

Landscape Diversity of the National Park Paklenica as Paradigm of Tourism Development

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Paklenica National Park was established in 1949. The Park territory forms a part of Dinaric karst, one of the most impressive karst units in the world, marked by distinctive geological, geomorphological and hydrological features. The tourist offer of the National Park is extraordinarily interesting to foreign visitors, the number of whom is, according to the research included in this final paper, 77%. The types of tourism such as adventure ecotourism, wildlife tourism and nature based tourism are well implemented in the Park. For that reason, this paper dealt with the visitors'/tourists' perceptions on valorisation of the landscape particularities as the paradigms of the development of specific types of tourism.

Landscape particularities of the Park

The Park abounds in numerous types of karst reliefs such as karrens, sinkholes, cliffs, groves, rocky areas, karst wells and icicles, and in speleological structures it contains caves and pits. The Park area dominates in carbonate rocks limestones and dolomites. The majority of the Park territory, including its peaks, is built from the Jurassic carbonate sediments, while the lower southwest slopes are made of Cretaceous and Paleogene carbonate deposits. Clastic sediments pride themselves in impermeability and thus enable the existence of several permanent or occasional torrent-flows and numerous permanent springs. The most powerful spring of Velika Paklenica is CrnoVrloat 780 m.a.s.l., followed by Kontinovovrilo at 870 m.a.s.l., Jukićavrilo at 600 m.a.s.l. and Ivine vodice at an altitude of around 1200 m. In the Park area there are several types of soils such as brown soil on limestone, red clay soil and rockery. In hydrological terms, the stream Velika Paklenica stands out because, during the rain season, it flows into the sea in its full length. Another significant watercourse is situated in the Mala Paklenica canyon.

The aim of the research and the methodology

The aim of this research is to explore the extent to which landscape diversity influences the Park's attendance and the development of the specific types of tourism in the Park's area. In order to test the influence of landscape diversity as the paradigm of the tourism development, it is necessary to analyse all the Paklenica NP landscape factors and explore the visitors' views and the way in which the landscape diversity of the Park influences the development of different forms of tourism. In doing so, a survey was used as a primary form of the empirical research of this paper. A survey research has been conducted by using a structured survey questionnaire on

a sample of 359 respondents (N=359).Based on the structured questionnaire which included set of closed and openended questions, face-to-face interview was used as the method of data collection. The survey consists of a total of 31 questions. The fist 11 questions are close-ended and relate to socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. The second part of the survey questionnaire concerns the park's landscape diversity. It consists of 20 claims followed by a 7-item Likert scale according to which the respondents express their level of agreement or disagreement with a certainclaim. A 7-item scale was used to obtain more possibility of the response differentiation.

Survey on the landscape diversity of the Park

The survey contains 20 claims regarding the Park's landscape diversity, and the answers range from 1 (Strongly agree) to 7 (Strongly disagree). The answers are expressed in percentages (Table 1.). In this survey, 28% of respondents strongly agree, 31% agree, and 23% somewhat agree with the claim that the Park boasts with the exceptional landscape diversity. The majority of respondents strongly agree with the claim that the landscape diversity of the Park represents the foundation of the biological variety and should be protected, preserved and improved, which pinpoints to a high level of visitors' knowledge concerning the ecological problems. Around one-fifth of the survey respondents absolutely agree regarding the following questions: *"Geomorphology is the main motive of my visit to the park (according to some authors Velebitmountain has about 8,000 geomorphological phenomena). It is necessary to further develop and promote the landscape tours. It is necessary to bring the tourists closer to specific habitats for individual plant or animal species."* Considering these questions, one must assume that the problem should be confronted in a simpler, more convenient and comprehensive way. Furthermore, it is interesting that only a few of the respondents strongly agree with perceiving the Adventure Tourism and the Nature Based Tourism as the future of the Park. A rather small percentage of the respondents consider speleological structures of the Park represent an extremely valuable hydrological asset. Taking into consideration that the park, as a part of the Velebit mountain, abounds in water springs (over 4000 different springs) and geomorphological phenomena (around 8000), that and these claims confirm the hypothesis: *"The landscape diversity of Paklenica National Park has not been adequately validated as a paradigm of the alternative tourism development."* The tasks that impose themselves include a systematic enhancement of the promotion of these natural assets as a prerequisite for the development of those specific forms of tourism that are based on these assets/attractions.



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