

EXAMPLES OF EUROPEAN TOURISM DESTINATIONS AND IMPORTANCE OF AGRICULTURAL LANDSCAPES

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Abstract: *Landscapes contain and create value for tourism destinations worldwide and have wide influences on the perception of a destination. The landscapes with its specific geographical and climatic features are perceived as pull factors (attraction factors) to tourists. In European countries agricultural landscapes are highly valued both by local population and tourists attracting them to the destination. Agricultural production, especially vineyards, olives, orchards and animals in the landscape create an original experience of the destination. On the case of several European countries with and without maritime surroundings, we have chosen attractive tourism destinations with highly attractive landscapes.*

The paper shows examples of Slovakia, Czech Republic as non-maritime countries opposite to Mediterranean countries as Croatia and Slovenia.

The main aim of this paper was to assess the importance of agricultural landscapes in the context of tourism. Along with the gastronomic offer and cultural heritage, the agricultural landscapes create high values for tourism destinations. Tourists perceive these features as pull factors and grade highly their value. Furthermore, these features are even more highly valued and cherished by the local population.

Key words: *Croatia, landscape, tourists, local population.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism in its most general terms stands for travel outside the usual residential place, initiated or motivated by some intrinsically or extrinsically motivation factors (so called push and pull factors) which attract tourists to a certain destination. In the 80ties of the last century a theory of push and pull factors was presented by [1] and [2], [3]. According to [2] and [3] push motives were escape, relaxation, prestige, exploration and evaluation of self, regression, enhancement of kinship relationships and facilitation of social interaction. The pull factors were novelty and education.

Landscapes are a consequence of different geographical, historical and climate influence in a certain region. For example in France landscapes with castles, small villages and vineyards are highly valued and attractive to tourists [4]. The geomorphological and climate situations enhance the quality of landscapes and possibilities of agricultural production resulting in improvements of the economic and social position and status of its inhabitants [5]. The aesthetics and diversity of landscapes is also a heritage of humans influence during centuries of agricultural production and different agricultural practices and techniques.

For example in hilly regions the most common and traditional form of productive agricultural land are terraces, with small plots of land [6], [7]. In some cases terraces are newly formed in modern times for specific needs in agricultural production for example new vineyards planted

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[8]. On the other side in more plane areas the possibilities for agriculture are larger and plots are more monotonous, larger but the sights might be more monotonous.

2. METHODOLOGY

In this paper qualitative and quantitative analysis were used. The qualitative analysis was used for comparison of case studies and examples of field research on agricultural landscapes in different countries (maritime and non-maritime).

Description of landscape features was similar to the methodology of [6] which categorize the landscape as very steep (not suitable for agriculture), steep (suitable for grasslands), moderate (limited plough land alternating with grassland), gentle (plough land with limits), plane (plough land with or without limits) and planes with possible water erosion.

Further in the description of terraced landscapes we have used the methodology of [7] which classifies traditional four types of agricultural landscapes with terraces; traditional agricultural land with dispersed settlements; traditional agricultural land with vineyards; traditional agricultural land with arable land, grassland and orchards; traditional agricultural land with arable land and grassland.

The qualitative analysis was executed through a field survey on a sample of respondents from the local (Croatian) citizens (170) and tourists visiting the Istria County (120). Respondents graded the features of rural areas of Istria County on a Likert scale (1 to 5, 5 as highest grade).

3. RESEARCH RESULTS

The landscapes in European countries follow a track of similarity depending on the geographical features, for example on steep and moderate steep land where agricultural production is possible terraces are a common way of land use.

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2. «Improving technology of viticulture-wine production on family farms», financed by the Ministry of agriculture and forestry, Croatia, 1998-2001.
3. «A strategy for rural development in Croatia» (2004-2010) financed by the Ministry of agriculture and forestry, Croatia, (Draft)
4. «Watermelon production technologies in the Mediterranean» (IV-27-10/03), financed by the Ministry of agriculture and forestry, Croatia, 2004-2005.
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6. «Tempus project, AHAED» financed by EU DG culture and education, 2005-2008. JEP 19004-2004.
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8. Valorization of economic resources for sustainable development in carst regions 2008-2010.
9. Competitiveness and comparative development of Istra and Kolubara region. 2008-2010.

Picture 1. Map of researched areas in Europe



Source: [8]

In the case of Slovakia we are showing a pictures part of Hrinovske Lazi that has extensive agricultural production and potential for farm tourism in scattered villages.

Picture 2. Example of Slovakia (Hrinovske Lazi) – moderately steep landscape with grasslands and limited plough land



Source: [9]

Picture 3. Example of Slovakia (Hrinovske Lazi) agricultural production

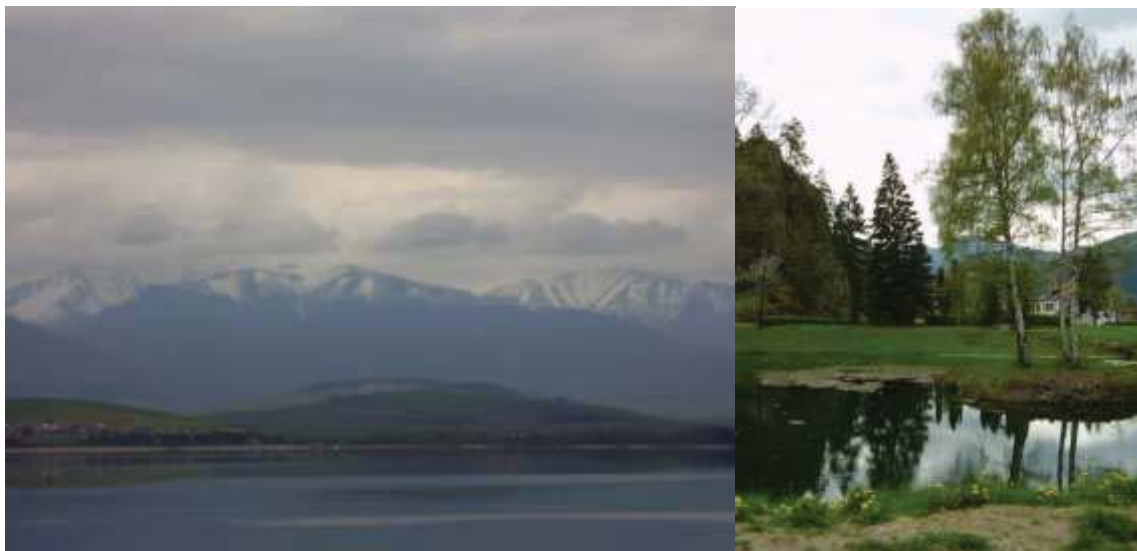


Source: [9]

Further we are showing the case of north eastern Slovakia, the region of Poprad which is a traditional tourism area for winter sports whereas the mountainous area and planes at the bottom of the mountains attract tourists to visit the area. New health oriented activities (like in wellness facilities) are enhancing the variety of choice.

The part of Slovakia on the north-eastern part surrounding the area of mountains of Visoke Tatry is known as a tourist region with facilities for skiing and wellness tourism. Walking and cycling roads are available and a wide range of landscapes from very steep mountainous landscape to planes.

Picture 4. and 5. Example of Slovakia (region Poprad) – steep landscape (Visoke Tatry) not suitable for agricultural production and gentle landscape in the bottom of the mountains



Source: authors' research

In the region of Moravska in the Czech Republic the landscape is moderately steep up to planes very suitable for agricultural production. The region is wide known for its vineyards and several wine roads are existing in the area. Along the lakes cycling roads exist, while the quality of sights is enhanced by historical cities with castles making it an attractive region for tourism.

Picture 6. Example of Czech Republic, Moravska County- moderately steep and gentle landscape with agricultural production - vineyards



Source: authors' research

Slovenia as a country has very steep up to moderately steep landscapes, with agricultural production of majority vineyards, orchards and grassland. In the Northern part close to the Austrian border the hills are moderately steep and suitable for grassland and in some parts for vineyards (see picture 7 and 8.). Small villages and scattered individual houses are placed in the landscape, which add visual value to the space.

Picture 7. Slovenia (north east – Zgornja Kungota)



Source: authors' research

Picture 8. Slovenia (north east – Zgornja Kungota)



Source: authors' research

3.1. The case of Istria County landscape (Croatia)

In Croatia we give an example of Istria County because its diversity in geographical, pedology and ecological features and rich cultural heritage. From very steep mountainous areas of Učka through steep and moderately steep hills around towns of Motovun, Oprtalj, Buzet, Buje and downwards toward the flat landscapes in the coastal areas.

Picture 9. Example of Croatia (Istria County, Učka Mountain) – very steep and steep landscape (not suitable for agricultural production)



Source: [11]

Istria County is in Croatia the leading tourist area with highest number of incoming tourists (around 4 million in 2016.), most nights spent in tourists facilities (23 million nights) and most of the tourists generating income (in the GDP). The landscapes are crossed with walking and cycling paths, wine and olive oil roads. The sights are full of scattered and small villages and towns and family farms with agricultural production and farm and rural tourism facilities. The number of agricultural holdings in 2016 was 5.37 with 45.607 hectares of utilized agricultural land (with 8.850 ha permanent crops, 527 ha orchards and 6.651 ha cereals) [12].

Picture 10. Example of Croatia (Istria County, Valley of Mirna) - gentle landscape / traditional agricultural landscape with arable land



Source: [13]

Most areas are suitable for agricultural production whereas in more hilly areas terraces are common with forests, pastures, mowed meadows, olives and vineyards, while on flat areas grains, vegetable production and viticulture plots are common.

Picture 11. Example of Croatia (Istria County, Oprtalj) – moderately steep landscape with terraces with agricultural production – vineyards / traditional agricultural land with settlement



Source [14]

Picture 12 and 13. Example of Croatia (Istria County, Ženodraga by Višnjan) Gentle landscape with agricultural production – vineyards / traditional agricultural land with vineyards and Example of Croatia (Istria County, Bale) – Gentle landscape with agricultural production - olives / traditional agricultural land with orchards



Source: authors' research

3.2. Field survey results

On a sample of tourists, visitors in Istria and a sample of local population, we have tried to measure which features of the rural area of Istria are important.

Tourists, visitors, were mostly men (2/3), between 35 and 54 years of higher education (faculty) were mostly self-employed or employees in companies, and every fifth was in the position of manager or director of the company, and the highest income (over 4 thousand euros per month). Most of them were from Italy and Germany, and these are traditionally the most common visitors of Istria as a tourist destination. Minority was from Austria, the Netherlands and England.

The local population was represented mostly by women in their thirties, highly educated and with a middle or lower level of income.

Between the two groups there were clear differences in gender whereas local population was dominated by women, while in the sample of tourists men predominate.

The local population had a similar age structure as tourists, but also a significantly higher level of education compared to tourists.

Tourists were more often employed by self-employed and managers, while the local population was more often employed by the company, as a result of which tourists had a significantly higher level of income.

Table 1. Socio demography profile of respondents'

Socio demography Indicators		Local Population (%)	Tourists (%)
Gender	Male	33.9 %	63 %
	Female	66.1 %	37 %
Age	Up to 24	12.9 %	12 %
	25-34	24.2 %	17 %
	35-44	27.4 %	36 %
	45-54	24.2 %	20 %
	55+	11.3 %	15 %
Education	Primary	-	1 %
	Secondary	11.3 %	39 %
	Faculty / higher	88.7 %	60 %
Land of origin	Croatia	100 %	25 %
	Italy	-	16 %
	Germany	-	16 %
	Slovenia	-	6 %
	Belgium	-	4 %
	Netherlands	-	4 %
	Russia	-	4 %
	Other	-	18 %

Source: authors' research

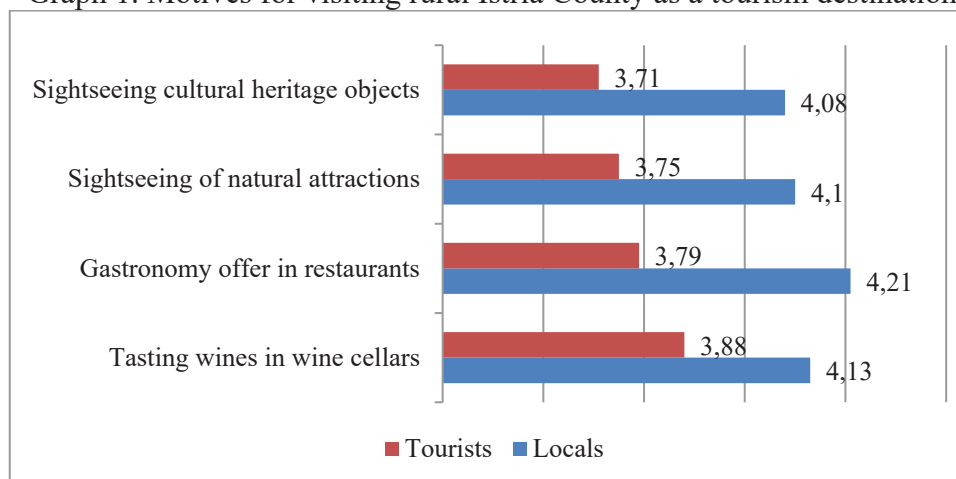
Table 2. Economic profile of respondents'

Economic indicators		Local Population (%)	Tourists (%)
Monthly Income	Up to 1.000 €	60.5 %	26 %
	1001-2000 €	29.5 %	29 %
	2001-3000 €	-	19 %
	3001-4000 €	-	6 %
	Over 4000 €	-	20 %
Employment	Entrepreneur / own business /selfemployed	12.9 %	31 %
	Employee	62.9 %	32 %
	Manager	6.5 %	20 %
	Student / pupil	12.9 %	10 %
	Retired	1.6 %	4 %
	Other	3.2 %	3 %

Source: authors' research

Main motive for visiting rural parts of Istria County was related to the gastronomy offers of the destination. Slightly less important were sightseeing of natural and cultural attractions and objects like nature parks, small cities and villages, old castles, ruined medieval castles and old ruined cities. Results showed an interesting point in research, because the local population valued much higher all the components of the rural areas grading with an average 4 (on the scale 1 to 5) in comparison to tourists.

Graph 1. Motives for visiting rural Istria County as a tourism destination



Source: authors' data processing

4. CONCLUSIONS

Romanticism and aesthetic pleasure of the landscapes and natural scenery present a value of an area a quality of living for local population and an attractive feature for incoming tourists (a push factor) for an area. The landscapes in chosen research areas have shown similarities in terms of geographical features and similar agricultural production (grassland, vineyards and orchards).

Istria County as a chosen area of Croatia offers a variety of natural landscapes in all categories of land: very steep (not suitable for agriculture), steep (suitable for grasslands), moderate (limited plough land alternating with grassland), gentle (plough land with limits), plane (plough land with or without limits) and planes with possible water erosion.

The territory of Istria County contains also all four types of agricultural landscapes with terraces; traditional agricultural land with dispersed settlements; traditional agricultural land with vineyards; traditional agricultural land with arable land, grassland and orchards and traditional agricultural land with arable land and grassland.

Through the field survey we came to conclusion that sightseeing of natural attraction in Istria is highly valued with average grade 3.75 and similar importance for cultural heritage sights 3.71. The interesting point of our survey was that local population valued more highly all features of rural areas (scoring 4.1 for natural attractions and 4.08 for cultural heritage) in comparison to tourist opinions.

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