

## MOTIVES FOR VISITING TRADITIONAL CULTURAL EVENTS OF ETHNIC GROUPS IN VOJVODINA

**Ivana Blešić**  
**Tatjana Pivac**  
**Sanja Božić**

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### **Abstract**

**Purpose** – The Autonomous Province of Vojvodina is a distinctly multi-ethnic region. According to the 2011 census, Vojvodina is home to 26 nations and national or ethnic groups, which makes it a highly multi-ethnic environment. Each ethnic group nurtures a specific culture and traditions that are recognized as having significant potential for development, particularly development of cultural tourism in Vojvodina.

**Methodology** – This paper will present the results of a questionnaire survey conducted in order to determine the basic motives for visiting the most popular events of Hungarians, Slovaks, Croats and Ruthenians that take place on the territory of Vojvodina. The questionnaire is modified and adapted based on the model used in the study of motives for visiting music festivals (Blešić et al., 2013; 2014a). Analysis of the obtained will use descriptive statistical analysis, t-test for independent samples and analysis of variance ANOVA.

**Findings** – The authors have conducted a pilot study (N=53) on the basis of which the reliability of the used questionnaire is confirmed. Also, there are set two initial hypotheses: H1 – The people of Vojvodina are insufficiently familiar with the events of ethnic groups; H2 – In relation to the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents, there is a statistically significant difference in the motives for visiting events and the attitudes towards events.

**Contribution** – This research will show how the events of the ethnic groups are recognized by the local population of Vojvodina and which are the basic motives of their visit.

**Keywords** ethnic groups, cultural events, tourism, Vojvodina

### **INTRODUCTION**

Event tourism is one of the most important forms of tourism trends. It encompasses a unique experience that visitors gain through their desire to socialize, learn about a culture, directly participate, and be entertained. Events are also becoming an increasingly important factor when deciding on a travel destination that attracts a large number of visitors throughout the year. Demands of a modern tourist are changing in the direction of seeking a wider selection of events or manifestations that add to the appeal of a destination regardless of the season. Festivals have a positive effect on income, through sale of souvenirs, foods and beverages and, therefore, have an important economic role at a local level. Furthermore, festivals also greatly contribute to the cultural development of a local community (Raj and Vignali, 2010; Blešić et al., 2014a; Pivac et al., 2011). Events attract a large number of visitors and are an important tool for creating a tourism image within different communities (Getz, 1997). From the aspect of tourism, Getz (Getz, 1997) speaks of events as “attractions, image-creators, animators of static attractions, and catalysts of future development”. They can

extend the tourist season or create a new one. In that regard, the limited resources available for the organization of an event must be used so as to yield maximum (economic and socio-cultural) benefits for the community.

Vojvodina celebrates numerous traditional local events and festivals, of which some have already transcended their popularity on the domestic market and became recognizable in the region and beyond. Events in Vojvodina, primarily in the role of keepers of intangible cultural heritage, hold significant tourism potential. However, many of them are local in character and their tourism significance is low or negligible. Most cultural events in Vojvodina are open type, meaning no ticket is required. Hospitality industry and commerce are potentially significant sources of income for local communities and organizers of events. This especially applies to food fairs, which are an additional source of income for local food producers (wine, cheese, meat products, etc.) (Cvetičanin et al., 2016, 34).

This research will show how the events of the ethnic groups are recognized by the local population of Vojvodina (employees in regional and local tourist organizations and cultural institutions in Vojvodina, students and teaching staff of the Department of Geography, Tourism, and Hotel Management in Novi Sad) and which are the basic motives of their visit. In addition, visitors profile will be segmented which can contribute to the organizers and other stakeholders for designing promotional activities and programs.

## 1. LITERATURE REVIEW

According to the review of the motivation literature, a number of factors that influence travel decisions were identified. 'Escape from everyday environment', 'novelty', 'cultural experience', 'social interaction', and 'prestige' motivation factors are commonly cited in the literature (Crompton and McKay, 1997; Formica and Uysal, 1998; Lee, 2000; Kim et al., 2001; Lee et al., 2004). The more important motivational factors for travelling to foreign countries were 'cultural experience' and 'novelty seeking' (Kim and Prideaux, 2005). Some cross-cultural studies have indicated that travellers with different cultural backgrounds or nationalities have different motivations for travelling (Kozak, 2002; Seddighi et al., 2001; Yuan and McDonald, 1990). Based on the analysis of 29 motivational items using travellers from four countries (United Kingdom, Japan, France, West Germany), Yuan and McDonald (1990) found five major push factors: 'escape', 'novelty', 'prestige', 'enhancement of kinship relationships', and 'relaxation/ hobbies'. The study also observed that motivational factors varied according to nationality.

Tourist motivations are characteristics of individuals that influence the choice of destinations, and the effects of motivational influences of this nature on an individual have also been labelled as push factors. Push factors are more related to internal or emotional aspects, such as the desire for escape, rest and relaxation, adventure, or social interaction. Pull factors are linked to external, situational, or cognitive aspects, of which, attributes of the chosen destination, leisure infrastructure and cultural or natural

features are examples. Nevertheless, these destination attributes may reinforce push motivations (Yoon and Uysal, 2005).

Motivations of visitors may be expected to vary greatly from event to event (Scott, 1996; Rachael and Douglas, 2001). However, as Schneider and Backman (1996) and Lee et al. (2004) suggested that visitors who are participating in various festivals are likely to share similar motives in attending festivals and special events even if they come from different cultural backgrounds although to different degree. As a result, it is meaningful to clarify whether the motivations of tourists attending festivals are homogeneous and whether they vary according to different types of festivals, in particular in a novel context (Chang, 2006).

According to Lee et al. (2004) events and festivals having strong cultural components are likely to increase in the participation numbers. Identification of festival or event visitors' needs is a prerequisite for effectively developing elements of festivals. Furthermore, effective marketing is unfeasible without identifying and understanding what motivates people to travel or attend an event (Taylor and Shanka, 2008; Fodness, 1994).

Lee and Lee (2001) concluded that segmenting festival markets through motivations enables event managers to identify the strengths and opportunities of each market and helps guarantee visitors' satisfaction. In most situations where festival visitors are heterogeneous, segmenting particular visitor groups and understanding their characteristics based on festival motivations would be a powerful marketing tool, that would enable event managers to enhance and promote event features preferred and valued by target segments (Uysal et al., 1993; Formica and Uysal, 1998).

## **2. TOURIST EVENTS OF ETHNIC GROUPS IN VOJVODINA**

The Autonomous Province of Vojvodina covers 24.4% of the territory of the Republic of Serbia, i.e. 21,588 km<sup>2</sup>. According to the last census from 2011, the AP Vojvodina has a population of 1,931,809, or 21.56% of the total population of the Republic of Serbia. Serbs are the majority population (66.76%), followed by Hungarians (13%), Slovaks (2.60%), Croats (2.43%), Roma (2.19%), Romanians (1.32%), Montenegrins (1.15%), Bunjevci (0.85%), Ruthenians (0.72%), Yugoslavs (0.63%), Macedonians (0.54%), and other smaller ethnic groups, including Ukrainians, Muslims, Germans, Albanians, Slovenians, Bulgarians and others (Republički zavod za statistiku 2011; Vlada Republike Srbije 2004).

Vojvodina is a typical multicultural territory, and is also the most developed and ethnically most heterogeneous part of Serbia. Ethnic composition of the population is extremely varied. Numerous ethnicities, religions, languages and cultures existing on that territory make Vojvodina "the Balkans in miniature" (Raduški, 2010; Blešić et al., 2014a).

**Slovaks:** They constitute absolute majority in the municipality of Bački Petrovac (66.41%) and are the largest minority ethnic group in Kovačica (41.07%) (Pivac et al., 2014, 32). The number of Slovaks in Vojvodina has been in decline (from 63,545 in 1991 to 56,637 in 2002). From the total of 466 settlements in Vojvodina, Slovaks constitute the majority in 12 of them (Janošik, Selenča, Pivnice, Bački Petrovac, Gložan, Lug, Slankamenački Vinogradi, Kovačica, Padina, Kisač, Lalić, and Ljuba) (Ivkov, 2005; Bubalo-Živković, 2017, 39). The Slovak community in Serbia consider festivals as celebratory events and centres of social events. For Vojvodina Slovaks, the year starts with *Meeting in the field of Pivnica*, which gathers performers of authentic Slovak songs from all corners of Vojvodina, dressed in most beautiful folk costumes. This festival is visited by numerous admirers of authentic Slovak songs. In the spring, performers of classical music genres have the chance to present themselves at *The Spring Trill (Prolećne note)* manifestation in Bački Petrovac. The largest music and folklore festival *Dance, Dance... (Tancuj, tancuj...)* is held in the amphitheatre in Gložane or in some other Slovak village. The school summer break begins with *The Golden Gate (Zlatá brána)* festival, where children perform folk choreographies, children's games, songs, etc. The first weekend of August is reserved for the *Slovak Folk Festival*, which is not only reserved for music and folklore, but is also the place for presenting the highest quality content created during the year. Autumn is the time to reap the fruits of creativity, particularly from the domain of music production in popular genres. More precisely, a festival of popular music, *The Golden Key (Zlatni ključ)* is held every October in Selenča (Zavod za kulturu vojvođanskih Slovaka 2017).

**Hungarians:** According to the 2011 censuses there were 251,136 Hungarians, respectively, most of them living in Vojvodina. They inhabit all 45 Vojvodina municipalities, and constitute absolute majority in six of them: Ada, Bačka Topola, Kanjiža, Mali Idoš, Senta, and Čoka, and relative majority in two (Bečej and Subotica) (Blešić et al., 2014b; Pivac et al., 2014, 32). The above municipalities have 60.06% of the total number of Hungarians in Vojvodina. Festivals *Durindó* (music festival) and *Gyöngyösbokréta* (folklore festival) are the most numerous and prestigious folklore events of Hungarian youth and senior orchestras of folk music and folklore groups. Other important events include the Festival of dramatic arts of Vojvodina Hungarians, High school art competition in Hungarian, etc. Novelists writing in the Hungarian language in Serbia nurture annual events, of which the most prominent is *Senteleki's Days*, which is traditionally held in Sivac, *Ferenc Feher Memorial*, *Karolj Sirmaj Memorial* (Manić, 2011, 360; Pivac, 2017, 106).

**Croats:** According to the 2011 census, the national community of Croats in Vojvodina counted 47,033 people. Croats are the most numerous in northern and western Bačka, and in the municipalities of Sonta, Apatin, Bereg, and Monoštor. They also live in Hrtkovci and Nikinci in Srem (Bubalo-Živković, 2017, 27). One of the most important cultural institutions is *Matica hrvatska*, which was founded in 1998, with registered seat in Subotica. *Matica hrvatska* brings together members of Croatian community with the aim of preserving their tradition and cultural identity on the territory of Vojvodina. The cultural life of Croats is linked to well-known events in Vojvodina, such as *Dužijanica* (harvest festival), *Grožđebal* (wine festival) and *Veliko prelo*. The event *Šokačko veče* is organized by Šokadija from Sonta, a cultural and educational

association of Croats. The Festival of Croatian amateur theatre has been held since 1996 in Mirgeš (Centar za interkulturnu komunikaciju 2016).

**Ruthenians:** Today in the Republic of Serbia and its northern province of Vojvodina, the Ruthenians represent a small ethnic community whose tradition and cultural characteristics are highly distinctive. There are less than 14,000 Ruthenians, who comprise less than one percent in total population (Bubalo-Živković, 2017, 39). Ruthenians have a long tradition of nurturing their national culture and art. Cultural and art associations exist in all the places where Ruthenians live. Ruski Krstur holds a well-known international *Festival of Ruthenian Culture “Red Rose”*. This festival encompasses exhibits, review of vocal and instrumental groups, review of new compositions in folk and popular music, children’s music and folklore event, meetings of folklore ensembles that nurture Ruthenian and Ukrainian cultures. The most famous theatre event is the seven-day *Drama Memorial “Petar Riznić Dađa”*, which is held every April in Ruski Krstur. *Kucura Harvest*, a event of authentic folklore, songs, and customs of Vojvodina Ruthenians and Ukrainians is held every August in Kucura. *Cultural Manifestation Kosteljnik’s Autumn* is held in the places where Ruthenians live. Ruthenian associations organize traditional cultural events of wider significance. All events of the Ruthenians living in Serbia are consolidated and coordinated by the National Council of the Ruthenian Ethnic Minority (Zavod za kulturu vojvođanskih Rusina 2013; Pokrajinski sekretarijat za kulturu, javno informisanje i odnose s verskim zajednicama 2008).

Today, the aforementioned festivals are considered as having significance for all ethnic minorities. Their organization and realization are under the purview of various citizens’ associations, cultural and art associations, or cultural centres. Given their diversity and the diversity of their target groups and locations where they take place, the festivals of ethnic minorities are celebratory events and centres of social events. Vojvodina has a large number of tourism events of cultural character that are based on the ethnic element, folklore and tradition of ethnic groups.

### 3. METHODOLOGY AND RESEARCH DESCRIPTION

The questionnaire used in the study is comprised of three parts. The first part includes six socio-demographic questions (gender, age, ethnic affiliation, occupation, monthly income, and education). The first part contains one open-type question – *Name the events of ethnic minorities in Vojvodina that you know of*. The second part of the questionnaire pertains to respondents’ attitudes regarding events of ethnic minorities. The questionnaire was constructed based on the model used to study the attitudes of visitors of cultural events in Sombor and Apatin municipalities (Blešić et al., 2014a, 19). It includes 21 questions that are grouped in five factors: *socio-economic influence, organization, entertainment, promotion, and services*. Respondents’ attitudes were measured using the five-point Likert scale (1 – strongly disagree, 2 – disagree, 3 – neither agree nor disagree, 4 – agree, 5 – strongly agree). The third part of the questionnaire pertains to the motives for visiting the events dedicated to the culture and customs of ethnic minorities. The questionnaire was taken from the study of motives for visiting the events of the Slovak ethnic minority (Blešić, 2017, 123), which was

modified based on the model used in the study of motives for visiting music festivals (Blešić et al., 2013; Blešić et al., 2014a). The study included 11 questions. The motives were measured using the five-point Likert scale (1 – not at all important, 2 – not important, 3 – undecided, 4 – important, 5 – very important). The reliability of the questionnaire was evaluated with a pilot study in June 2016 (N=53). After the reliability was confirmed by implementing Cronbach`s alpha, the survey was carried out electronically in the period 15 July 2016-25 February 2017. Questionnaires were emailed to employees in regional and local tourist organizations in Vojvodina and to cultural institutions. Students and teaching staff of the Department of Geography, Tourism, and Hotel Management in Novi Sad were also surveyed. The sample included 596 respondents.

The collected data were fed into the u SPSS database and all subsequent analyses were carried out using the Statistical Package for Social Science, version 20.0.

The paper proposed two initial hypotheses: H1 – The people of Vojvodina are insufficiently familiar with the events of ethnic groups; H2 – In relation to the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents, there is a statistically significant difference in the motives for visiting events and the attitudes towards events.

#### 4. RESULTS

Female respondents are represented in the sample with 52% and male respondents with 48%. More than half of the respondents (51.5%) belong to the 31-40 age group. Respondents over the age of 50 are represented with only 8.9%. In relation to the national structure, the majority of respondents were Serbians (61.1%), then Hungarians (23.3%), Slovaks (8.4%), Croatians (4.7%), Ruthenians (2.2%), and Romanians (0.2%). Of all the respondents, 71.8% are employed, and 43% have monthly income of 201-400 €. Regarding the educational structure, the most numerous were respondents with completed secondary school (36.7%).

Table 1: Demographic information of respondents (N = 596)

	<i>n</i>	%
<b>Gender</b>		
male	286	48,0
female	310	52,0
<b>Age</b>		
21-30	139	23,3
31-40	307	51,5
41-50	97	16,3
51-60	13	2,2
61 +	40	6,7

	<i>n</i>	%
<b>Nacionality</b>		
Serbians	364	61,1
Hungarians	139	23,3
Slovaks	50	8,4
Croatians	28	4,7
Ruthenians	13	2,2
Romanians	2	0,3
<b>Occupation</b>		
student	102	17,1
employed	428	71,8
retired	28	4,7
unemployed	38	6,4
<b>Average income</b>		
≤ 200 €	55	9,2
201-400 €	256	43,0
401-600 €	113	19,0
601-1000 €	87	14,6
1001 € +	38	6,4
no income	47	7,9
<b>Education</b>		
secondary education	219	36,7
college	38	6,4
higher education	163	27,3
master's degree	127	21,3
doctor's degree	49	8,2

Based on the results presented in Table 2, we conclude that *socio-economic influence* is the most important factor for organizing an event. Respondents evaluated as most significant the contribution that events have on the sense of community and facilitating the exchange of ideas among ethnic groups in a community. The *promotion* factor is next in line. It is defined as the importance that events have on the promotion of exhibitors and local community. The questions pertaining to *entertainment*, *services* and *organization* were assessed by respondents as least significant. The reliability of the questionnaire that was used for measurement was evaluated with Cronbach's alfa, with was 0.7 or above for both factors, which indicates that the established model is reliable (Nunnally, 1978).

The open-type question *Name the events of ethnic minorities in Vojvodina that you know of*, was answered by 185 (31%) of respondents. The answers included: Cultural Days of Vojvodina Hungarians, Festivals “Durindo” and “Đendeš Bokret”, Days of Hungarian Cuisine Skorenovac (events of the Hungarian ethnic group), Slovak Folk Festival – Bački Petrovac, Dance, Dance, The Golden Gate – Kisač (events of the Slovak ethnic group), Dužijanča in Subotica, Grožđebal in Sonta (events of the Croatian ethnic group) and Red Rose in Ruski Krstur (event of the Ruthenian ethnic group). The obtained results confirmed the first hypothesis.

Table 2: Descriptive statistics (by factors and questions) and analysis of the reliability of the questionnaire

Factors and questions	Mean	Standard deviation	Cronbach's $\alpha$
<b>F1 – Socio-economic influence</b>	4.4690	0.3883	0.78
Event should be held at a suitable location with sufficient parking space.	4.4765	0.6669	
Events allow for exchange of ideas among ethnic groups in the community.	4.5084	0.6416	
Events contribute to the sense of community.	4.6644	0.5982	
Events increase tourist numbers.	4.6057	0.5475	
Events increase cooperation between people.	4.5336	0.7175	
Events provide additional income to local residents.	4.4228	0.6183	
Events hold positive cultural influence.	4.5705	0.6136	
Events help to improve the quality of life in the community.	3.9698	0.9987	
<b>F2 – Organization</b>	4.1233	0.6047	0.86
Event should contain accompanying programmes (education, contests, and workshops).	4.4933	0.5783	
Event should be organized by the local self-government (of the city/town that holds it).	4.1326	0.7891	
Event should be organized by expert associations.	4.2047	0.8210	
Event should be organized by a group of citizens oriented towards making a profit.	3.6628	0.9431	
<b>F3 – Entertainment</b>	3.4592	0.5356	0.72
Event should be entertaining.	4.0621	0.9210	
Performance of popular entertainers is necessary.	2.3003	0.7068	
Event s have rich and meaningful programme.	4.0151	0.7591	
<b>F4 – Promotion</b>	4.3887	0.6358	0.81
Event should be promoted in neighbouring countries.	4.2383	0.8756	
Brochures promoting the exhibitors should be given away during the event .	4.1443	1.0608	
Events hold great significance for the promotion of local community.	4.7836	0.4122	
<b>F5 – Services</b>	3.7466	0.6023	0.70
Safety of visitors during the event is high.	3.9614	0.8262	
The prices of products and services are reasonable (foods, beverages, souvenirs).	3.6980	0.7283	
The quality of products and services is exceptional (foods, beverages, souvenirs).	3.5805	0.7855	

The t-test of independent samples was implemented with the aim of comparing the arithmetic means of answers of male and female respondents (Table 3). The analysis of the obtained data leads to a conclusion that statistically significant differences in respondents' answers depending on the gender are present in four factors: *socio-economic influence*, *entertainment*, *promotion*, and *services*. This difference may be due to women being more prone to purchase handicrafts and home-made foods.

Table 3: The results of T-test analysis according to gender

Factors	$\bar{X}$		t - test
	Male (n=286)	Female (n=310)	
F1	4,4331	4,5020	-2,171*
F2	4,1538	4,0952	1,184
F3	3,2902	3,6151	-7,757**
F4	4,1608	4,5989	-8,773**
F5	3,6305	3,8538	-4,638**

\*p<0,05; \*\*p<0,01

High values in both these factors indicate that the significant motives for a visit are equally related to gaining new knowledge of the culture, cuisine, and customs of ethnic groups, as well as socializing, entertainment and enjoyment in the festive ambience and programme. The strongest motive in the first factor is the need to experience something new and escape everyday life. In the second factor, the motives that stand out include participation in various contests (cooking contests and sporting contests), purchasing authentic handicrafts, and enjoyment in local foods and drinks.

Table 4: Main motives for visiting a event – descriptive statistical analysis

Factors and questions	Mean	Standard deviation	Cronbach's $\alpha$
<b>F1 – Entertainment and socializing</b>	<b>4.1876</b>	<b>.49108</b>	<b>0.72</b>
meeting people who are enjoying the festive ambience	3.8255	.85784	
enjoying the mood and the crowds	3.8674	1.35877	
enjoying the music programme	4.1074	.86299	
escape from everyday life	4.5050	.61218	
experiencing something new	4.5789	.63682	
establishing contact with local residents	4.2416	.91597	
<b>F2 – Learning and perception of the festival</b>	<b>4.1993</b>	<b>.48590</b>	<b>0.76</b>
gaining new knowledge about products by interacting with exhibitors	3.7131	.73786	
participating in various contests	4.4161	.80837	
enjoying local foods and drinks	4.3305	.72400	
getting to know the culture and customs of ethnic minorities	4.1896	.87695	
purchasing authentic handicrafts and foods (which represent souvenirs of that town, area, region) at reasonable prices.	4.3473	.91220	

Analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to examine whether there is a statistically significant link between dependent variables (selected factors) and independent variables (socio-demographic characteristics of respondents – age, occupation, education level, income, and ethnicity). The results of the one-way analysis of variance in both factors indicate that at significance level  $p < 0.01$  there are statistically significant differences in relation to respondents' education level (Table 5). The result of this difference may be found in the assumption that the respondents with the highest degree of education (doctoral studies) are able to come across numerous cultural events during their professional development and are, therefore, aware of the local significance of these events and are less inclined to visit them.

ANOVA and t-test results lead to a conclusion that, in relation to socio-demographic characteristics of respondents (gender and education level), there is a statistically significant difference in respondents' attitudes towards events and motives for visiting them, thus partially confirming the second hypothesis.

Table 5: **The results of ANOVA according to education**

Factors	Mean					F	LSD post hoc test
	group 1 secondary education	group 2 college	group 3 higher education	group 4 master's degree	group 5 doctor's degree		
<b>F1</b>	4,2169	4,2412	4,1677	4,2428	3,9388	4,000*	5>1,2,3,4
<b>F2</b>	4,2612	4,1853	4,2454	4,1701	3,9184	6,017*	5>1,2,3,4

\* $p < 0.01$

## CONCLUSION

In tourism today, the interest of tourists in exploring different cultures has become dominant. Considering global tourism trends, tourism professionals are increasingly aware of how significant the development of cultural tourism is, particularly in the view of rich cultural offer of ethnic minorities living on the territory of Vojvodina.

The cultural heritage of the peoples of Vojvodina holds a singular and irreplaceable cultural value. For this reason, the care in preserving and promoting cultural heritage is not only an obligation of competent institutions and business entities in the tourism industry, but is also a moral role of the entire society which, by recognizing the importance of cultural heritage, creates the conditions for the preservation thereof.

The results of the study have shown that the people of Vojvodina are insufficiently aware of the events of ethnic groups – only a third of respondents specified some of the many events.

This and other similar studies give the general public insight into the culture, customs, and traditions of ethnic minorities. This is also a good way to point out to the possibilities of creating new tourist destinations with authentic offer.

Today, our society has limited knowledge of the history and culture of Vojvodina, let alone other ethnic groups. This is mostly due to gaps in education or lack of direct experience in this domain. Familiarizing young people and adults with customs, folklore and traditional folk songs of ethnic groups should help to preserve identity, foster culture, strengthen social solidarity, respect differences, and improve ethnic relations in these parts.

Segmenting festival markets and understanding their characteristics based on motivations will be important for successful festival and event managers in the future. In the context of international festivals and events, motivations may not be homogeneous between visitors of different socio-demographic structure, indicating differentiation of their marketing strategies.

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**Ivana Blešić**, PhD, Associate Professor  
University of Novi Sad  
Faculty of Sciences  
Department of Geography, Tourism and Hotel Management  
Trg Dositeja Obradovića 3, 21000 Novi Sad, Serbia  
Phone: +381638842756  
E-mail: [ivana.blesic@gmail.com](mailto:ivana.blesic@gmail.com)

**Tatjana Pivac**, PhD, Associate Professor  
University of Novi Sad  
Faculty of Sciences,  
Department of Geography, Tourism and Hotel Management  
Trg Dositeja Obradovića 3, 21000 Novi Sad, Serbia;  
Phone: +381641759344  
E-mail: [tatjana.pivac@dgt.uns.ac.rs](mailto:tatjana.pivac@dgt.uns.ac.rs)

**Sanja Božić**, PhD, Assistant Professor  
University of Novi Sad  
Faculty of Sciences  
Department of Geography, Tourism and Hotel Management  
Trg Dositeja Obradovića 3, 21000 Novi Sad, Serbia  
Phone: +38163622115  
E-mail: [sanja.bozic.89@gmail.com](mailto:sanja.bozic.89@gmail.com)