

Conditions and valorization of tourism in Shtip, an old town in the Republic of Macedonia

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Abstract: For a scientists is a challenge to explore the beginning and the course of tourism in smaller cities. The emergence of tourism in Shtip is from a recent date. However, through the example of tourism in Shtip, we identify two historical periods: the preturism and the period of tourism. Thus, the first period lasts until the appearance of the first hotel in 1912, and the second from the middle of the twenties of the 20th century. Serious data on the tourism in Shtip are obtained from the end of the 1950's onwards. The analysis is based on primary and secondary data sources. From the analysis we learn that the tourism in Shtip in recent years has been growing with real development perspectives of diverse tourist offer and production.

Keywords: Conditions, Perspectives, Republic of Macedonia, Shtip, Valorization.

1. INTRODUCTION

City of Stip is the largest city in the eastern part of the Republic of Macedonia (RM). The city is located between the heights of the hills of Isar (450 m above sea level), Meri (420 m above sea level) and Cumlac (peak Klisse Bair 591 m above sea level), and extends along the banks of the river Otinja (2 km) and the river Bregalnica (5 km). The city of Shtip is distinguished with: area of the town of 13,5 km², altitude 300 m, altitude of Isar 450 m, length of the city north - south 6 km, width of the city east - west 6 km. The city's outskirts are divided into about 20 urban communities. In the city there is Banja Kezovica 64°C and another warm spring L'chi. The city has 47,796 inhabitants, 4 primary and 5 secondary schools, a university with 15 faculties, etc.

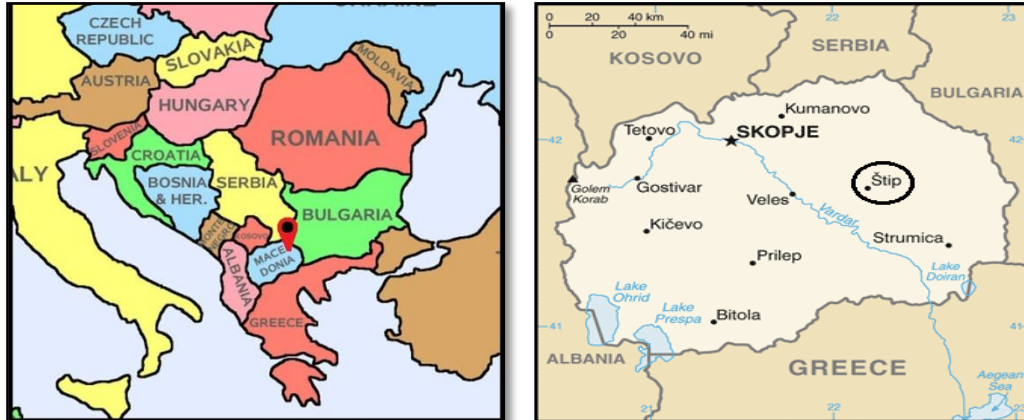


Figure 1. Geographical location of the Republic of Macedonia in Europe

Figure 2. Geographical location of Shtip in the Republic of Macedonia

Shtip is the seat of the Municipality (893 km² with 48 settlements) and the seat of the East Planning Region (3,537 km², 14% of the territory of the RM with over 181,000 inhabitants, 10% of the RM, with a density of 51 inhabitants / km² and in which there are 11 gravitate municipalities, with a total of 217 settlements). (V. N. Dimitrov, D. Joseski and N. Miteva (2017)).

Shtip is a city with a rich history dating from the 1st century, when as a Peony city of Astibo, the town of Shtip was mentioned in written documents from the time of the Roman Emperor Tiberius (14 – 37 year). Since then, the history of the city has been characterized by numerous turbulent historical events. The territory of the town of Shtip, through the years, belonged to the hands of the Bulgarian authorities, then the Byzantine, again the Bulgarian, the Serbian, for a long time through the hands of the Ottoman authorities, again Bulgarian, until 1944, when the city was totally freed by the units of the National Liberation War.

The city of Shtip abounds with numerous natural and anthropogenic values that are of great importance for the development of tourism in it. There are two rivers flowing through the town of Shtip: the river Otinja which flows through the very center of the city, about 2 km long and the larger river Bregalnica, which flows

from the right side of the town of Shtip, about 5 km in length. From the anthropogenic values here are the fortress "Isar" and the archeological site "Bargala" near Shtip, the numerous churches such as the church "St. Nikola", Paraclis "St. Archangel Michael Glavatov", the church "St. Prophet Elijah"/ Husa Medin Pasha Mosque, "Kadin Anna Mosque", the churches "St. Archangel Michael - The Fiction" and "St. John the Baptist" at the hill Isar, the churches "Dormition of the Most Holy Mother of God", "St. Spas", "The Protection of the Most Holy Theotokos", "St. Demetrius", the graben church "St. Trinity" in Novo Selo in Stip, the churches "St. Petka", "St. Mother of God" and "Saint Emperor Constantine and Empress Elena" in the settlement of Balkanska in Shtip, as well as the icon galleries in the churches "Dormition of the Most Holy Mother of God" and "St. Nikola" in Shtip. Among the cultural institutions, monuments and memorials are the Institute and Museum of the city of Shtip, the National Theater in Shtip, the Art Gallery "Bezisten", the Cultural Center "Aco Shopov", the Library "Goce Delchev", the Goce Delchev School - today's rectorate of UGD, the Monument to the Fallen Fighters in the National Liberation War, the Monument to the Jews, the Heritage Monument from 2001, the Clock Tower, the Emir Kucuk Sultan Bridge, the "Sloboda(Freedom)" Square and others. In addition, the city of Shtip is distinguished by the numerous manifestations such as "Pastramaliada", "Makfest" Festival, "Green fest", "RUN MK festival", "Summer Beach Festival" and others, and the traditional Shtip specialties are also recognizable, from which the best known specialty is the Pastramalia of Shtip (specialty of dough and meat in the shape of a boat).

All of them make this city a potential cultural and historical tourist destination. These potentials enable the city to be promoted as such a destination.

2. METHODOLOGY

The research uses a qualitative analysis based on the review and examination of relevant primary (archival documents and published books) and secondary sources (statistical data, historical and contemporary written sources, as well as scientific publications, but also a questionnaire and interview).

The main unit of measure for tourism development are tourist arrivals, but for pre-tourism or prototourism for which we do not have data as the basic measure are the number of inns, caravanserais and hotels that most often received guests - travelers (traders, foreign travelers and others). The data group from the first period covers caravanserais and inns from the 15th century to the present, while for hotels it covers the period from 1912 onwards.

We are investigating the number of tourists from the period when they were registered for Shtip, and that is from 1958 onward, because for the previous period we did not find data for tourists in the city.

In the part of valorization, we are valuing the current natural and anthropogenic motifs that are important for the touristic activity of the city.

3. RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

In general, for the city of Shtip, we group the results in two periods with several subperiods. This is supported by the following arguments. The first period is before- tourist period and covers the sub-period when the Republic of Macedonia and Shtip are under the Ottoman rule, then the sub-period of the Balkan and World War I, and ends with the sub-period when the Republic of Macedonia and Shtip are part of the Vardar Banovina, under the rule of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1919-1941), and in this sub-period we include the Second World War (1941-1944).

For the whole of this period, only for certain years we are able to find data of the number of caravanserais, inns, hotels and taverns, but nowhere is the number of guests or tourists mentioned. That means there is still no beginning of tourism.

After the Second World War, the period of tourism begins. We divide the period of tourism into two sub-periods, the sub-period when the Republic of Macedonia and Shtip are part of the SFR Yugoslavia (1945-1991) and sub-period from 1991 onwards, that is, from the independence of the Republic of Macedonia.

First quantitative data for catering facilities, tourists and overnight stays for Shtip, which means for the tourist period, we meet in 1958. Since then, the tourism in Shtip has seen various cycles of rising and fallings.

We make valorization based on 10 parameters through which the value of the natural and anthropogenic potentials for tourism development in the city of Stip is shown, and that is the tourist position, tourist equipment, infrastructure, traffic connectivity, accessibility, specificity, content, meaning, seasonality and the level of attendance, and they are rated with grades from 1 to 3, from the lowest / bad value to the highest / good value.

3.1. Beginnings and conditions in tourism

The predecessors of the hotels in Macedonia and wider in the Ottoman Empire were caravanserais and inns.

In the travelogue of Hadzi Kalfa Mustafa from around 1650, he noticed that there is one large caravanserai in Shtip (Shtip). The same was confirmed by the traveler Evliya Celebija in 1661, who wrote that in Shtip there was a double decker caravanserais with 50 rooms on the floor and seven inns. There were seven inns in the city, of which the most famous were "Sinan-Begov An", "Kara-Kadini An", "Chumulji Zade An". The other inns were: "KuchukEmirAn", "ElmazovAn", "PirinchAn", "Alikiov An" and "AnlarIlindeAn". (B. Aleksova, and M. Apostolski (1986); A. Matkovski(2002); V.N. Dimitrov andT. Veljanov (2017))

In 1883, 12 inns and one café were built in Shtip and 32 inns were restored. In some of them there were also fountains. From the end of the XIX century until 1912 in Shtip there were a total of 47 inns for the overnight stay of the merchants and marketers who came by merchandise in the city. Among them were: "Pirini an", "Akifaa an", "Mamudov an", "Toshanski an", "Zoev an" (Zavoev), "Azhipecov an", "Dukov an", "Danov an", "Gorica an", "Miladin an", "Teranski an", "Azhi Kostadinov an" and others. (A. Matkovski(2002); V.N. Dimitrov and T.Veljanov (2017))

The first hotel built in Shtip is "Grand Hotel" (owned by the church municipality). It was probably built in the period 1910-1912. Other two hotels were the hotel "Solun (Thessaloniki)" owned by Vane Filipov Paunche and hotel "Balkan" by Gjoshko Postolov. For these two hotels, it is not determined when they appear, but most probably their existence is in the period 1913-1918, ie during the military actions.

In the early thirties in Shtip the first mountaineering association "Bregalnica" was formed. (A. Stojmilov (1993); A. Stojmilov and A.B. Toshevska (2016); N. Panov (1996)).

In the period 1919-1941, the number of hotels in Shtip was as follows: in 1926 4 hotels were registered, in 1936 - 5 hotels, and in 1939 - 8 hotels. Some of the hotels were former inns and with renovation and adaptation they became hotels. They worked with interruptions and often changed their name. From our analysis, in the period 1916-1939 we could identify the names of 12 hotels, which does not mean that each of them worked the entire period. These are: hotel "Kruna", hotel "King - Serbian king or King Alexander", hotel "Avala", "Grand hotel" - later "Novi Beograd", hotel "Solun (Thessaloniki)", hotel "Balkan", "Savin hotel" - later "Bregalnica", "Hotel Prolekje", hotel "Moscow", hotel "Culture", hotel "Jagoda" and hotel "Lepi izgled". In most of these hotels there were restaurants and cafes.

Despite the large number of hotels in Shtip, the then Royal State Statistics, the city does not mention it as a tourist place, so we do not have data of tourists. (GSS, 1929-1940).

Famous cafes and pubs were: "Brioni", "Shumadia", "Prolekje", "Pirinch - han", "Zvezda", "Bregalnica", "Lepi izgled", "Zaharieva", "Zajkova", "Oslobodjenje", "Chocheto", the pub "Bunker", the pub "Solun (Thessaloniki)" and others.

Also, during the Second World War and in about ten years after it, we were unable to find out data of the number of tourists in the city.

After the Second World War the period of tourism begins. The first data for a number of tourists in Shtip is since 1958 when 5577 tourists were registered (of which only 155 were foreign), which had 12434 overnight stays (of which 155 foreign). In that year, there were 15 catering establishments in the city and only 30 beds. This means that most of the hotels were nationalized and stopped working.

With the construction of the hotel "Astibo" in 1974 the conditions of catering and tourism are improving considerably. Thus, in 1982 in Shtip there were 54 business units, 206 beds, 14270 tourists registered (of which 467 foreign), who made 28579 overnight stays (of which 885 foreign).

The highest number of visitors in Shtip was in 1984 with 15967 tourists registered, who had 28057 overnight stays. (See Table 1, Fig. 3 and 4)

In 1996 we registered the lowest data of the number of tourists and overnights, including 2984 tourists and 4275 nights.

The situation with the tourism from 2010 continues to improve significantly, so in 2016 there are 80 catering business units in the city of Shtip, 220 beds, a visit of 6714 tourists (of which 3667 foreign with participation in the total number of 54.6%), who realized 15244 nights (of which 9056 foreign with a share of 59.4%) with an average in days of 2.2 (SSO, 1958, 1982, 1996, 2016).

From Table 1, Fig.3 and 4, it is noticeable that the largest increase in the number of tourists is registered with foreign tourists and overnight stays. Namely, foreign tourists from 155 in 1958 increased to 3667 in 2016, an increase of 3512 tourists, or 2265% or about 23 times. An even higher increase is recorded in overnight stays realized by foreign tourists, from 155 in 1958 to 9056 overnights in 2016, which is an increase of 8901 overnights, 5742% or 57 times.

These figures speak of a rise in tourism. Particularly increased among foreign tourists who usually come for hunting, visiting and participating in cultural and other events organized by the city, and less for visiting the Kezhovica spa. However, the expansion of the number of foreign tourists has been since 2007, ie since the establishment of the University "Goce Delchev" (UGD) with its seat in Shtip. Namely, since then, the number of foreign tourists visiting and staying in Shtip has significantly increased. A large number of foreign

professors, students and other persons come to the University and its faculties for the purpose of staying in or participating in scientific and expert conferences, symposiums and other forms of cooperation organized by UGD.

Tourists visit Shtip because of significant natural and anthropogenic attractive motifs. For tourists it is quite attractive that the city is located on several hills and between two rivers, as well as the bath with hot springs.

The cultural and historical monuments distributed throughout the city, dating from the ancient period onwards, are also attractive. Tourists visit the ancient medieval Fortress "Isar", and they are also visiting the churches that are old from the 14th century onward ("St. Spas", "St. Nicholas", "St. Mary", "St. John the Baptist", "St. Dimitrija"), then the medieval Clock tower, the Bezisten, the mosque, the city museum, the several memorial houses, the national theater, the home of culture and other monuments.

In Shtip throughout the year there are more cultural entertainment ("Makfest") and gastronomic manifestations ("Pastrmalijada"), which are visited by domestic and foreign tourists. All this, confirms that the city has opportunities and perspectives for tourism promotion.

Today, in the city of Stip, there are 11 hotels, motels, villas and apartments: Hotel "Oaza" (renovated in 2001 with 60 beds), Hotel "Izgrev" (built in 1987 with 28 beds), Hotel "Vago Petrol" (1990 with 55 beds), Motel "Vago 2 – Krupishte", Hotel "Garni" (9 beds), Hotel "Kim", Hotel "Radio Cafe Kanal 77" (6 beds), "Urbanista - Boutique hotel", "Short Term Apartments", "Grande NVP" and Villa "Mag Exclusive".

There are 8 tourist agencies, as well as 60 catering facilities in the tourism industry: 25 restaurants ("Longourov", "Mal odmor", "Necko 2", "Aleks", "Necko", "Meana za Merak", "Merak", "Sofra", "University Club", etc.), 7 pizzerias ("Verona", "Alberta", "San Remo", "Roma", etc.), 3 taverns, 11 fast food restaurants, 4 dairy restaurants and a dozen other facilities. (V.N. Dimitrov, D. Joseski and N. Miteva (2017)).

In the city there are also several private student dormitories ("Hilyadnikov", "Danilov" and others), accommodating students, and in the summer period tourists. (V.N. Dimitrov and D. Metodijevski (2017)).

Table 1: Number of tourists and tourist overnights in Shtip, from 1958 to 2016

Years	Number of stores – business units	Number of beds	Number of tourists		Number of nights		Average in days
			Total	Of that:	Total	Of that:	
				Foreign		Foreign	
1958	15	30	5577	155	12434	155	2,2
1968	50	69	6645	287	11492	710	1,7
1982	54	206	14270	467	28579	885	2,0
1983	61	206	13167	400	23287	820	1,7
1984	63	186	15967	1806	28057	4261	1,7
1985	62	186	14261	1314	23565	2223	1,6
1986	69	186	12173	864	23812	2132	1,9
1994	53	202	3748	1607	7037	2781	1,8
1996	32	192	2984	965	4275	1781	1,4
2000	40	192	2349	951	4283	1878	1,8
2005	45	210	4449	1554	8300	3273	1,8
2008	52	210	7399	2541	17425	5673	2,3
2010	63	200	5795	2600	12463	6174	2,1
2011	70	180	6770	3353	14776	8619	2,1
2016	80	220	6714	3667	15244	9056	2,2

Source: Statistical Yearbook of SRM and RM, from 1958 to 2016

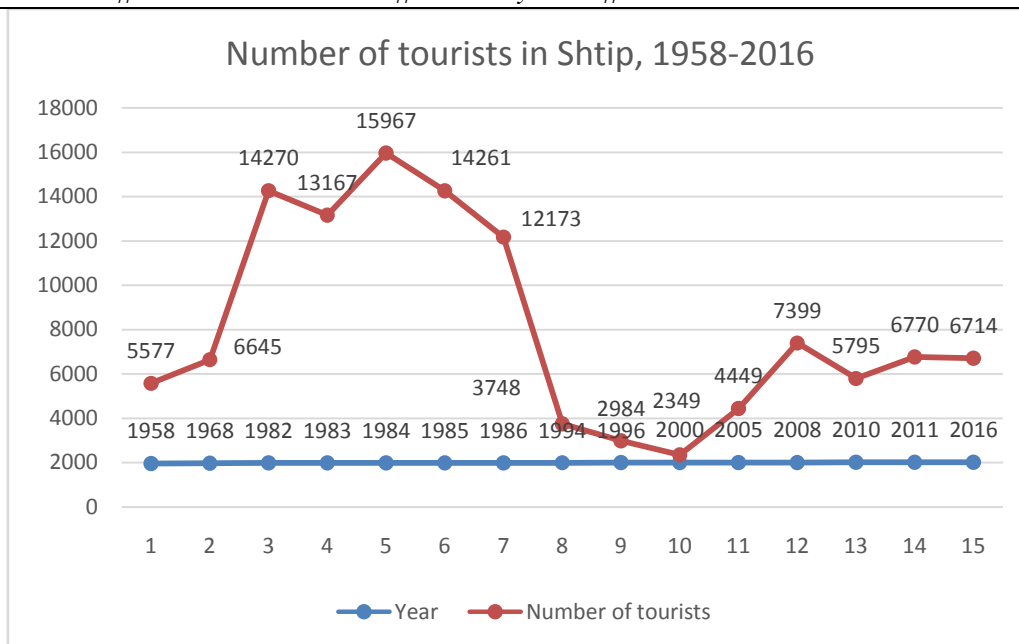


Figure 5. Number of tourists in Shtip, 1958-2016

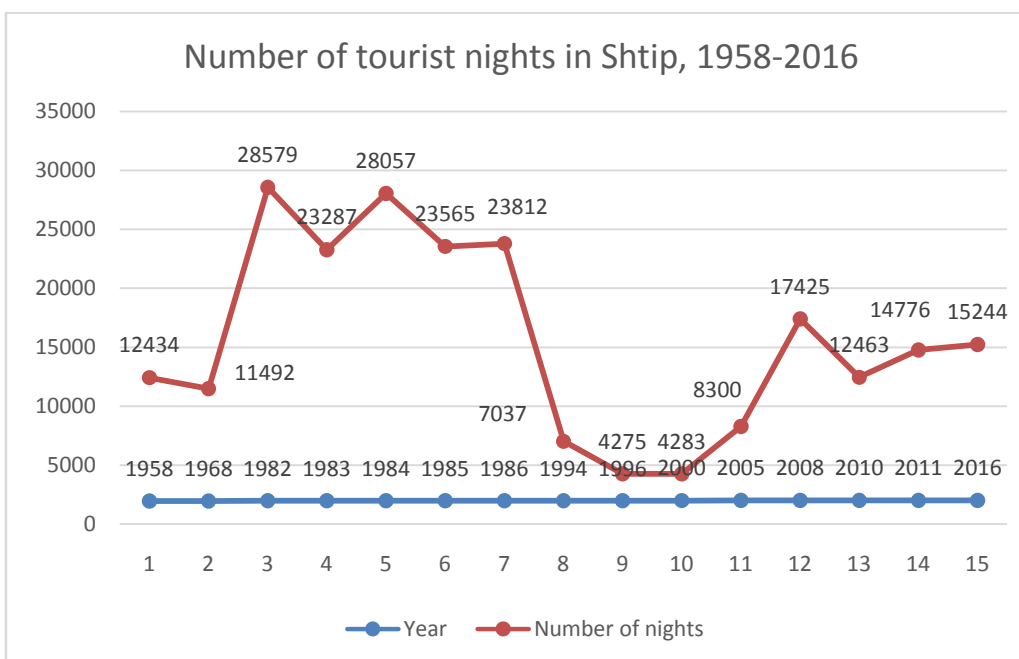


Figure 6. Number of tourist nights in Shtip, 1958-2016

3. 2. Valorization of tourism

As it's mentioned earlier, the valorization is done on the basis of 10 parameters which together with its value are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Overview of 10 parameters for valuation of natural and anthropogenic values of Shtip

PARAMETER	NUMER VALUE		
	1	2	3
Tourist position	BAD	MEDIUM	GOOD
Tourist equipment	WEAK	MEDIUM	GOOD
Infrastructure equipment	WEAK	MEDIUM	GOOD
Traffic connection	BAD	MEDIUM	GOOD

Accessibility	BAD	MEDIUM	GOOD
Specificity	SMALL	MEDIUM	LARGE
Contents	WEAK	MEDIUM	GOOD
Meaning	LOCALLY	REGIONALLY	NATIONALLY
Seasonality	ONE SEASON	TWO SEASONS	ALL YEAR
Degree of attendance	LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH

Table 3 shows the valorization of the natural values of the town of Stip, which are the river Bregalnica, the river Otinja, the mountain Plachkovica and the mountain Serta.

Table 3. Valorization of the natural values of the city of Stip

NUMBER	NATURAL VALUE	Tourist position	Tourist equipment	Infrastructure	Traffic connection	Accessibility	Specificity	Contents	Meaning	Seasonality	Degree of attendance	Total: General tourist value	Location Coordinates	
													X	Y
1.	River Bregalnica	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	2	2,7	4621794,56	7598794,56
2.	River Otinja	3	3	2	3	3	3	1	1	2	3	2,4	4621209,18	7599114,17
3.	Mountain Plachkovica	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2	3	2	2,6	4625006,14	7627451,61
4.	Mountain Serta	2	2	2	3	3	2	2	2	3	2	2,3	4604003,83	7590612,63

From Table 3 it can be noted that from the valorized natural values, which are the river Bregalnica, the river Otinja, the mountain Plachkovitsa and mountain Serta, the highest value has the river Bregalnica, probably because it is the largest of all valorized rivers, with the greatest content, and the smallest value has the mountain Serta, although it has great importance for the development of hunting tourism.

In Table 4, valorization of the most important anthropogenic values of the city of Shtip is made, and these are the fortress Isar, the archeological site Bargala, the Institute and the museum Shtip, the Bezisten, the Clock Tower and the "Sloboda(Freedom)" square.

Table 4. Valorization of the most important anthropogenic values of the city of Stip

NUMBER	ANTHROPOGENIC VALUE	Tourist position	Tourist equipment	Infrastructure	Traffic connection	Accessibility	Specificity	Contents	Meaning	Seasonality	Degree of attendance	Total: General tourist value	Location Coordinates	
													X	Y
1.	The fortress Isar	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	2,8	4621396,47	7598672,47
2.	Archeological site Bargala	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	2	3	2	2,6	4628369,80	7607195,63
3.	Institute and Museum Shtip	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3,0	4621217,58	7598938,32
4.	The Bezisten	3	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2,9	4621320,44	7599175,84

5.	Clock Tower	3	2	1	3	3	3	3	1	3	2	2,4	4621430,60	7599170,18
6.	Square "Sloboda"	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	1	3	3	2,8	4621311,34	7599254,93

In Table 4, the 6 most important anthropogenic values of the Municipality of Stip have been valorized: Fortress Isar, Bargala archaeological site, Institute and Museum, Bezisten, Clock Tower and Square "Sloboda". The highest value of them has the Institute and the Museum of the city of Stip, since all the parameters are assessed with grade 3, from the tourist position, to his attendance, while the smallest value has Clock tower rated at 2.4 because there is no separate infrastructure, is of little importance and is insufficiently visited.

Table 5 shows the valorization of the most important sacral objects in the city of Stip, as follows: the church "St. Nikola", the church "Dormition of the Holy Mother of God", the church "St. Petka", the church "St. Spas", the church "St. Archangel Michael", church "St. John the Baptist" and Kadin Anna Mosque/church "St. Ilija".

Table 5. Valorization of the most significant sacral objects in the city of Stip

NUMBER	SACRAL OBJECT	Tourist position	Tourist equipment	Infrastructure	Traffic connection	Accessibility	Specificity	Contents	Meaning	Seasonality	Degree of attendance	Total: General tourist value	Location Coordinates	
													X	Y
1.	Church "St. Nikola"	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3,0	4621219,15	7598861,38
2.	Church "Dormition of the Holy Mother of God"	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3,0	4621147,49	7598309,87
3.	Church "St. Petka"	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3,0	4622379,71	7599596,04
4.	Church "St. Spas"	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	1	2	2,5	4621019,46	7598522,80
5.	Church "St. Archangel Michael"	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	2,8	4621474,87	7598802,49
6.	Church "St. John the Baptist"	3	2	1	3	3	3	3	3	2	1	2,4	4621224,27	7598455,09
7.	Kadin Anna Mosque	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3,0	4621370,46	7599614,10

In Table 5, the 7 most famous sacral buildings on the territory of the city of Stip have been valorized: the church "St. Nikola", church "Dormition of the Holy Mother of God", church "St. Petka", church "St. Spas", church "St. John the Baptist", church "St. Archangel Michael" and Kadin Anna mosque. From the table it can be noted that the highest value of them has the church "St. Nikola", the church "Dormition of the Holy Mother of God", the church "St. Petka" and Kadin Anna mosque in Stip. They are all rated with a score of 3.0 most likely because they are all located in the center of Stip and are the most visited objects. The smallest value is characterized by the church "St. John the Baptist" of Isar because of the smallest attendance and infrastructure.

3.3. Perspectives of tourism

To develop tourism in Shtip, significant investments are needed, enriched offer of new contents, promotion, construction of hotels with 4 and 5 stars, elite restaurants, Spa center "Kezhovica", arrangement of the archeological site "Isar" with the construction of open museum of the Fortress Isar, construction of Ethno Museum "Novo Selo", establishment of tourist info center, promotion of new tourist contents and so on.

In Shtip there is enough content for sightseeing of the city. From the analysis, we distinguish three zones that in the near future can function as touristic routes in the consideration of the city. We propose the following tourist zones: zone of central city area, zone "Isar", and zone Novo Selo with Banja Kezhovica. (See Fig.5)

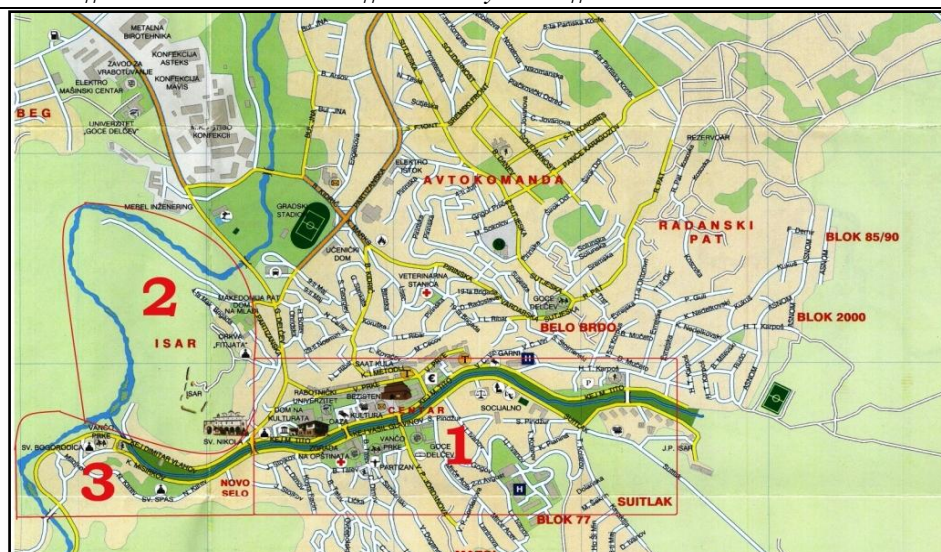


Figure 5. Tourist zones in the city of Shtip

The city of Shtip owns numerous potentials that allow it to develop as a separate alternative tourist destination. Numerous cultural and historical monuments, churches and sites allow it to represent itself as a cultural and historical tourist destination. Mountains Plackovica and Serta that are rich with wild animals enable them to grow into a known hunting tourist destination, and it can be concluded that it is already developing as such. Several wineries are of great importance for the development of wine tourism, which, unfortunately, is still not very popular. What is perhaps the biggest potential for tourism development is the presence of Kezovica Baths rich with medicinal mineral water. If its potentials are used, if it is invested and it turns into a modern SPA center, then the town of Shtip will undoubtedly receive a new picture of a famous SPA tourist destination.

4. CONCLUSION

Generally, Shtip has less influence over the entire tourist period than the cities in the Republic of Macedonia (Ohrid, Skopje, Struga, Dojran, Bitola, Gevgelija and Prilep) which are considerably ahead. This is primarily caused by the economic conditions, poor tourist infrastructure and insufficient promotion and neglect for the development of tourism in the city of Shtip.

The local community and the region need to develop a Strategy for tourism development in the city of Shtip.

Shtip has perspectives for economic development and strengthening of the role of a regional tourist center. It is realistically possible that Shtip becomes a tourist attraction Spa destination and an urban cultural and historical destination with a diverse offer of more events throughout the year.

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