar Planina, represent a significant tourist motive for the development of stationery forms: cultural – monastic and religiously manifested tourism, as well as transitory tourism.



Figure 4: Aladza (Colorful) Mosque – Tetovo.

There are many cultural-historical monuments from the era of the Ottoman Empire in these areas, with the most significant ones situated around Tetovo and its immediate surroundings. Aladza, also known as the Colorful Mosque is one of the most valuable monuments from Tetovo's cultural heritage.It is located on the right bank of the river Pena and it is assumed to be built in the 15th century. A family from Tetovo, Paloshi, has kept a legend according to which the mosque was built by Hurshide Anuma around the year 1566 (Stefkovskietal., 1980, 69).Judging by its architecture the mosque Aladza belongs to a group of smaller mosques built from weak materials, covered in tiles. Its facade gives the appearance of a particulary interesting and appealing construction, which leaves a strong impression. The dazzling arabesques in multiple colors are strongly expressed by the blue flowers and the flickering sun form a very specific décor, which represents a rarity in these areas. The mosque is also decorated on the inside, more precisely on its inside walls. The mosque is used by the religious community, and it is also opened to visitors and it is a part of all the tourist tours in Macedonia. All of the previously mentioned constructions, along with the bazaar, with a few houses of beys and inns form a uniqueurban unity, which given a small amount of funding required for the implementation of the urban development plan are bound to become a great tourist attraction.



Figure 5: Arabati Baba Teke – Tetovo.

The most preserved monument with Islamic architecture in this region is the *tekija* Sersem Ali Baba, or better known as the Arabati Baba Teke, which represents the most significant object of its kind in the Republic of Macedonia and it is one of the most significant ones on the Balkan Peninsula. It was built somewhere between end of the 18th and 19th century, during the ruling of Redzep Pasha and Abdurahman Pasha, and its founder was Sersem Ali, the creators of one of the largest and richest *tekijas* with real estates and movable assets in the European part of the Ottoman Empire.It belonged to the Dervish cult – Bekteshi, and the entire complex consists of constructions which serve for the religious rituals performed by the Dervish people. The Bektesh people have a specific religious service, beside the typical Muslim prayer they have a prayer accompanied by rhythmic singing and ritual games, more precisely a highest

level of prayer during which they are completely cut off from reality, going into a mystical trans, releasing the spirit from the body, surrendering to God Allah. These kinds of rituals are extremely appealing and a matter of great interest. Some of them are closed for the public, but a large number could be included in tourist tours. The Baba showed great understanding for the idea of organizing tourist visits to the complex, moreover they see it as a great honor for people to learn about their way of living and their believes.

Around the entire architectural complex there are high walls made of stone with four gates, which gives at the appearance of a fortress. On the left side of the main entrance there is the *mihman evi* (representing home), with a number of nice rooms where the Baba receives his guests, and on the rights side there is the *humbar evi* (a place where they keep the food). In the central part inside there is the *shadrvan* (a fountain) which served as a place for holidays during the summer. It is characterized with a unique beauty, since in the most part it is made out of nicely decorated wooden construction, as beautifully made carvings can be found on the ceiling and the gates of the fountain. On its right side there are two smaller and one bigger drinking water fountains. Unlike the other drinking fountains the Big fountain does not serve for *adbest* (spiritual and corporal cleansing before the prayer), but for drinking and on it there is writing in Ottoman.[9]

Above the fountain there is a *meidan* (a Bekteshpraying mantis), a room constructed for religious rituals. The *median* is actually a square room covered in a dome richly ornamented with floral patterns. Opposite the *meidan* are situated the rooms dervish and the *tulbe* where the graves of 11 dervishesand Fatima Hanum are placed, while the graves of Sersem Ali Baba abd Redzep pasha are in separate rooms.In this part there are also the *dervish han* and a kitchen with dining room. On the left side of the fountain there are, facilities called *atevi* where the horses are kept. The northern part of the yard is separated with a stone wall and a residential building. In the rest of the wall there used to be several auxiliary facilities from which nowadays only remains are left behind.[14] The entire yard has the appearance of a park, filled with green surfaces and flowers, fruits, very old tree stems and several water fountains. The stone, wood and the ceramic roof are so nicely put together that they appear as a completely homogeneous unity, to which any kind of supplement would be redundant.[10]

The entire yard has the appearance of a park, filled with green surfaces and flowers, fruits, very old tree stems and several water fountains. The stone, wood and the ceramic roof are so nicely put together that they appear as a completely homogeneous unity, to which any kind of supplement would be redundant. The entire complex is filled with past and present attractions, so in order for foreigners to fully comprehend this way of life a guide from the shrine is required, and visitor can also take part in some of the rituals. This is a typical issue of a promotional and organizational character, which requires the collaboration of the Baktesh people and it needs to be taken into account for the development plan for the tourism in the Shara-Polog region.

[9]The calligraphic inscription says "*Drink water in the name of Husein, nephew of Mohamed a.c. who for the Islam became shehid in Karbala from Jezit, son of Muavija*".

[10]According to the sayings of Dervish Abu Mutalib Bekjiri from Arabati Baba Teke, Tetovo.

1.2. Ethno-social motifs

The Polog-Shara region is characterized with ethno-social heterogeneity, meaning that there are inhabitants from several nationalities who, throughout their existence, have created various, unique and esthetically high quality ethnic motifs. The rising quantity of the ethological collective groups highlights the number of ethno-social elements, while the diversity is evident, (Marinovski, 1993, 67) and this heritage certainly needs to be valorized and incorporated into the tourist offer. The central role in the tourist offer belongs to the ethno-social elements: traditional folk costumes, folk dances and songs, folk music and instruments, traditional customs, traditional national art, the different types of houses with their interiors and exteriors etc.

The traditional folk costumes from this region are characterized with a rich folk combination of colors. In addition to being very beautiful, vivid and unique, they are also very diverse. This diversity is not only a product of the various ethnological collective groups inhabiting the area, but also of the separated spatial units in the region. The most prominent units are Dolni Polog and Gorni Polog, as well as the towns Tetovo and Gostivar where the traditional folk customs are characterized with their own recognizable traits.

Macedonian folk costumes are very vivid, consequently attracting a lot of attention and they represent a significant motif for the tourist valorization. The female costumes are uniquely beautiful. The female traditional folk costume from Dolni Polog is remarkable by its white, long and heavy shirt, with rich black embroidery and small eyes made of silver threadon the bottom. It is covered in two aprons – a big *zavjachka* and on top of it is the small one. There are different types of shirts, depending on the age and the purpose of the person wearing it (*proveska, letoshniche, na dve zice, crnogorka, srmenka, vejche, olca, letoshnicjka etc*.). The one thing they all have in common is the rear part, embroidered with red thread (*omet*). The top of the female costume, over the vest, is a combination of different types of clothing, depending on the season. The upper garments, made out of white *klashna*or cloth, differentiated by age – *sache, s'ltevere, klashenik, kjurdija, gornik, fur hat (shubara)*– have certain purpose for a particular age group and different seasons, and each of them has its esthetical characteristics. All the previously mentioned garments are sleeveless and white.Fringed silk headscarves are worn, as well as *skutina* or *skutinche*, over whose front two pieces of cloth are stitched – *zavjachka* (Kraguljet.al., 1987, 244). The jewelry consist of silver and gold: a necklace, *s'riche*, beads, *shikchinja, rings, sokaj and plitance.* A *fes* with *podgushnik* is worn on the head, called *sokajche*, and it is covered with a white cloth, because of which these folk costumes are known as *belokrpi* (white cloths). The bride folk costume is even more interesting, since it is complemented by numerous ornaments: *sramualka, a waist belt with s'skavici, additional sleeves, different kinds of jewelry* which contribute to the unique esthetical effect of the costume.



Figure 6: Female folk costume from Dolni Polog and Gorni Polog.

The female costume from Gorni Polog stands out as being unique due to its distinctive cut and the peculiar type of ornamentation. The shirt is symmetrical open and loose, and the embroidery is more lively and rich. A red scarf is used for covering the face.There are two *skutini* from which the front *opregach* is longer, embroidered and fringed with various colors, while the back *opregach* is shorter, black and pleaded. The bride garment is the most beautiful, characterized with the loosest shirt, with *30 wedges, r'kai – a short shirt with sleeves embroidered with white sterling silver and colorful kadelka – spinning woolen threads, klaeshnik – upper garment from white klashna*, richly and exquisitely ornamented with various motifs out of white sterling silver. They used to wrap themselves in a type of a waist belt with bouquets, with long and colorful fringes and round coins like decorations made out of sterling silver, which when put around the waist, fall on the hips, giving this folk costume a special decorative and distinctive appearance. As part of the brides' big garment there was plenty of jewelry: *necklaces, nametushki, tepelaci, earrings.*

The male traditional folk costume is simpler in comparison to the female one, having the same traits in the entire region. The men wear white *klashnens* garments with black cords on the edges embroidered in three rows, with similar types of elements, but being given different names by different people. The grooms used to wear white *chakshires* with 5 rows of cords. The shirt is white, made out of homemade cloth over which a sleeveless vest is worn. In winter they used to wear *mintan* over the vest, which closed on the right front side. There was no collar around the neck. It was decorated with cords on all the edges (Kraguljetal.,1987., 39-40). All of the upper front garment is short, right to the waist, with short sleeves and a big collar and a

woven belts in the waist area. The whole appearance is complemented with a hat made out of sheepskin called *kachula*, and knitted woolen socks on the feet, called *kalchini* and footwear (*opinci*) with white woolen cords called *opachnici*.

Quite intriguing are also the Albanian and Turkish folk costumes, which have certain differences. However, they are still very similar as a consequence of the long period of time these nations have spent living together and their common religion views. The female costumes consist of a *shirt, dimii (shalvare), belt, vest, mintan, dzube, anterija, fes and slippers*, all of which is decorated with gold and silver coins, mostly *lira*. The male costume consists of *chakshiri and mintan*, ornamented with silk cords, over the *mintan* a sleeveless vest is worn, made out of cotton or silk, a red *fes*or a *black hat* (typical for the Turks) and a *round white hat - keche* (typical for the Albanians), the socks out of wool or cotton. Both of the folk costumes are nicely ornamented under direct oriental influence.

This is only a fragment of the variety of costumes in this region, whose diversity is characterized with unique beauty and particularity giving it a significant tourist potential. The best tourist attraction would be for the traditional folk costumes along with the rest of the objects made by the national genius to be exhibited at a house with a traditional national rural or urbanarchitecture, which would provide for an authentic setting of a past time which always inspires interest amongst people for building and enriching their knowledge.

Traditional national dances (ora) and songs are an inseparable fragment of the folk culture of a nation, having been created over a long period of time. From the Macedonian dances the most famous ones are *Lesnoto* (the easy one) and *Teshkoto* (the hard one). Particularly interesting is Teshkoto, requiring a lot of concentration and dedication, especially at the beginning when the dance is very calm and discreet, transforming into a livelier and rhythmically playful dance later on. The most famous from the Turkish dances is called *Chochek*. The dance is danced by a larger group of people gathered in a circle, however the real attraction being the man and the woman dancing in the centre of the circle. All the traditional folk dances have a quite interesting and rich choreography which certainly needs to be preserved in its original form, excluding any kind of stylization or incorporation of modern elements.

Most of the dances are accompanied by various traditional songs representing the true image of the spiritual heritage and the culture of the nations. There are separate songs and melodies which capture the way of life during those times.

From the big variety of songs the one which is sung most frequently is Prepuknala Shar Planina (Bursting Shar Planina), which judging by its popularity can certainly be called the anthem of Shar Planina. From the rest of the songs the best known are: Kanga nga e sharit, Pofalila se Shar (Shar planina has praised itself), Planina and Raspeana Shar Planina (Singing Shar Planina).

All of the previously mentioned dances and songs are accompanied by national folk music which is played on large number instruments. Amongst the oldest musical instruments are: *rostrum, goch and bagpipes, tambura, dalbuka and the flute: shupelka (duduk) and kaval*. The *kaval* is the most prevalent between the shepherds, due to the pleasantness its sound inspires in the sheep herds and its size. The melody called Egzij, played on one of the flutes (*kaval*) is quite interesting and it is represents an image of the most significant economic sector in Shar Planina's past – sheep breeding. Certainly these events could also include the traditional folk songs, the Macedonian instruments, as well as the various shepherd games of which the most famous ones are *loja breza, kculja, bulje guti, koshkapa, svinjushka etc.*

The various festivities and other types of ritual practice attract tourist attention. In the Shara – Polog region the festivities related to the birth of a newborn, weddings and shepherd customs are quite an appealing and interesting motif which emphasizes the authentic folk elements. They differentiate in ethnic collective groups, as well as in different areas of the region. Same as the previously mentioned, these ethno – socialmanifestations are in danger of extinction and they need to be presented, a good example being the Galichnik or Pijanec Maleshevo wedding. Due to the different ethno collective groups the so-called Sharplanina wedding would unite all nations, thus creating a bigger event. This was not only of an economical, but also of a cultural importance, which shed light to and prioritize the forgotten folk culture.

Macedonian traditional art represents a very significant tourist motif. Weaving, knitting, embroidering, painting, woodcarving, blacksmithing etc are part of the creativity of certain members of the ethnic units where all the ethnic groups have their own characteristics. Knitting, embroidering and painting were mostly expressed on textiles, especially on the traditional folk costumes. Wood was also quite popular, which can still be seen in old houses, decorated mostly on the ceilings, entrance doors and maiden crates for *cheiz*. The blacksmithing was highly developed in Tetovo and Gostivar. Nowadays objects made out of filigree and silver meet very high demands, particularly brooches, and in some workshops old guns and rifles decorated with various geometrical and vegetative elements can still be found.

The types of houses and their exteriors and exteriors leave a strong impression amongst tourists. The houses in this region are mostly built from stone, and the roof is on four sides. In the mountain parts most of the houses are covered with stone slabs, whereas in the lower valley part they are covered with roof tiles. The houses have multiple floors, with a rectangle base.

The ground floor served as a barn where oxen, tools or other objects were kept. The ground and the first floor were connected with a wooden stairway leading to an overreaching balcony called *chardak* from where the roomscouldbe accessed. In the towns the houses with chardak are prevalent and they mostly resemble one another, regardless of their owner's nationalities. From an architectural aspect the following elements can be identified: a ground floor (for the family to stay during the winter), first floor (with a chardak open from three sides and facilities for guest reception), *divan hane* (a chardak being used for rest during the summer). Macedonian houses are unique by their floors reaching over the streets, with a nice view and a lot of windows. The Turkish houses are known by chardaks which spread on the ground and the first floor, surrounded by lush gardens filled with fruits and flowers. They were surrounded with high walls which jealously protected this environment from curious glances.

Nowadays, rural and urban settlements gradually lose their authentic look. Most of the old houses are being demolished, replaced by new, modern and more functional types of houses which unfortunately disturb the old architecture. The villages on Shar Planina are more preserved and they represent a good foundation to tourism development. The village Gorno Jelovce is completely abandoned and it could be transformed into a tourist center, following the example of several villages in the mountain parts of the Alps, where already existing object would be renovated and put into use. The ethnic values as well as the climate and the clean mountain air make this possible.The archaeological site Budimir Tomb is located near the village which is a medieval necropolis with tombs built of stone slabs.

The previously mentioned, as well as other elements of the ethno – social complex of motifs and their diversity in this region, represent a tourist factor with a complex actionsince they express the material and spiritual culture of certain nations.

1.3. Event motifs

Events are part of the anthropogenic tourist motifs which represent many different ways and forms of public speaking and presenting occurrences and processes with interesting themes which can attract visitors on their own or have a complementary role in the tourist offer of this region. These events include cultural – artistic, sports, economic or scientific achievements, as well as religious. Through them ancient customs and the culture of a nation or a population are shown in a quite vivid, dynamic and most importantly authentic way (Panov, 1998, 78). We will onlymention the cultural artistic events as a tourist motif through the already existing ones. However we will also draw attention to certain possibilities for new attractive events which will enrich the tourist visit to the region, and in near future could become a motive for tourist movement.



Figure 7: Folk festival Shara pee – "Sharri Këndon" (Shara sings).

One of the most important events in the region is the folk festival „*Shara pee – Sharri Këndon"* (Shara sings), which is organized traditionally. It is held in the Cultural center in Tetovo and it exhibits Albanian folklore starting from the rituals and everyday customs, to the unique traditional dances and songs. The programme lasts for three days and unfortunately does not have a major tourist feature because of improper propaganda and the limiting attention dedicated simply to the authenticity and the cultural dimension of the festival.

In recent years "*Summer of Tetovo culture*" is becoming more important, were more days to present music, culture and literature and it is international. The "*Tetovo Folk Festival*" is heldin the Cultural Center which is with a competitive character. Last years the festival is held in the yard of the Leshok monastery where they perform best Macedonian folk singers.

One of the most significant cultural events is the festival TEHO (*Tetovski horski odzivi*) which is held traditionally every year. The international Film Festival Tetovo - TIFF was heldfor many years, as well as many other events in the region, but with inadequate presentation and local importance.

A large number of these events has a religious character and is of local importance. The biggest religious gatherings are held in the monastery Leshok during the biggest Christian holidays, and since it is equipped with rooms for accommodation it is significant for the tourism. It is most crowded on the holiday *Golema Bogorodica*(Dormition of the Mother of god) which is celebrated annually on the 28thof August.Apart from all the other gatherings, we will also mention the celebration of *St. Naum Ohridski Chudotvorec* in the church on Popova Shapka carrying his name. On the two most important Islam holidays Ramazan Bajram and Kurban Bajram significant economical effects have been noted, due to the fact that during these days many of the emigrants come back home in order to celebrate the holiday with their close relatives.

2. RURAL TOURISM AS A LEADER OF THE TOURIST TRADE WITH AN ANTHROPOGENIC HARBINGER

The Shara – Polog region has favorable conditions for the development of rural tourism. The tourist attraction of the rural areas is based on various recourses.It is the case of a specific combination of natural and anthropogenic features, differing in quality from the urban environments. The recreational and rehabilitation benefits, with a unique landscape, in combination with the ethno – cultural dimension (cultural, eventful, religious), separates the village from other types of tourism.

The number of tourists who choose to substitute the luxurious hotels in popular resorts with mountain meadows and forest paths, clear streams and healthy homemade food rises every day. In that regard the ruraltourism in the Shara – Polog region, primarily Shar Planina has an unlimited potential. Those are the favorable conditions created by the untouched nature, pleasant climate, fresh air unpolluted rivers and glacial lakes, rich flora and fauna. Staying here in nature offers opportunities for walks, picnics, recreation, sports, hunting and fishing, mountain climbing, gathering forest fruits and herbal plants and other recreational – entertaining activities in the nature.A possibility can be presented for the tourists who are interested to join every day activities in the villages, which enriches the stereotypical tourist offer.

Concerning the state of rural tourism in Macedonia and its region, it is far behind the European. This type of tourist offer in a natural rural ambient in this country is still at its beginning when theoretically it is still under development through many projects for making villages more active in tourist purposes. The initialization of the regional rural tourism depends on multiple factors, but this process is very hard, demands high investments and should be very well organized and planned.

The Shara-polog region is one of the rare regions in our country, where the urban population and the rural population increased at the same time, but with smaller intensity which is a positive circumstance for the tourist development. Shar Planina is on an altitude of more than 1000m with a population of 12.847. At this altitude the surface of Shar Planina is 795 km^2, where the average population density in last census is only 16.16 persons per m^2. This population size allows development of different forms of tourism, especially the rural tourism where it is necessary to have certain number of people included directly in the tourist activities, but the number of people who are included into the activities, however there would be a significantly larger number of people who would be influence and therefore stimulated by the tourism. The accommodation consists of rural houses, where there is a well preserved part of an old rural architecture. This especially refers to the house on multiple floors or the house with chardak

mentioned in the part of anthropogenic motifs. Tourists eat homemade food, mostly local specialties, which they often get to prepare themselves, as well as an opportunity to participate in various other everyday activities typical for the village, and the mountain is always here to offer a wide range of unique recreational activities. The different ethnical structure has enabled the creation of heritage of anthropogenic motifs which are an important part of the tourist offer in our region.

Table 1: Total population and average population density on Shar Mountain (over 1.000 m. above sea level).

Year	1948	1953	1961	1971	1981	1994	2002
Population	12.071	12.889	12.382	11.241	12.777	11.789	12.847
Pop. per km²	15.18	16.21	15.57	14.14	16.07	14.83	16.16

The variety of the tourist offer must be finalized with a quick adaptation of the villages for tourist reception, which mostly means adaptation of the old village houses. From this aspect, and taking in consideration the small investments for the construction of proper accommodation and the protection of the nature, it should be emphasized that most of the villages that have far more apartments than households have perfect conditions for tourist development and can serve as a base for accommodation and an opportunity for all nature lover to conquer Shar Planina. It is extremely important that a large number of them have managed to preserve their unique and authentic architecture, and part of the unique impression these villages leave is due to the enviroment surrounding them and their location.



Figure 8: Sharra Mountains with vilages: Shipkovica, Lavce and Selce.

The positivie effects of rural tourism do not require much elaboration. It influences the intensive development of the agricultural production, villages start to develop tertiary activities which results with the loss of monofunctionality of villagehouseholds. It also improves the current economic state of the local population through the possiility to offer different types of services to tourists. Improvement of the infrastructural equipment, improvment of the educational

structure as a result of the demand of high quality capable stuff for tourist activities, preserving and protection of the folklore and cultural heritage.

In contacts with the local population nothing has changedduring two different periods. In 2004 and in 2015 as well the population still does not have any experience in offering tourist services and they still have no idea that it is possible to have more people living in their region in some part of the year. This represents a limiting factor. There were times when I felt that it was the beginnings of this kind of tourism in Macedonia, but today I think the local government, tourist agencies and NGOs, especially in this region have undertaken nothing for the rural and other alternative forms of tourism.

Educating the rural households to induldge in this activity is one of the most important tasks for the rural tourist development. Public institutions, tourist and nongovernmental organizations should be given an important role in this. It would be a good idea to have specially organized lectures where all the hosts will beintroduced to the expected conditions concerning the accommodation, the higiene, the quality of food, guest tretment and all other necessery reqierment for pleasant stay of tourists in rural households. Furthermore, making a register of interested households and their involvement in the tourist offer. According to the market, the basic role of the organizer will be takenby travel agencies, and the promotion will be in cooperation with the local government.

Despite educating the local population the access to rural setlements as potential tourist sites demands special attention to be paid to the receptive capacities. Precondition for this is the exsistence of proper traffic and communal infrastructure. We find the opinion of most of the authors from this region regarding the strict depedence between the accomodating capacity and the adaptation to be incorrect. On the contrary,what is necessary is the construction of facilities with purpose, which should express the spirit of the original construction in an architectual sense, more precisely this would be a quanitatively and qualitatively contrlled construction which would in no way endanger, but improve the landspace features of the rural area.

It is necessary to initiate more cultural, folk, religious and other events in this region, and to organize picnics, mountain tours and expeditions. The construction of memorial rooms or an ethno museum representing the particular place or the wider region. It is also important to enable the population to offer services (renting horses, donkeys, bikes, hang-glider etc.). It is important to construct viewpoints above the villages and to maintain them, to organize the local community to cook healthy food and local specialties. All this is only a fragment of the unlimited opportunities and different potential accommodation and vacation programs for tourists in a rural environment.

3. PERSPECTIVES FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM AND ITS PLANNING

The concept for future development in the Shara-Polog region is based upon realistic evaluation of the tourism supply and demand, as well as the tourism flows in our surroundings. The Shara-Polog region has a high quality potential for tourism development, which has so far not been sufficiently exploited. This is especially true for both, the natural and the anthropogenic motifs. Regardless of all the objective, as well as the big number of subjective reasonsall necessary measures should be taken for creating appropriate conditions and becoming competitive on the tourism market.

Based on the research and observations that we have made so far, we believe that the development of tourism in the Shara-Polog region depends on the steps which need to be taken by the state and the local government.

It is necessary to make a comprehensive and integrated valorization of the natural, spatial, commercial, communications and other conditions. Unfortunately, such adequate evaluation has not been madefor years. Analyzing trends in tourism demand clearly differentiates three basic points of any tourist development project that considers long-term success, and they are as follows:- a protected environment of high ecological quality;

- top level health careand

-a tourist experience filled with a variety of contents, which provides an opportunity for a pleasant vacation, filled with different physical and spiritual activities, fun and amusement, with interesting experiences.

The global trends of tourism development dictate the contents of top priority activities of/for every tourist destination. Those are the following:

-Permanent protection, as well as valorization of the tourist resource potential of the Shara-Polog region, sustainable in the long run;

-Preparation and implementation of thorough development documents, long-term development concepts and strategies, with clear specifications as to the place and role of tourism in the total economic development in the region;

-Listing of all the available areas and spatial layouts of the necessary touristic contents in the main Urbanization plan, in accordance with the development concept;

-Realization of basic development norms, such as accessibility, infrastructural equipment and utility standards;

-Intensification of the collaboration between the relevant government institutions (local and state), and between the private sector with the general public, in order to strengthen the institutions of the tourist destination;

-Continual process of education of the local population about taking part in tourism;

-Encouragement and involvement of the noncommercial hosting capacities/objects (houses, holiday homes);

-Encouragement of all local production activities and production of eco-food for the tourists;

-Activation of the remaining locations on Shar Planina which have tourist potential, especially the passive rural regions;

-Defining the relationship and the interdependence between other tourist zones and regions.

In the concept presented above, we believe that despite the relatively big number of hosting capacities, there is a lack of accompanying objects, meant to enrich the guest's stay and satisfy the needs of the diverse tourist clients. By implementing most of these points, the Shara-Polog region, as well as the entire country, will be on the road to creating a new treasure of unique tourist experiences, which will achieve long-term tourism effects.

CONCLUSION

The Shara-Polog region is a complex tourist location of high quality, rich with exceptional natural and anthropogenic factors. The main touristic entity of this region is the picturesque and superior by number of natural beauties - Shar Planina, followed by the valley with its cities and

villages. The favorable geographic positioning as well as the excellent traffic connections are the foremost factors which allow an intensive growth and development of tourism, and account for the great number of visits of this region. Beginning with the natural beauties which complement each other, building a rich authentic and inexhaustible touristic motive. The anthropogenic motifs/factors, especially the multiethnicity,have led to the development of several different cultures in this region, each having its distinct traditional architecture, national folk costumes, customs (traditions), interesting religious buildings and monuments, and the way they have influenced each other. This type of ethno-social motifs are very interesting, and attribute to the fulfillment of the cultural, educational and other heterogeneous needs of the modern tourist, which need to be actualized, organized and offered. The current degree of tourist valorization of the high quality natural and anthropogenic motifs of this region is very low. The current infrastructure does not satisfy the needs for an adequate presentation and the touristic potential of this highly complexregion. The creation of an infrastructure needed for tourism development needs to be based upon a complex spatial panning and regulation of the entire mountain. The spatial planning on a regional, as well as on a national level, has to include much more attention on the wide array of specifics that this diverse region and its numerous population. The amelioration of the economical and the socio-political condition of the country and the particular areas will have a big impact on the development and achievement of better results in tourism, because if the condition of the vital/basic social values is on a poor level, and without peace and collaboration between the peoples, there is no perspective/future for tourism development. The Shara-Polog region has a high quality potential for the development of tourism, which up to now, has not been much exploited. With the aforementioned pointers for the potential of tourism development, as well as other good ideas for activities, we can count on a speedy development, which is and will continue to be of a high importance for the Shara-Polog region.

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АНТРОПОГЕНИ ПОТЕНЦИЈАЛИ КАКО ФАКТОР ЗА РАЗВОЈ НА ТУРИЗМОТ ВО ШАРСКО - ПОЛОШКИОТ РЕГИОН

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ИЗВОД

Шарско – полошкиот регион претставува квалитетен комплексен и самостоен туристички регион богат со изразити природни и антропогени мотиви. Носител на туризмот во регионот е извонредната Шар Планина, а потоа котлината со градските и селските населби. Поволната туристичко – географска положба и сообраќајната поврзаност се првиот предуслов кој што овозможува интензивен развој на туризмот и масовна посетеност на регионот. Природните мотиви се надополнуваат едни со други и претставуваат содржаен, автентичен и неисцрпен туристички мотив. Антропогените мотиви, пред се мултиетничкиот колоритет, овозможил на подрачјето да се развијат различни култури, со различна народна архитектура, народни носии, обичаи, религии и религиски објекти и меѓусебните влијанија. Ваквите мотиви секако се интересна содржина и можат да се вклучат во понудата и задоволување на културните, образовните и другите хетерогени потреби на современиот турист. Сегашниот степен на туристичката валоризација на природните и антропогените мотиви во овој регион е многу низок. Распоредот на инфраструктурата не ги задоволува потребите за адекватно презентирање и туристичка понуда на овој комплексен регион. Изградбата на инфраструктурата потребна за развојот на туризмот треба да се базира на комплексно просторно планирање и уредување на целата планина.

Стопанската и општествено – политичката состојба во земјава и опкружувањето во изминатиот период до денес имаат големо влијание врз туристичкиот промет. Без стабилна состојба на виталните општествени вредности, без мир, соработка и разбирање меѓу народите нема развој на туризмот. Непобитен е фактот дека Шарско – полошкиот регион располага со еден широк комплекс на квалитетни потенцијали за развој на туризмот. Со веќе изнесените смерници во делот за перспективите за развој, но и други добро осмислени активности можеме да сметаме на забрзан развој на туризмот.