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Hiking trails of Istria County and their function in slow tourism development

Pješačke staze Istarske županije u funkciji razvoja sporoga turizma

This research includes the hiking trails of Istria County as an element in the slow tourism supply. The official tourist supply of hiking trails managed by the Istrian Tourism Development Agency was analysed. The supply includes 84 trails with a total length of 859.4 kilometres, classified into six hiking regions. The objectives of the research were to determine the spatial layout and tourism supply of hiking trails as an element of slow tourism development in Istria County. Further objectives were to propose a more purposeful regionalization of existing trails as well as the distribution and definition of non-valorized trails. A complex method of field research of trails was used, including the methods of participant observation, autoethnography and mapping with the support of GIS. The hiking regions Rovinj and Poreč-Vrsar have the best tourism supply and opportunities for slow tourism development.

Ovo istraživanje obuhvaća pješačke staze Istarske županije kao element ponude sporoga turizma. Analizirana je službena turistička ponuda pješačkih staza kojima upravlja Istarska razvojna turistička agencija. Ponuda uključuje 84 staze ukupne dužine 859,4 km razvrstane u šest pješačkih regija. Ciljevi istraživanja su utvrditi prostorni raspored i turističku ponudu pješačkih staza kao elementa razvoja sporoga turizma Županije. Nadalje, ciljevi su predložiti svrhovitiju regionalizaciju postojećih staza te raspodjelu i definiranje nevaloriziranih staza. Korištena je složena metoda terenskoga istraživanja staza, uključujući metode sudioničkoga promatranja, autoetnografije i kartiranja uz podršku GIS-a. Najbolju turističku ponudu i mogućnosti za razvoj sporoga turizma imaju pješačke regije Rovinj i Poreč-Vrsar.

Key words: slow tourism, hiking trails, natural heritage, cultural heritage, tourist accommodation, Istria

Ključne riječi: spori turizam, pješačke staze, prirodna baština, kulturna baština, turistički smještaj, Istra

Introduction

Post-COVID-19 trends and processes in tourism on the global, national and local levels include the re-establishment of large-scale and frequent holiday travels of numerous people to touristic countries and regions. The motivations for spending leisure time in this manner are more diversified, which result in new forms of tourism similar to those that dominated in the pre-COVID-19 period. Such forms of tourism are mutually connected to two key components: environmental sustainability and social and/or personal wellbeing (Moore, 2012; Oh et al., 2016). Despite being established and developed decades before, slow tourism, as one of the forms of tourism, gained an added dimension in the COVID-19 period, during which the dominant model of staycations or holiday vacations were recorded, closer to tourist home regions (Krešić and Gjurašić, 2023).

Modern societies, in which leisure time and overall mass tourism movement have significant roles, promote and encourage a fast pace of living and cult of speed as a positive value (Honoré, 2004; Molz, 2009). Despite the fact that special interest tourism has been viewed as a counterpoint to the unsustainable nature of mass tourism, the achievement of that objective remains a highly contentious matter (McKercher and Chan, 2005; Weiler and Firth, 2021). In contrast to the prevailing dimensions of social life and various leisure activities, slow tourism prioritizes travel quality over quantity (Wen et al., 2020), environmental and sociocultural awareness and deeper connections with the host community and local heritage, including slower pace in the destination (Gardner, 2009; Dickinson and Lumsdon, 2010; Fullagar, et al., 2012; Conway and Timms, 2012; Klarin et al., 2023). In terms of implementations of all of these slow tourism elements, walking and cycling are the dominant and most acceptable ways of transport in such destinations (Molz, 2009; Lumsdon and McGrath, 2011; Caffyn, 2012). Moreover, as Molz (2009), Davies et al. (2012) and Pileri and Moscarelli (2021) suggested, use of hiking trails gives a better chance of immersion and getting to know local regions, cultures and people. Furthermore, from the point of tourism attractiveness of destination, hiking trails are considered to be the part of the tourism attraction system as linear attractions (Lew, 1987; Wall, 1997; Timo-

Uvod

Post-COVID-19 trendovi i procesi u turizmu na globalnoj, nacionalnoj i lokalnoj razini uključuju ponovnu uspostavu masovnih i čestih putovanja velikog broja ljudi na odmor u receptivne turističke zemlje i regije. Motivacije za takvo provođenje slobodnoga vremena sve su raznolikije, što rezultira novim oblicima turizma sličnim onima koji su dominirali u razdoblju prije COVID-19. Ti oblici turizma međusobno su povezani s dvjema ključnim komponentama: ekološkom održivošću i društvenom i/ili osobnom dobrobiti (Moore, 2012; Oh i dr., 2016). Iako je nastao i razvijao se desetljećima prije, spori turizam kao jedan od oblika turizma dobiva dodatnu dimenziju u razdoblju COVID-19, u kojem je zabilježen dominantan model boravka ili ljetovanja bliže matičnim regijama turista (Krešić i Gjurašić, 2023).

Suvremena društva, u kojima slobodno vrijeme i ukupno masovno kretanje turista imaju značajnu ulogu, promiču i potiču brz tempo življenja i kult brzine kao pozitivne vrijednosti (Honoré, 2004; Molz, 2009). Unatoč činjenici da se turizam posebnih interesa smatra protutežom neodrživj naravi masovnoga turizma postizanje toga cilja ostaje krajnje sporno pitanje (McKercher i Chan, 2005; Weiler i Firth, 2021). Za razliku od ovih prevladavajućih dimenzija društvenoga života i raznih aktivnosti slobodnoga vremena, spori turizam daje prednost kvaliteti putovanja u odnosu na kvantitetu (Wen i dr., 2020), ekološkoj i sociokulturnoj svijesti te dubljim vezama sa zajednicom domaćina i lokalnom baštinom uključujući sporiji ritam boravka u destinaciji (Gardner, 2009; Dickinson i Lumsdon, 2010; Fullagar i dr., 2012; Conway i Timms, 2012; Klarin i dr., 2023). U pogledu implementacije svih tih elemenata sporoga turizma pješaćenje i vožnja biciklom dominantni su i najprihvatljiviji načini prijevoza u destinaciji (Molz, 2009; Lumsdon i McGrath, 2011; Caffyn, 2012). Štoviše, kao što Molz (2009), Davies i dr. (2012) te Pileri i Moscarelli (2021) sugeriraju, korištenje pješačkih staza daje bolju mogućnost susreta i prožimanja turističkih mjesta, regija, lokalnih kultura i ljudi. S gledišta turističke atraktivnosti destinacije pješačke staze smatraju se i

thy and Boyd, 2015), which connect all the essential components of this system: tourists, nucleus and markers (Leiper, 1990).

According to the aforementioned, the Istrian Tourism Development Agency (IRTA, 2023) has designed, marked, and promoted hiking trails in Istria. The final objective of these efforts, among others, is to contribute to rebranding and restructuring tourism in Istria into a high-quality region with tourist supply that is active throughout the year. Although the original intention of this initiative was primarily motivated by sports and recreation development for locals and tourists, hiking trails could be a part of the slow tourism supply. Considering the aforementioned factors, the objectives of the research are to determine the spatial layout and tourism supply¹ of hiking trails² as an element of slow tourism development in Istria County. Furthermore, the objectives are to propose a more purposeful regionalization of existing trails, as well as the allocation and definition of new, hitherto non-valorized paths, suitable for the implementation of this form of tourism. The purpose of the research is to contribute to the scientific evaluation of hiking trails in the slow tourism development, with recommendations in tourism planning.

Theoretical framework and review of previous research

Over the past two decades, a significant quantity of research, professional articles, scientific papers, books, and other publications have been published regarding the relatively recent phenomenon of slow travel and tourism (Serdane et al., 2020; Krešić and Gjurašić, 2023; Karin et al., 2023). Respecting those contributions to the literature, the slow tourism in this paper can be defined as a form of sustainable and environmentally conscious tourism and tourist behaviour that assumes a slower type of travel to the destination, including a longer stay with the purpose

dijelom sustava turističkih atrakcija kao linearne atrakcije (Lew, 1987; Wall, 1997; Timothy i Boyd, 2015) koje povezuju sve bitne komponente ovoga sustava: turiste, jezgru i putokaze (Leiper, 1990).

Sukladno navedenom, Istarska razvojna turistička agencija (IRTA, 2023) dizajnirala je, markirala i promovirala pješačke staze u Istri. Konačni je cilj tih nastojanja, među ostalim, doprinijeti rebrandiranju i restrukturiranju ove županije u kvalitetnu regiju s turističkom ponudom aktivnom tijekom cijele godine. Iako je izvorna namjera ove inicijative ponajprije bila motivirana razvojem sporta i rekreacije za lokalno stanovništvo i turiste, pješačke staze mogle bi biti dio ponude sporoga turizma. S obzirom na navedene čimbenike ciljevi su istraživanja a) utvrditi prostorni raspored i turističku ponudu¹ pješačkih staza² kao elementa razvoja sporoga turizma u Istarskoj županiji, b) predložiti svrhovitiju regionalizaciju postojećih staza te izdvajanje i definiranje novih, do sada nevaloriziranih staza, pogodnih za realizaciju ovoga oblika turizma. Svrha je istraživanja doprinijeti znanstvenom vrednovanju pješačkih staza u razvoju sporoga turizma s preporukama u turističkom planiranju.

Teorijski okvir i pregled dosadašnjih istraživanja

U posljednjim dvama desetljećima objavljena je značajna količina istraživanja, stručnih članaka, znanstvenih radova, knjiga i drugih publikacija o relativno recentnom fenomenu sporoga putovanja i turizma (Serdane i dr., 2020; Krešić i Gjurašić, 2023; Karin i dr., 2023). Uvažavajući te priloge u literaturi, spori turizam u ovom radu može se definirati kao oblik održivoga i ekološki osviještena turizma i turističkoga ponašanja koji podrazumijeva spori putovanje do destinacije, uključujući duži boravak sa svrhom

1 In this research, the analysed tourism supply are commercial tourist accommodation, protected natural sites and areas cultural heritage sites and length of hiking trails. The other tourist infrastructure such as local shops, bars, restaurants and public transport are not included.

2 According to English-Croatian dictionary (Bujas, 1999) noun *bike* and verb *to hike* mean a longer trip on foot or go on a longer trip on foot. From that reason, the term *hiking* is more suitable than *walking* for this paper.

1 U ovom istraživanju analizirana je turistička ponuda komercijalnoga turističkog smještaja, zaštićenih prirodnih lokaliteta i područja, lokaliteta kulturne baštine i dužine pješačkih staza. Ostala turistička infrastruktura kao što su lokalne trgovine, barovi, restorani i javni prijevoz nisu uključeni.

2 Prema Englesko-hrvatskom rječniku (Bujas, 1999.) imenica *bike* i glagol *to hike* označavaju duži put pješice ili ići na duži put pješice. Zbog toga je pojam *hiking* prikladniji od *walking*.

of deeper and broader observation and study, as well as a more intense experience of local natural and anthropogenic attractions. Although Conway and Timms (2012) and Krešić and Gjurašić (2023) emphasized the need for differentiation between slow travel and slow tourism, most researchers agree that there is an integral system consisting of the outward journey, destination, and return. Moreover, as Lumsdon and McGrath (2011) concluded, slow travel as the journey and slow tourism as a way of enjoying the destination are two sides of the same coin.

The slow tourism phenomenon should be observed and studied in several dimensions or categories. First, there is the slow pace and savouring of time during the holiday, which includes an unhurried rhythm of destination exploring (Honoré, 2004; Andrews, 2006; Gardner, 2009; Molz, 2009; Cresswell, 2010; Caffyn, 2012). Second, there are elements of the location and activities within the destination that encompass more profound relationships and mutual connections with the locals (Matos, 2004; Conway and Timms, 2010; Nielsen et al., 2011). Furthermore, travel experiences and solutions, modes of transport, favouring low-carbon emission vehicles are essential categories in slow tourism demand (Ceron and Dubois, 2007; Gardner, 2009; Polyxeni et al., 2017; Pileri and Moscarelli, 2021). Self-reflection, well-being, conviviality, enjoyment and similar characteristics represent personal and intimate dimensions of slow tourism (Caffyn, 2012) that some authors consider to be the major travel motives in this phenomenon (Molz, 2009; Oh et al., 2016, Rabbiosi, 2021). Last, there is the matter of environmental consciousness and sustainability, which interconnects all the slow tourism categories and dimensions (Dolnicar et al., 2008; Dickinson and Lumsdon, 2010; Dickinson et al., 2011; Wearing et al., 2012). However, as Heitmann et al., (2011) pointed out, slow tourism shares similar characteristics and values with sustainable tourism.

As an environmentally friendly mode of transportation (Dickinson et al, 2011), the implementation of bicycling and walking infrastructure in destinations affords slow tourists the opportunity to establish a deeper connection with the locals, natural and anthropogenic attractions, as well as access to food and beverage supply. Moreover, biking and walking enable

dubljea i širega promatranja i proučavanja, kao i intenzivniji doživljaj lokalnih prirodnih i antropogenih atrakcija. Iako su Conway i Timms (2012) te Krešić i Gjurašić (2023) naglasili potrebu razlikovanja sporoga putovanja i sporoga turizma, za većinu istraživača postoji cjelovit sustav sastavljen od dolaska, destinacije i povratka. Štoviše, kako su zaključili Lumsdon i McGrath (2011), sporo putovanje kao putovanje i spori turizam kao način uživanja u destinaciji jedno su te isto.

Fenomen sporoga turizma treba promatrati i proučavati u nekoliko dimenzija ili kategorija. Prije svega je tu sporost i vrijednost vremena tijekom odmora, što uključuje tempo i neuzurban ritam istraživanja destinacije (Honoré, 2004; Andrews, 2006; Gardner, 2009; Molz, 2009; Cresswell, 2010; Caffyn, 2012). Drugo, postoje elementi lokacije i aktivnosti unutar destinacije koji obuhvaćaju dublje odnose i međusobne veze s lokalnim stanovništvom (Matos, 2004; Conway i Timms, 2010; Nielsen i dr., 2011). Nadalje, putnička iskustva i rješenja, načini prijevoza, favoriziranje vozila s niskom emisijom ugljika bitne su kategorije u potražnji sporoga turizma (Ceron i Dubois, 2007; Gardner, 2009; Polyxeni i dr., 2017; Pileri i Moscarelli, 2021). Samorefleksija, blagostanje, druželjubivost, užitak i slična obilježja predstavljaju osobne i intimne dimenzije sporoga turizma (Caffyn, 2012) koje neki autori smatraju glavnim motivima putovanja u ovom fenomenu (Molz, 2009; Oh i dr., 2016, Rabbiosi, 2021). Na kraju, tu je i pitanje ekološke svijesti i održivosti, koje povezuje sve kategorije i dimenzije sporoga turizma (Dolnicar i dr., 2008; Dickinson i Lumsdon, 2010; Dickinson i dr., 2011; Wearing i dr., 2012). Međutim, kako su istaknuli Heitmann i dr. (2011), on dijeli slične značajke i vrijednosti s održivim turizmom.

Kao ekološki prihvatljiv način prijevoza (Dickinson i dr., 2011), implementacija biciklističke i pješačke infrastrukture u destinaciji pruža sporim turistima priliku da uspostave duboku vezu s lokalnim stanovništvom, prirodnim i antropogenim atrakcijama te pristup hrani i opskrbi pićem. Štoviše, biciklizam i hodanje daju mogućnost smisljena i spora putovanja kroz istraživanje de-

meaningful and slow travel exploration of destination and rich and immersive tourist experiences (Lumsdon and McGrath, 2011). With respect to the aforementioned, hiking trails are the key elements in the slow tourism supply which unify environmentally suitable modes of travel inside of a destination, linear tourist attraction (with natural and anthropogenic elements) and the means of self-reflection and discovery.

Literature review of the slow tourism phenomenon as a relatively new form of sustainable tourism is rooted in publications and articles about the *slow food movement*. This movement was founded in 1989 in Italy as a reaction to the opening of fast-food restaurants in the centres of heritage towns (Pietrykowski, 2004; Hall, 2006; Bac Dorin, 2014; Clancy, 2018). Consequently, *slow food* ideas spread to various aspects of sustainable urban daily life and tourism founding the *Cittáslow (Slow city)* movement (Slow cities, 2000; Knox, 2005; Heitman et al., 2011; Nilsson et al., 2011; Yurtseven and Kaya, 2011; Bac Dorin, 2014). Slow tourism as a term is first mentioned in the context of Alpine regions' regeneration (Matos, 2004) and *A Manifesto for Slow Travel* (Gardner, 2009) played a turning point role in affirmation of slow travel and tourism in the broader context of tourism. Although, even before the modern-day transport system, in the time of *Grand tour* (Towner, 1985) and pilgrimage (Murray and Graham, 1997), all forms of tourism could be considered to be slow tourism (Dickinson et al., 2011).

In the context of this study, the most significant publications and research concerning the interconnections between hiking trails and the slow tourism phenomenon (Honoré, 2004; Molz, 2009; Dickinson and Lumsdon, 2010; Lumsdon and McGrath, 2011; Fullagar, et al., 2012; Polyxeni et al., 2017; Kato and Prozano, 2017; Rabbiosi, 2021). Similarly, influential research and publications focus on the general impact of hiking, and other outdoor activities on the tourism supply of tourist-receiving countries and regions (Ceron and Dubois, 2007; Davies et al., 2012; Timothy and Boyd, 2015; World tourism organization, 2019; Cencič et al., 2020; Ward-Perkins et al., 2020; Pileri and Moscarelli, 2021). Finally, the most prominent studies are those that include innovative and applicable research methods such as fieldwork, participant observation, personal walking,

stinacije te bogata i sveobuhvatna turistička iskustva (Lumsdon i McGrath, 2011). Uzimajući u obzir sve navedeno, pješačke staze ključni su elementi ponude sporoga turizma koji objedinjuje ekološki prihvatljiv način putovanja unutar destinacije, linearnu turističku atrakciju (s prirodnim i antropogenim elementima) te sredstvo samorefleksije i otkrivanja.

Pregled literature fenomena sporoga turizma kao relativno nova oblika održivog turizma potječe iz publikacija i članaka o *Slow food pokretu*. Ovaj pokret nastao je 1989. u Italiji kao reakcija na otvaranje restorana brze prehrane u središtima gradova baštine (Pietrykowski, 2004; Hall, 2006; Bac Dorin, 2014; Clancy, 2018). Ideje *Slow fooda* proširile su se na različite aspekte održivoga urbanog svakodnevnog života i turizma utemeljujući pokret *Cittáslow (Spori grad)* (Slow cities, 2000; Knox, 2005; Heitman i dr., 2011; Nilsson i dr., 2011; Yurtseven i Kaya, 2011; Bac Dorin, 2014). Spori turizam kao pojam prvi se put spominje u kontekstu regeneracije alpskih regija (Matos, 2004), a *Manifesto for Slow Travel* (Gardner, 2009) imao je prekretnicu u afirmaciji sporoga putovanja i turizma u širem kontekstu. Iako su se, čak i puno prije suvremenoga prometnog sustava, u vrijeme *Grand toura* (Towner, 1985) i hodočašća (Murray i Graham, 1997), svi oblici turizma mogli smatrati sporim turizmom (Dickinson i dr., 2011).

U kontekstu ove studije najznačajnije publikacije i istraživanja tiču se međusobnih veza između pješačkih staza i fenomena sporoga turizma (Honoré, 2004; Molz, 2009; Dickinson i Lumsdon, 2010; Lumsdon i McGrath, 2011; Fullagar, i dr., 2012; Polyxeni i dr., 2017; Kato i Prozano, 2017; Rabbiosi, 2021). Slično tomu, utjecajna istraživanja i publikacije usredotočuju se na opći utjecaj pješačenja i drugih aktivnosti na otvorenom na turističku ponudu receptivnih turističkih zemalja i regija (Ceron i Dubois, 2007; Davies i dr., 2012; Timothy i Boyd, 2015; Svjetska turistička organizacija, 2019; Cencič i dr., 2020; Ward-Perkins i dr., 2020; Pileri i Moscarelli, 2021). Konačno, najistaknutije studije uključuju inovativne i primjenjive istraživačke metode kao što su terenski rad, sudioničko promatranje, osobno hodanje i

and autoethnography, which are compatible with the main ideas of slow tourism as a sustainable and environmentally friendly form of tourism (Wylie, 2005; Careri, 2006; Ingold and Vergunst, 2008; Olafsdottir, 2013; Rabbiosi, 2021).

METHODOLOGY AND THE SPATIAL FRAMEWORK

The analysis of the theoretical background of slow tourism development, that was carried out, including its multiple interconnections with hiking and other mode of transport and considering literature review, led to three main research questions. First, what is the spatial layout of hiking trails in Istria? Second, is the current distribution of hiking trails evenly distributed across the Istrian tourism regions? And finally, do hiking trails provide tourist attractions and facilities suitable for slow tourism development?

For the purpose of realizing research objectives, and obtaining scientific results, several scientific methods, tools, and techniques were used. The methodological procedure of this study includes three main stages. The first stage had two steps. The first step was to collect, sort and analyse relevant scientific research, studies and books, professional paper and expertise, popular articles and books regarding the phenomena of hiking, trails, slowness, slow travel, and slow tourism. The second step was to analyse, collect and organize data from the Istrian Tourism Development Agency (IRTA), which is the body responsible for creating and maintaining hiking trails (IRTA, 2023). These data include trails' descriptions, distances (in km), maps, GPX files, written instructions and information for potential visitors, recreational facilities along and around trails.

The second and the most complex phase of this study was fieldwork, in which all of IRTA's 84 trails were researched on foot. Complex fieldwork research was used together with the method of participant observation (Hall, 2011; de Walt and de Walt, 2011; Ribeiro and Foemmel, 2012; Phillips and Johns, 2012). Simultaneously, autoethnography in the fields of geographical, outdoor and tourism studies, defined by Butz and Besio (2004),

autoetnografija, a koje su kompatibilne s glavnim idejama sporoga turizma kao održivog i ekološki prihvatljiva oblika turizma (Wylie, 2005; Careri, 2006; Ingold i Vergunst, 2008; Olafsdottir, 2013; Rabbiosi, 2021).

METODOLOGIJA I PROSTORNI OKVIR

Provedena analiza teorijske utemeljenosti razvoja sporog turizma, uključujući njegovu višestruku povezanost s pješaćenjem i drugim oblicima prijevoza te s obzirom na pregled literature, upućuje na tri glavna istraživačka pitanja. Prvo, kakav je prostorni raspored pješačkih staza u Istri? Je li trenutna distribucija pješačkih staza ravnomjerno raspoređena po turističkim regijama Istre? I na kraju, pruža li ponuda pješačkih staza turističke atrakcije i sadržaje pogodne za razvoj sporoga turizma?

Za realizaciju ciljeva istraživanja i postizanje znanstvenih rezultata korišteno je nekoliko znanstvenih metoda, alata i tehnika. Metodološki postupak ovoga istraživanja uključuje tri glavne faze. Prva faza imala je dva koraka. Prvi korak bio je prikupiti, sortirati i analizirati brojna relevantna znanstvena istraživanja, studije i knjige, stručne radove i ekspertize, popularne članke i knjige o fenomenima pješaćenja, staza, sporosti, sporoga putovanja i sporoga turizma. Drugi je korak bila analiza, prikupljanje i organiziranje podataka Istarske razvojne turističke agencije (IRTA), koja je službeni županijski pružatelj i održavatelj pješačkih staza (IRTA, 2023). Ti podatci uključuju opise staza, udaljenosti (u km), karte, GPX datoteke, pisane upute i informacije za potencijalne posjetitelje, rekreacijske sadržaje uz staze i oko staza.

Druga i najsloženija faza ovoga istraživanja bio je terenski rad, u kojem su sve IRTA-ine 84 staze istražene pješice. Korištena je metoda složenoga terenskoga istraživanja zajedno s metodom sudioničkoga promatranja (Hall, 2011; de Walt i de Walt, 2011; Ribeiro i Foemmel, 2012; Phillips i Johns, 2012). Istodobno je korištena autoetnografija u područjima geografskih, *outdoor* i turističkih studija, definiranih u Butz i

Butz (2010), Cloke (2014), Scarles and Sanderson (2016) and Humberstone and Nicol (2020) were used. The application of autoethnography was adapted in the same way as in the similar walking and slow tourism studies (Wylie 2005; Ingold and Vergunst, 2008; Olafsdottir, 2013; Rabbiosi, 2021). Such methodological plurality provided the opportunity for testing real-life scenarios on the trails. During fieldwork, all trails were measured using a GPS device (*Garmin Montana 680t*) and mobile applications (*A-GPS Tracker 5.5.253* and *Osmand Pro 4.5.10*) and at the same time, notes, sketches, photos, and videos were made to compare with official IRTA data.

The third phase included the selection and processing of elements relevant to the slow tourism supply. The first group of elements are the number and density of hiking trails in Istrian towns and municipalities where hiking trails are developed. To test the tourist attractiveness of each trail, two groups of elements were collected and processed. The first is the number of registered tangible cultural heritage attractions/sites in Istrian towns and municipalities (*Ministry of Culture and media, 2023*) and the second is the number of natural protected areas and sites in Istria County (*Bioportal, 2023*) along or in the immediate vicinity of trails. By decision of the researcher, using data collected from the fieldwork, a one-kilometre buffer zone from tangible cultural-historical monuments and natural protected sites is considered to be the immediate vicinity of the trail. The fourth element is commercial tourist accommodation capacities (number of beds) in January and August 2023³ (*Croatian bureau of Statistics, 2023*) in towns and municipalities with trails. In order to evaluate the slow tourism supply by hiking region, descriptive statistical methods with the support of GIS (*QGIS 3.34.1*) and scoring of all of these elements (Araújo and Costa, 2008; Hassan et al., 2012; Vojnović and Petrić, 2019; Setiadji et al., 2022) were used.

The spatial framework in this study is the Croatian regional self-government unit Istria County, which consists of 10 administrative towns and 31 municipalities. Nevertheless, the research was only

Besio (2004), Butz (2010), Cloke (2014), Scarles i Sanderson (2016) te Humberstone i Nicol (2020). Primjena autoetnografije prilagođena je kako se to činilo u sličnim studijama pješačkoga i sporoga turizma (Wylie 2005; Ingold i Vergunst, 2008; Olafsdottir, 2013; Rabbiosi, 2021). Takva metodološka pluralnost pružila je mogućnosti testiranja stvarnih životnih scenarija na stazama. Tijekom terenskoga rada svim stazama mjerene su udaljenosti pomoću GPS uređaja (*Garmin Montana 680t*) i mobilnih aplikacija (*A-GPS Tracker 5.5.253* i *Osmand Pro 4.5.10*) te su ujedno napravljene bilješke, skice, fotografije i videozapisi radi usporedbe sa službenim podacima IRTA-e.

Treća faza uključivala je odabir i obradu elemenata bitnih za ponudu sporoga turizma. Prvu skupinu elemenata čine broj i gustoća pješačkih staza po istarskim gradovima i općinama u kojima su uređene pješačke staze. Za ispitivanje turističke atraktivnosti svake staze prikupljaju se i obrađuju dvije skupine elemenata. Prvi je broj registriranih materijalnih kulturnih dobara po istarskim gradovima i općinama (Ministarstvo kulture i medija, 2023), a drugi je broj prirodnih zaštićenih područja i lokaliteta u Istarskoj županiji (Bioportal, 2023) uz staze ili u njihovoj neposrednoj blizini. Odlukom istraživača koristeći se podacima s terenskoga istraživanja, neposrednom blizinom staze ocjenjuje se pojas udaljen jedan kilometar od materijalnoga kulturno-povijesnog spomenika i zaštićenoga prirodnoga lokaliteta. Četvrti su element komercijalni turistički smještajni kapaciteti (broj ležaja) u siječnju i kolovozu 2023.³ (DZS, 2023) u gradovima i općinama sa stazama. Da bi se ocijenila ponuda sporoga turizma po pješačkim regijama, korištene su deskriptivne statističke metode uz podršku GIS-a (*QGIS 3.34.1*) i bodovanje svih ovih elemenata (Araújo i Costa, 2008; Hassan i dr., 2012; Vojnović i Petrić, 2019; Setiadji i dr., 2022).

Prostorni je okvir u ovoj studiji Istarska županija, hrvatska jedinica regionalne samouprave koju čini 10 gradova i 31 općina. Ipak, istraživanje je bilo usmjereno samo na gradove i općine

³ January represents the low tourist season, whilst August represents the top of the high season.

³ Siječanj predstavlja nisku turističku sezonu, dok kolovoz predstavlja vrhunac visoke sezone.

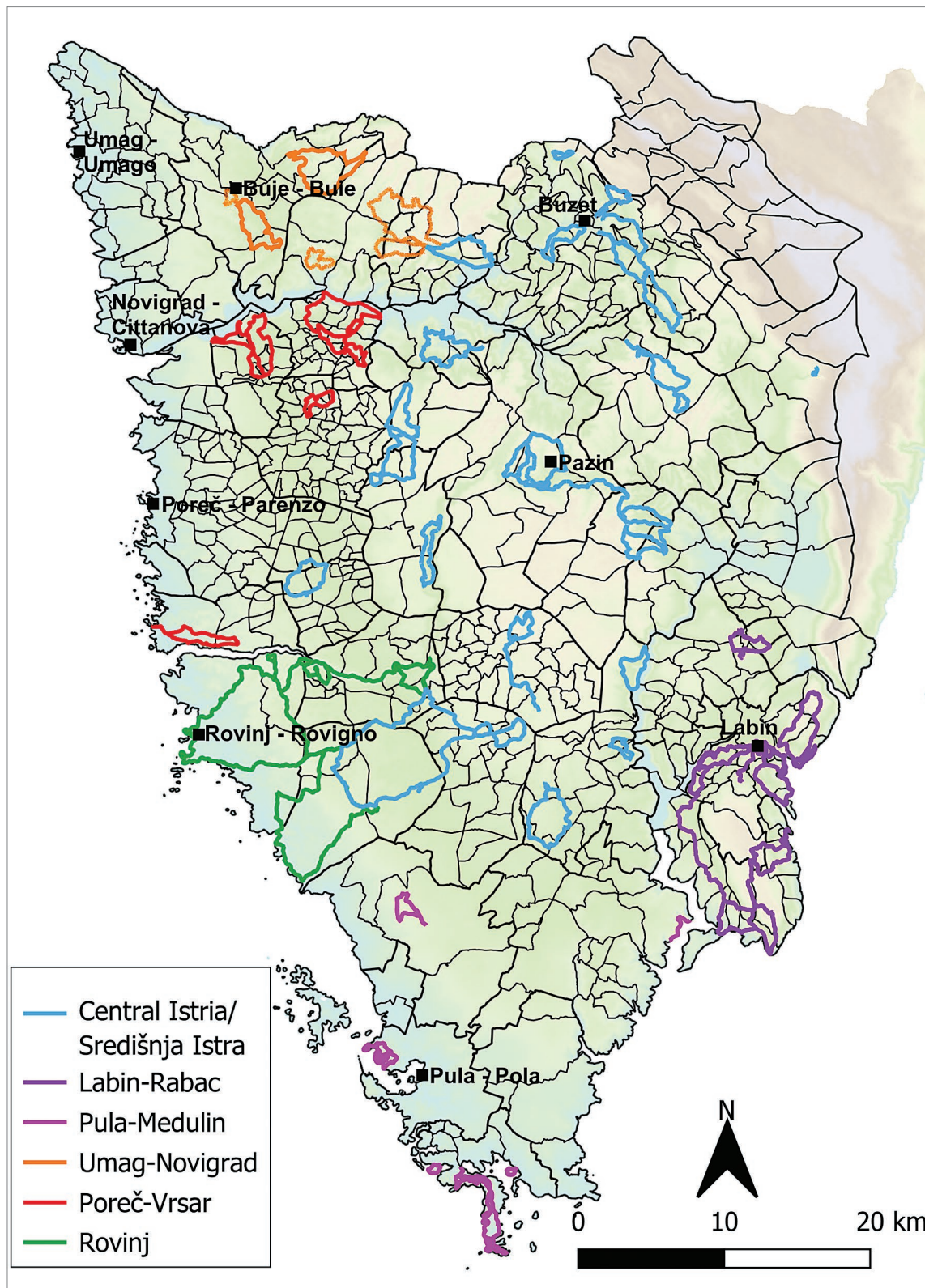


Fig. 1 Geographical layout of trails in Istria County by hiking regions
Sl. 1. Geografski raspored staza u Istarskoj županiji po pješačkim regijama

Tab. 1 Hiking regions and towns and municipalities with hiking trails
Tab. 1. Pješačke regije s gradovima i općinama s pješačkim stazama

Hiking region / Pješačka regija	Gradovi i općine s pješačkim stazama / Towns and municipalities with hiking trails
Rovinj	Bale, Kanfanar and Rovinj
Pula-Medulin	Marčana, Medulin, Pula and Vodnjan
Umag-Novigrad	Buje, Grožnjan and Oprtalj
Labin-Rabac	Labin, Raša and Sveta Nedjelja
Poreč-Vrsar	Kaštelir-Labinci, Višnjan, Vižinada and Vrsar
Central Istria / Središnja Istra	Barban, Buzet, Cerovlje, Gračišće, Karojba, Lupoglav, Motovun, Pazin, Pićan, Sveti Lovreć, Svetvinčenat, Tinjan and Žminj

Source: According to IRTA (2023), modified and adapted by the author
Izvor: Prema IRTA (2023), modificirao i prilagodio autor

focused on towns and municipalities where hiking trails have been developed by IRTA (IRTA, 2023). According to this Agency, 84 hiking trails (mid of 2023) in 30 Istrian towns and municipalities were designed, marked, and then geographically distributed and organized in seven hiking regions, namely: Central Istria, Labin-Rabac, Poreč, Pula-Medulin, Rovinj, Umag-Novigrad and Vrsar-Funtana. Poreč and Vrsar-Funtana⁴ hiking regions, because of geographical and touristic similarity, are unified into one region: Poreč-Vrsar. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, six regions have been selected: Central Istria, Labin-Rabac, Poreč-Vrsar, Pula-Medulin, Rovinj and Umag-Novigrad (Tab. 1 and Fig. 1). The research in this study excludes hiking trails created by locals and private associations, as well as mountain trails and impassable paths on challenging terrain.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Using the aforementioned scientific methods, tools, and techniques, 84 hiking trails have been identified in Istria County, spanning a total length of 859.4 kilometres, and are geographically distributed across six hiking regions (Tab. 2). More than one-third of all

u kojima je IRTA razvila pješačke staze (IRTA, 2023). Prema podacima ove agencije, 84 pješačke staze (sredina 2023. godine) u 30 istarskih gradova i općina dizajnirane su, označene, a zatim geografski raspodijeljene i organizirane u sedam pješačkih regija, i to: Središnja Istra, Labin-Rabac, Poreč, Pula-Medulin, Rovinj, Umag-Novigrad i Vrsar-Funtana. Pješačke regije Poreč i Vrsar-Funtana⁴ zbog geografske i turističke sličnosti objedinjene su u jednu regiju: Poreč-Vrsar. Stoga je za potrebe ovoga istraživanja izdvojeno šest regija: Središnja Istra, Labin-Rabac, Poreč-Vrsar, Pula-Medulin, Rovinj i Umag-Novigrad (tab. 1. i sl. 1). Istraživanje u ovoj studiji isključuje pješačke staze koje su izradili mještani i privatne udruge te planinske staze i neprohodne putove na zahtjevnom terenu.

REZULTATI ISTRAŽIVANJA

Navedenim znanstvenim metodama, alatima i tehnikama identificirane su 84 pješačke staze u Istarskoj županiji ukupne duljine 859,4 kilometra, a geografski su raspoređene u šest pješačkih regija (tab. 2). Više od jedne trećine svih staza

⁴ IRTA's hiking region Vrsar-Funtana has one trail only, implemented in the municipality of Vrsar.

⁴ IRTA-ina pješačka regija Vrsar-Funtana ima samo jednu stazu implementiranu na području Općine Vrsar.

trails are developed and promoted in the towns and municipalities of the Central Istria hiking region (30 trails). This region has the longest network of the trails with a length of 329.3 kilometres. These results are explicable if one considers the fact that towns and municipalities in this region are sparsely populated, with only two important urban centres (Buzet and Pazin) and a large area covered with natural vegetation and partly abandoned agricultural land. Moreover, from a geomorphological standpoint, this region is primarily comprised of the Istrian hills and mountains Čićarija and Učka, which encompass rugged terrain with steep slopes. A significant number of trails are placed in the hiking regions Labin-Rabac (17 trails) and Pula Medulin (16 trails). Also, Labin-Rabac has the second longest network of trails (174.1 kilometres). In contrast to these we have Umag-Novigrad, a developed tourism region where only six trails have been identified, spanning a total length of 70.5 km. Nevertheless, if one considers trails density (km of trails per km² of region area), the most prominent regions are Labin-Rabac (0.8 km/km²) and Rovinj (0.6 km/km²). With only 0.2 km per km² of area, the lowest density of trails was identified in Pula-Medulin region. The Central Istria and Umag-Novigrad have identically low density, both of which are 0.3 km/km² (Tab. 2).

uređeno je i promovirano u gradovima i općinama pješačke regije Središnje Istre (30 staza). Ova regija ima najdužu mrežu staza u dužini od 329,3 kilometra. Ti su rezultati objašnjivi ako se uzme u obzir činjenica da su gradovi i općine u ovoj regiji rijetko naseljeni, sa samo dvama važnim urbanim središtima (Buzet i Pazin) te velikim područjem prekrivenim prirodnom vegetacijom i djelomično napuštenim poljoprivrednim zemljištem. Štoviše, s geomorfološkoga stajališta ovu regiju prvenstveno čine Istarsko pobrđe i gorski sklop Čićarije i Učke, koji obuhvaćaju neravan teren sa strmim padinama. Značajan broj staza smješten je u pješačkim regijama Labin-Rabac (17 staza) i Pula-Medulin (16 staza), a Labin-Rabac ima drugu najdužu mrežu staza (174,1 kilometar). Nasuprot tim regijama je Umag-Novigrad, turistički razvijena regija u kojoj je identificirano samo šest staza ukupne duljine 70,5 km. Ipak, ako se uzme u obzir gustoća pješačkih staza (km staza po km² površine regije), najistaknutije su regije Labin-Rabac (0,8 km/km²) i Rovinj (0,6 km/km²). Sa samo 0,2 km po km² površine najmanja gustoća staza zabilježena je u regiji Pula-Medulin. Središnja Istra i Umag-Novigrad imaju identičnu nisku gustoću, obje 0,3 km/km² (tab. 2).

Tab. 2 Number of trails, trails length and density by hiking regions of Istria County
Tab. 2. Broj, duljina i gustoća staza po pješačkim regijama Istarske županije

Hiking region / Pješačka regija	Number of trails / Broj staza	Share / Udio (%)	Trail length / Duljina staza (km)	Share / Udio (%)	Area / Površina (km ²)	Density / Gustoća (km/km ²)
Rovinj	7	8.33	125.5	14.60	219.5	0.6
Pula-Medulin	16	19.05	78.7	9.16	319.9	0.2
Umag-Novigrad	6	7.14	70.5	8.20	227.3	0.3
Labin-Rabac	17	20.24	174.1	20.26	152.7	0.8
Poreč-Vrsar	8	9.52	81.3	9.46	170.9	0.5
Central Istria / Središnja Istra	30	35.71	329.3	38.32	943.4	0.3
Total / Ukupno	84	100.0	859.4	100.0	2,033.7	0.4

Source: According to IRTA's (2023) data of number and trail length, calculated by the author
Izvor: Prema podacima IRTA (2023) o broju i duljini staza, izračunao autor

Two groups of elements were analysed to assess the attractiveness of hiking trails for slow tourism. The first group consists of natural protected areas and sites, and the second includes cultural heritage sites. Istria County has 35 protected areas and sites, among which are the highly protected Brijuni National Park and Učka Nature Park (Bioportal, 2023). Apart from these areas, there are five special reserves, six natural monuments, 11 significant landscapes, five forest parks and six horticultural monuments in Istria County. In total, protected areas and sites cover 201.84 km² (7.17% of the County's area). In towns and municipalities with hiking trails, there are 29 protected areas and sites (Tab. 3, Fig. 2). However, in the immediate vicinity (up to 1 km) of hiking trails there are 22 protected areas and sites, among them are Učka Nature Park and several important special reserves.

The Central Istria and Rovinj are the most attractive hiking regions in terms of protected nature. These regions have seven natural protected areas and sites each along or in the immediate vicinity of trails. The most remarkable trails in Central Istria connected with protected nature are those inside of Učka Nature Park and the natural monument Vela

Analizirane su dvije skupine elemenata za ocjenu atraktivnosti pješačkih staza za spori turizam. Prvu skupinu čine zaštićena prirodna područja i lokaliteti, a drugu lokaliteti kulturne baštine. Istarska županija ima 35 zaštićenih područja i lokaliteta, među kojima su najstrože zaštićeni nacionalni park Brijuni i park prirode Učka (Bioportal, 2023). Osim ovih područja, u županiji je proglašeno pet posebnih rezervata, šest spomenika prirode, 11 značajnih krajobraza, pet park-šuma i šest spomenika hortikulture. Ukupno zaštićena područja i lokaliteti zauzimaju 201,84 km² (7,17 % površine županije). U gradovima i općinama s uređenim pješačkim stazama postoji 29 zaštićenih područja i lokaliteta (tab. 3, sl. 2). No, u neposrednoj blizini (do 1 km) pješačkih staza nalaze se 22 zaštićena područja i lokaliteta, među kojima su najvrjedniji park prirode Učka i posebni rezervati.

Središnja Istra i Rovinj najatraktivnije su pješačke regije u pogledu zaštićene prirode. Te regije imaju sedam prirodnih zaštićenih područja i mjesta, duž staza ili u njihovoj neposrednoj blizini. Najznačajnije staze u Središnjoj Istri povezane sa zaštićenom prirodom su one unutar parka prirode Učka i spomenika prirode Vela draga, posebnog

Tab. 3 Natural protected area and sites in vicinity of trails by hiking regions of Istria County

Tab. 3. Zaštićena prirodna područja i lokaliteti u blizina staza po pješačkim regijama Istarske županije

Hiking region / Pješačka regija	Number of natural protected area and sites / Broj zaštićenih prirodnih područja i lokaliteta	Natural protected areas and sites in the vicinity of trails / Zaštićena prirodna područja i lokaliteti u blizini staza	Share / Udio (%)
Rovinj	8	7	87.5
Pula-Medulin	6	3	50.0
Umag-Novigrad	1	0	0.0
Labin-Rabac	2	2	100.0
Poreč-Vrsar	3	3	100.0
Central Istria / Središnja Istra	9	7	77.8
Total / Ukupno	29	22	75.9

Izvor: Prema podacima Bioportala (2023), izračunao autor

Source: According to Bioportal (2023), calculated by the author

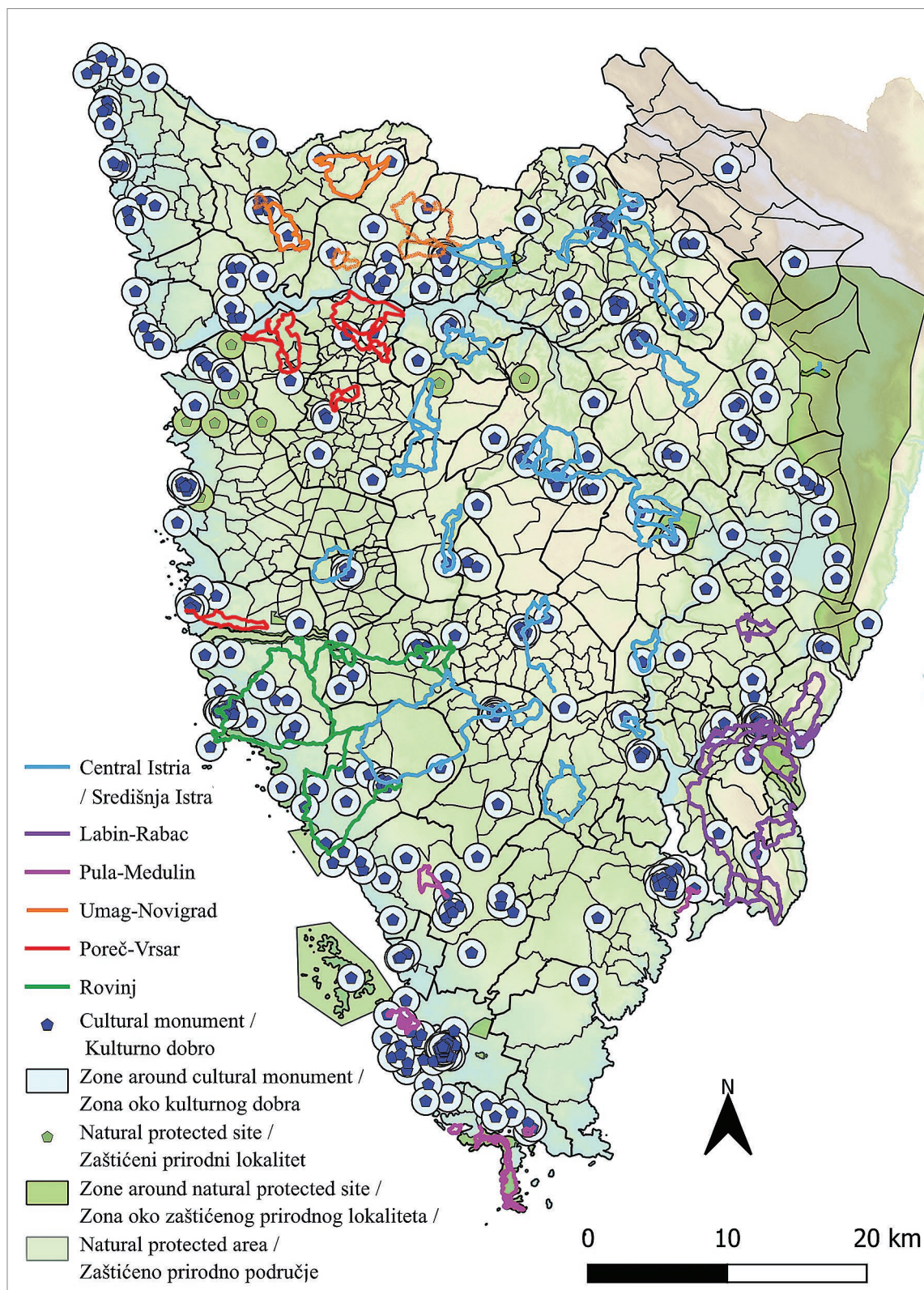


Fig. 2 Geographical layout and interconnectivity of trails, cultural monuments, natural protected areas and sites by hiking regions in Istria County
 Sl. 2. Geografski raspored i međusobna povezanost staza, kulturne baštine, prirodnih zaštićenih područja i lokaliteta u pješačkim regijama Istarske županije

Draga, the Motovun forest special forest reserve and the Pićan significant landscape. The most significant protected areas in the Rovinj hiking region are the Datule-Barbariga special paleontological reserve, the Palud special ornithological reserve, and the Limski Bay special marine reserve. The only hiking region without protected nature along or in the immediate vicinity of trails is Umag-Novigrad (tab. 3, Fig. 2). During fieldwork, using participant observation and autoethnography, possibilities for slow tourism supply in terms of the vicinity of natural protected areas and sites were explored. It was confirmed that this group of attractions is available with no obstacles.

Cultural heritage sites are the second group of attractions suitable for slow tourism development. In Istria County, there are 321 protected cultural heritage sites (*Ministry of Culture and media, 2023*)⁵ among which the most important are the Episcopal Complex of the Euphrasian Basilica in the Historic Centre of Poreč, registered on the UNESCO World Heritage list, and six monuments of the national significance. In towns and municipalities that offer hiking trails, there are a total of 247 cultural heritage sites. Nevertheless, within the immediate vicinity (up to 1 km) of hiking trails, there are 136 cultural heritage sites (Tab. 4, Fig. 2); among which, the most precious are the Church of St. Mary in Škriljinah, a monument of national significance, situated near the village of Beram, and urban or rural complexes of historic Istrian towns and villages.

The hiking regions of Central Istria, with a total of 58 sites, and Rovinj, with a total of 24, have the highest concentration of cultural heritage sites along or within the immediate vicinity of the trails. Only one-fifth or 16 cultural heritage sites of the Pula-Medulin region are located along or within the immediate vicinity of trails. The primary reason for this under-representation is attributed to the geographical dispersion of the trails, which extend far beyond the historical urban centre of Pula, where there are 30 cultural heritage sites. A similar issue exists in the Poreč-Vrsar region, where there is no es-

šumskog rezervata Motovunska šuma i značajnog krajobraza Pićan. Najznačajnija zaštićena prirodna područja u pješačkoj regiji Rovinj su posebni paleontološki rezervat Datule-Barbariga, posebni ornitološki rezervat Palud i posebni rezervat u moru Limski zaljev. Jedina pješačka regija bez zaštićene prirode uz staze ili u neposrednoj blizini staza jest Umag-Novigrad (tab. 3, sl. 2). Tijekom terenskog rada, na osnovi sudioničkoga promatranja i autoetnografije, testirane su mogućnosti ponude sporoga turizma s obzirom na blizinu prirodnih zaštićenih područja i lokaliteta. Potvrđeno je da je ova skupina atrakcija dostupna bez zapreka.

Lokaliteti kulturne baštine druga su skupina atrakcija pogodnih za razvoj sporoga turizma. U Istarskoj županiji zaštićeno je 321 kulturno dobro (*Ministarstvo kulture i medija, 2023*)⁵ među kojima su najznačajniji Biskupski kompleks Eufrazijeve bazilike u povijesnoj jezgri Poreča, uvršten na UNESCO-ov popis svjetske baštine i šest spomenika od nacionalnoga značaja. U gradovima i općinama koje imaju uređene pješačke staze postoji ukupno 247 kulturnih dobara. Ipak, u neposrednoj blizini (do 1 km) pješačkih staza nalazi se 136 lokaliteta kulturne baštine (tab. 4, sl. 2) među kojima su najdragocjeniji crkva sv. Marije u Škriljinama, spomenik nacionalnoga značaja, smješten u blizini sela Beram, te urbane ili ruralne cjeline povijesnih istarskih gradova i sela.

Pješačke regije Središnje Istre, s ukupno 58 lokacija, i Rovinja, s ukupno 24, imaju najveću koncentraciju lokaliteta kulturne baštine uz staze ili u njihovoj neposrednoj blizini. Samo jedna petina ili 16 lokaliteta kulturne baštine u regiji Pula-Medulin nalazi se uz staze ili u njihovoj neposrednoj blizini. Primarni razlog za ovu podzastupljenost pripisuje se geografskoj disperziji staza, koje se protežu daleko izvan povijesnoga urbanog središta Pule, gdje se nalazi 30 lokaliteta kulturne baštine. Sličan problem postoji i u regiji Poreč-Vrsar, gdje nema uređene staze u gradu Poreču iako se nudi 9 lokaliteta kulturne baštine u urbanom sre-

⁵ The Register of Cultural Property of the Republic of Croatia kept by the Ministry of Culture and Media comprises three lists: the List of cultural goods, the List of cultural goods of the national significance, and the List of the cultural goods under the preventive protection.

⁵ Registar kulturnih dobara Republike Hrvatske koji vodi Ministarstvo kulture i medija sastoji se od triju popisa: Popis kulturnih dobara, Popis kulturnih dobara od nacionalnog značaja i Popis kulturnih dobara pod preventivnom zaštitom.

Tab. 4 Natural protected area and sites in vicinity of trails by hiking regions of Istria County
Tab. 4. Kulturna dobra u blizini staza po pješačkim regijama Istarske županije

Hiking region / Pješačka regija	Number of cultural heritage sites / Broj kulturnih dobara	Cultural heritage sites in the vicinity of trails / Kulturna dobra u blizini staza	Share / Udio (%)
Rovinj	41	24	58.5
Pula-Medulin	77	16	20.8
Umag-Novigrad	21	12	57.1
Labin-Rabac	21	17	81.0
Poreč-Vrsar	14	9	64.3
Central Istria / Središnja Istra	73	58	79.5
Total / Ukupno	247	136	55.1

Source: According to Ministry of Culture and Media (2023), calculated by the author
Izvor: Prema podacima Ministarstva kulture i medija (2023), izračunao autor

tablished trail in the town of Poreč, although it offers 9 cultural heritage sites in the urban centre. Using fieldwork accompanied by participant observation and autoethnography, it was confirmed that cultural heritage sites can be listed as attractions in the slow tourism supply. Nevertheless, the primary drawback of these attractions is insufficient information on the sites themselves.

The Istrian hiking regions in January 2023 offered 21,983 tourist beds in commercial accommodations, of which Labin-Rabac and Pula-Medulin regions have a share of 60% of all capacities. These two regions have the densest network of beds (beds per km²), namely Labin-Rabac 29.0 and Pula-Medulin 27.6. Simultaneously, Central Istria offers a mere 1.1 beds per km² (Tab. 5). This region has a low density of beds, which is understandable given that there are only two major hotels (Buzet and Istrian spa resort) and other accommodation establishments are sparsely distributed. If one considers number of beds per km of hiking trails, then (in January) Pula-Medulin offers 112.2 beds per each kilometre of trail while, at the same time, Central Istria has only 3.3.

In August 2023, at the peak of the tourism season, a total of 167,276 tourist beds were recorded in

dištu. Terenskim radom popraćenim sudioničkim promatranjem i autoetnografijom potvrđeno je da se lokaliteti kulturne baštine mogu navesti kao atrakcije u ponudi sporoga turizma. Ipak, glavni je nedostatak ovih atrakcija nedostatak informacija na lokalitetu.

Istarske pješačke regije u siječnju 2023. nudile su 21 983 turističke postelje u komercijalnom smještaju, od čega regije Labin-Rabac i Pula-Medulin imaju udio od 60 % svih kapaciteta. Te dvije regije imaju najgušću mrežu postelja (postelja po km²), i to Labin-Rabac 29,0 i Pula-Medulin 27,6. Istodobno Središnja Istra nudi tek 1,1 krevet po km² (tab. 5). Ova regija ima malu gustoću postelja, što je i razumljivo s obzirom na to da postoje samo dva veća hotela (Buzet i Istarske toplice), a ostali smještajni kapaciteti rijetko su raspodijeljeni. Ako se uzme u obzir broj postelja po kilometru pješačkih staza, Pula-Medulin u siječnju nudi 112,2 postelje po kilometru staza, dok ih Središnja Istra ima samo 3,3.

U kolovozu 2023. godine, na vrhuncu turističke sezone, evidentirano je ukupno 167 276 turističkih postelja u komercijalnim smještajnim kapacitetima u pješačkim regijama Istre, što je

Tab. 5 Tourist beds in commercial accommodation in January and August 2023 by hiking regions of Istria County
 Tab. 5. Broj postelja u komercijalnom turističkom smještaju u siječnju i kolovozu 2023. po pješačkim regijama Istarske županije

Hiking region / Pješačka regija	January / Siječanj 2023			August / Kolovoz 2023		
	Beds / Postelje	Beds per km ² / Postelje na km ²	Beds per km of trails / Postelje na km staza	Beds / Postelje	Beds per km ² / Postelje na km ²	Beds per km of trails / Postelje na km staza
Rovinj	3,689	16.8	29.4	42,925	195.6	342.0
Pula-Medulin	8,828	27.6	112.2	71,035	222.1	902.6
Umag-Novigrad	976	4.3	13.8	4,185	18.4	59.4
Labin-Rabac	4,434	29.0	25.5	16,959	111.1	97.4
Poreč-Vrsar	2,974	17.4	36.6	21,006	122.9	258.4
Central Istria / Središnja Istra	1,082	1.1	3.3	11,166	11.8	33.9
Total / Ukupno	21,983	10.8	25.6	167,276	82.3	194.6

Source: According to Ministry of Culture and Media (2023), calculated by the author
 Izvor: Prema podacima Ministarstva kulture i medija (2023), izračunao autor

commercial accommodations in Istrian hiking regions, which is closely linked to the dominant *Sun and Sea* tourism development model. That model coincides with summer, warm weather and the period of collective holidays in the surrounding countries and regions. In this month, Pula-Medulin and Rovinj offered more than two-thirds of all commercial tourist accommodation capacities of the hiking regions. Similarly, these two regions have the densest network of tourist beds per km² and of hiking trails per km. Due to identical reasons as in the case of January accommodation data, Central Istria has the lowest values for both density indicators (Tab. 5). Although, Umag-Novigrad is a highly developed tourism region, it recorded lower data of accommodation density. The main reason for this is the fact that the majority of commercial tourist accommodations are located in the towns of Umag and Novigrad where there are no established hiking trails.

The evaluation procedure of the mentioned hiking trail data, in terms of slow tourism supply, included grading the key indicators. The key indicators are the density of trails in hiking regions (km/km²), the number of natural protected sites and areas along or

usko povezano s dominantnim modelom razvoja turizma *Sunce i more*. Taj model koincidira s ljetom, toplim vremenom i razdobljem kolektivnih godišnjih odmora u zemljama i regijama u okruženju. Pula-Medulin i Rovinj u ovom su mjesecu ponudili više od dvije trećine svih komercijalnih turističkih smještajnih kapaciteta pješačkih regija. Te dvije regije imaju i najgušću mrežu turističkih postelja po km² i po kilometru pješačkih staza. Zbog identičnih razloga kao i u slučaju podataka o smještaju za siječanj Središnja Istra ima najniže vrijednosti za oba pokazatelja gustoće (tab. 5). Iako je Umag-Novigrad turistički vrlo razvijena regija, bilježi nižu gustoću smještaja. Glavni je razlog tomu je činjenica da se većina komercijalnih turističkih smještajnih kapaciteta nalazi u gradovima Umag i Novigrad gdje nema uređenih pješačkih staza.

Postupak evaluacije navedenih podataka o pješačkim stazama, u pogledu ponude sporoga turizma, uključivao je ocjenjivanje ključnih pokazatelja. To su gustoća staza u pješačkim regijama (km/km²), broj prirodnih zaštićenih lokaliteta i područja uz staze ili u njihovoj neposrednoj blizini,

Tab. 6 Scoring of the key indicators
Tab. 6. Bodovanje ključnih indikatora

Hiking region / Pješačka regija	Indicators / Indikatori						
	Trails density / Gustoća staza	Natural protected area and sites in vicinity of trails / Zaštićena prirodna područja i mjesto u blizini staza	Cultural heritage sites in vicinity of trails / Kulturna dobra u blizini staza	Beds / Postelje	Beds per km / Postelje na km		Total / Ukupno
					January / Siječanj	August / Kolovoz	
Rovinj	2	2	2	2	2	10	
Pula-Medulin	1	1	1	2	2	7	
Umag-Novigrad	1	1	1	1	1	5	
Labin-Rabac	2	1	1	1	1	6	
Poreč-Vrsar	2	1	1	2	2	8	
Central Istria / Središnja Istra	1	2	2	1	1	7	

within the immediate vicinity of the trail, cultural heritage sites along or within the immediate vicinity of the trail, and the number of tourist beds in the commercial accommodations in January and August 2023 (Tab. 6). The grading in this research meant scoring those elements in such a way that the regions with a result above the average received two points, and those below it received one point.

The results of the scoring indicate that the trails in the Rovinj hiking region have the most favourable slow tourism supply in Istria County. According to this, Poreč-Vrsar has the second-best slow tourism supply (8 points). Nevertheless, if accommodation points are not included in this evaluation, the highest scores are achieved by Rovinj and Central Istria. In both grading versions, the Umag-Novigrad is the region with the lowest score.

DISCUSSION

Results of this study and grading of the hiking regions are expected if one considers previous research of tourism intensity in Istria County (Curić et al., 2012; Vojnović, 2018; Opačić et al., 2022). According to these papers, Rovinj and the sur-

lokaliteti kulturne baštine uz staze ili u njihovoj neposrednoj blizini te broj turističkih postelja u komercijalnim smještajnim objektima u siječnju i kolovozu 2023. (tab. 6). Ocjenjivanje u ovom istraživanju podrazumijevalo je bodovanje tih elemenata na način da su regije s rezultatom iznad prosjeka dobile dva boda, a one ispod prosjeka jedan bod.

Rezultati bodovanja pokazuju da staze pješačke regije Rovinj imaju najpovoljniju ponudu sporoga turizma u Istarskoj županiji. Drugu najbolju ponudu sporoga turizma ima regija Poreč-Vrsar (8 bodova). Ipak, ako se u ovu ocjenu ne uključe bodovi za smještaj, najviše ocjene postižu pješačke regije Rovinj i Središnja Istra. U objema inačicama ocjenjivanja regija Umag-Novigrad najslabije je ocijenjena.

RASPRAVA

Rezultati ovoga istraživanja i ocjenjivanje pješačkih regija očekivani su ako se u obzir uzmu prethodna istraživanja intenziteta turizma u Istarskoj županiji (Curić i dr., 2012; Vojnović, 2018; Opačić i dr., 2022). Prema tim istraživa-

rounding area is the top tourist destination with a high level of tourist intensity including accommodation capacities and attractions. In the same way, the favourable score of the Poreč-Vrsar region is the consequence of its high concentration of tourist accommodation capacities in the Vrsar Municipality (Vojnović, 2021).

Respecting previous research and publications of slow tourism supply, it can be concluded that spatial layout, attractions and commercial accommodation capacities of Istrian hiking regions fulfil primary purpose for slow tourists. Long-term and complex fieldwork, participant observation and autoethnography on each of the trails were used as testing situations for potential slow tourists or, as Rabbiosi (2021) emphasized, as the research instrument. Situations during fieldwork and hiking along each of Istrian trails confirmed the presence of all main dimensions of slow tourism. First, the length and complexity of geomorphological features of trails, especially in Central Istria, give possibilities to slowness and unhurried pace as Honoré (2004), Andrews (2006), Gardner (2009), Molz (2009), Cresswell (2010) and Caffyn (2012) suggested. Second, and similarly to the research of Matos (2004), Conway and Timms (2010), and Nielsen et al. (2011), it was unavoidable a deeper connection within the destination and with the locals, as well as personal and/or intimate dimensions, as the main travel motives (Molz, 2009; Caffyn, 2012; Oh et al., 2016; Rabbiosi, 2021). The network of trails in Istria provides opportunities for slow modes of transport inside the hiking region, as Honoré (2004), Lumsdon and McGrath (2011) and Caffyn (2012) pointed out. Finally, hiking trails are located and developed in parts of the Istrian cultural landscape where natural components enriched with protected area and sites (natural and cultural) are predominant. This confirmed the environmental dimensions that unify to be the most prominent slow tourism dimensions (Dickinson and Lumsdon, 2010; Dickinson et al., 2011; Heitmann et al., 2011; Wearing et al., 2012).

Next, it is necessary to give a critical overview of IRTA's hiking trails network and regions (IRTA, 2023). Although this network has the primary purpose of satisfying the needs of the locals, recreation-

čima Rovinj i njegova okolica vodeća su turistička destinacija s visokom razinom turističkoga intenziteta uključujući smještajne kapacitete i atrakcije. Jednako tako, povoljan rezultat regije Poreč-Vrsar posljedica je visoke koncentracije turističkih smještajnih kapaciteta na području Općine Vrsar (Vojnović, 2021).

Uzimajući u obzir dosadašnja istraživanja i publikacije o ponudi sporoga turizma, može se zaključiti da prostorni raspored, komercijalni smještajni kapaciteti i atrakcije istarskih pješačkih regija ispunjavaju primarnu namjenu za spore turiste. Dugotrajni i složeni terenski rad, sudioničko promatranje i autoetnografija na svakoj stazi korišteni su kao testne situacije za potencijalne spore turiste ili, kako je naglasila Rabbiosi (2021), kao instrument istraživanja. Te situacije tijekom terenskoga rada i pješčenja svakom od istarskih staza potvrdile su prisutnost svih glavnih dimenzija sporoga turizma. Prvo, duljina i složenost geomorfoloških značajki staza, posebno u Središnjoj Istri, daju mogućnost sporosti i neuzurbanosti kao što su Honoré (2004), Andrews (2006), Gardner (2009), Molz (2009), Cresswell (2010) i Caffyn (2012) predložili. Drugo, slično istraživanjima Matos (2004), Conway i Timmsa (2010) te Nielsena i dr. (2011), kao glavni motiv putovanja bila je neizbježna dublja povezanost unutar destinacije i s lokalnim stanovništvom, kao i osobne i/ili intimne dimenzije (Molz, 2009; Caffyn, 2012; Oh i dr., 2016; Rabbiosi, 2021). Mreža staza u Istri pruža mogućnosti za spori način prijevoza unutar pješačke regije, kako su istaknuli Honoré (2004), Lumsdon i McGrath (2011) i Caffyn (2012). Konačno, pješačke staze nalaze se i razvijaju u onim dijelovima istarskoga kulturnog krajolika gdje prevladavaju prirodne komponente obogaćene zaštićenim područjima i lokalitetima (prirodnim i kulturnim). Time su potvrđene ekološke dimenzije koje se ujedinjuju kao najistaknutije dimenzije sporoga turizma (Dickinson i Lumsdon, 2010; Dickinson i dr., 2011; Heitmann i dr., 2011; Wearing i dr., 2012).

U završnom dijelu potrebno je dati kritički osvrt na IRTA-inu mrežu pješačkih staza i regija (IRTA, 2023). Iako je ovoj mreži prvenstveno bilo u cilju zadovoljiti potrebe lokalnoga stanov-

ists and tourists, it could be used as a part of slow tourism supply. However, respecting the primary and commendable intentions to extend the tourist season from summer to year-round and to include less-developed Istrian tourist regions to enrich tourist supply, these efforts have certain shortcomings.

In general, the geographical layout of hiking trails is satisfactory because most of Istrian towns and municipalities are included in the network. The vicinity of trails is full of natural and anthropogenic tourist attractions and accommodation capacities. However, the current distribution of the hiking trails is uneven because 11 towns and municipalities⁶ are, without explainable reasons, excluded from the network. Despite this, some of them, like Poreč, Umag, Novigrad, Funtana, and Tar-Vabriga, are the leading tourist destinations in the County with significant networks of cultural heritage sites. The other municipalities, like Lanišće and Kršan, are partly located in the Učka Nature Park, and Ližnjan and Fažana municipalities offer scenic coastal trails. The tourist attraction networks of these 11 towns and municipalities is favourable, with 10 protected nature areas and sites and 64 cultural heritage sites, with 10,924 beds in January 2023 and 129,419 beds in August 2023, respectively.

Furthermore, the region names are partly confusing. For example, two regions (Poreč-Vrsar and Umag-Novigrad) are named after towns where there are no hiking trails. Similarly, there are three hiking trails in the Opatalj Municipality, but one of these is part of Central Istria and the other two are in the Umag-Novigrad region. For the purpose of enhancing the existing regionalization of hiking trails, which is illogical from a geographical standpoint, it is proposed that they be divided into five newly designated regions similar to the tourist regionalization of Istria by Blažević and Knežević (2006). The additional criterion important for slow tourism is that in each region, there is at least one major tourist destination with accommodation capacities opened all year round. The proposed regions are West (alternative name Rovinj-Poreč), East (alternative name Labin-Rabac), South (or Pula-Medulin), Northwest (or Umag-Novigrad), and Inland (Central

ništva, rekreativaca i turista, mogla bi se koristiti kao dio ponude sporog turizma. No, uvažavajući primarne i hvalevrijedne namjere da se turistička sezona produži s ljetne na cijelu godinu te da se obogaćuju turistička ponuda i manje razvijene istarske regije, ova nastojanja imaju određene nedostatke.

Općenito gledano, geografski je raspored pješačkih staza zadovoljavajući jer je u mrežu uključena većina istarskih gradova i općina. U blizini staza nalaze se brojne prirodne i antropogene turističke atrakcije i smještajni kapaciteti. No, trenutni raspored pješačkih staza nije ravnomjeran jer je čak 11 gradova i općina⁶ iz neobjašnjivih razloga isključeno iz mreže staza premda su neki od njih, poput Poreča, Umaga, Novigrada, Funtane i Tar-Vabrige, vodeće turističke destinacije u županiji sa značajnom mrežom kulturnih dobara. Ostale općine, poput Lanišća i Kršana, dijelom se nalaze u parku prirode Učka, a općine Ližnjan i Fažana nude slikovite obalne staze. Mreža turističkih atrakcija ovih 11 gradova i općina je povoljna, s 10 prirodnih zaštićenih područja i lokaliteta te 64 lokaliteta kulturne baštine, s 10 924 ležaja u siječnju 2023., odnosno s njih 129 419 u kolovozu 2023. godine.

Nadalje, nazivi regija djelomično su zbunjujući. Primjerice, dvije regije (Poreč-Vrsar i Umag-Novigrad) nazvane su po gradovima u kojima nema pješačkih staza. Isto tako, u Općini Opatalj nalaze se tri pješačke staze, od kojih je jedna u regiji Središnja Istra, a druge u regiji Umag Novigrad. U svrhu poboljšanja postojeće regionalizacije pješačkih staza, koja je geografski nelogična, predlaže se njihova podjela na pet no-vooblikovanih regija slično turističkoj regionalizaciji Istre u Blažević i Knežević (2006). Dodatni je kriterij, važan za spori turizam, da u svakoj regiji postoji najmanje jedna veća turistička destinacija sa smještanim kapacitetima otvorenima tijekom cijele godine. Predložene regije su Zapad (alternativni naziv Rovinj-Poreč), Istok (alternativni naziv Labin-Rabac), Jug (ili Pula-Medulin), Sjeverozapad (ili Umag-Novigrad) i Unutrašnja

⁶ Towns and municipalities without hiking trails are: Brtonigla, Fažana, Funtana, Kršan, Lanišće, Ližnjan, Novigrad, Poreč, Sveti Petar u Šumi, Tar-Vabriga and Umag.

⁶ Gradovi i općine bez pješačkih staza su: Brtonigla, Fažana, Funtana, Kršan, Lanišće, Ližnjan, Novigrad, Poreč, Sveti Petar u Šumi, Tar-Vabriga i Umag.

Hiking trails of Istria County and their function in slow tourism development

Pješačke staze Istarske županije u funkciji razvoja sporoga turizma

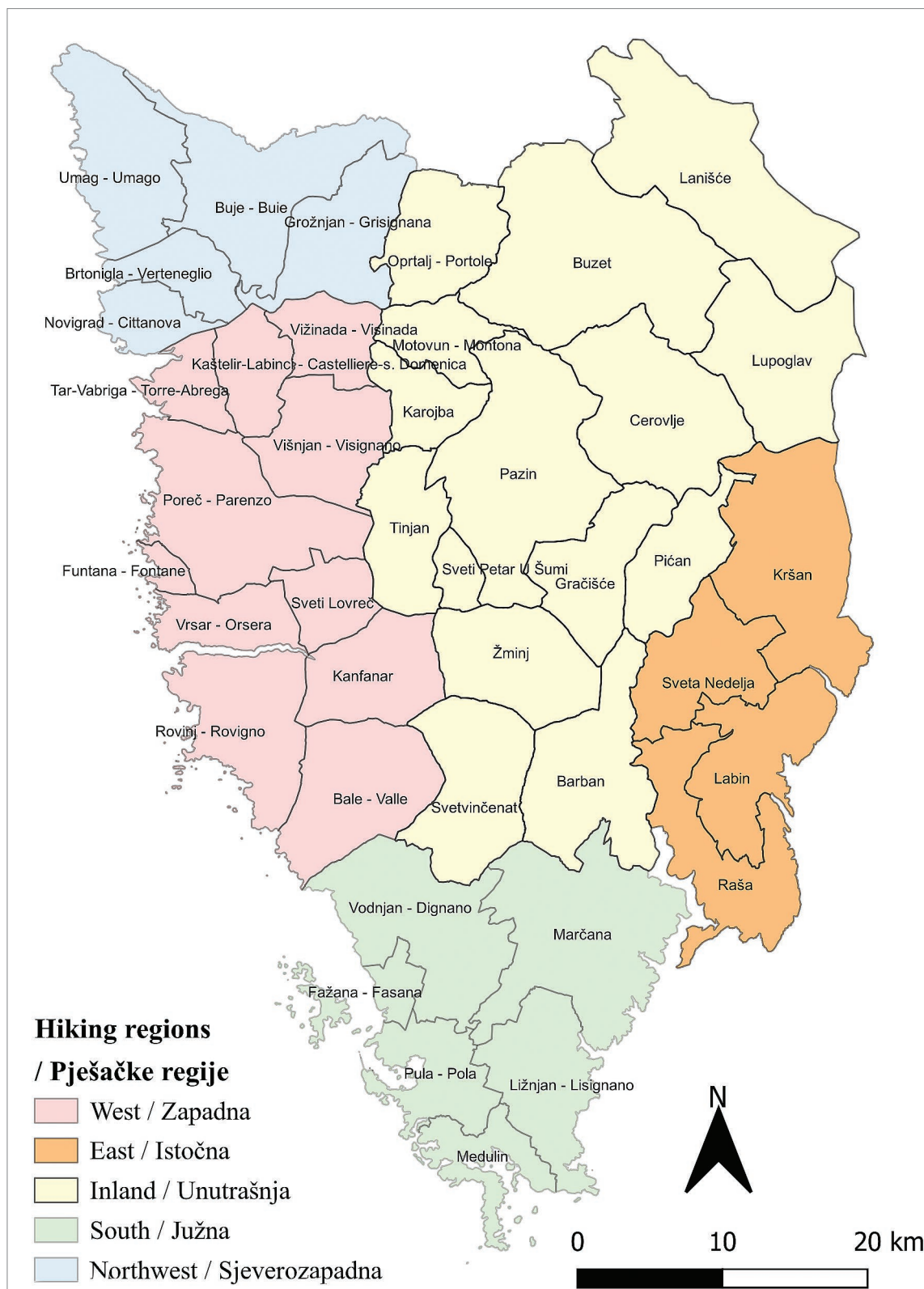


Fig. 3 The proposal for a new regionalization of hiking regions in Istria County

Sl. 3. Prijedlog nove regionalizacije pješačkih regija Istarske županije

Istria (Fig. 3). Alternatively, municipalities in the border zone of two regions can be placed in a neighbourhood region. For instance, landlocked municipalities, such as Grožnjan, Kaštelir-Labinci, Vižinada, Višnjan, and Sveti Lovreč, may be included within the Inland region. Similarly, the region West could be subdivided into two regions: Rovinj and Poreč.

During the fieldwork, using autoethnography as a part of research process (Humberstone and Nicol, 2020), technical and practical deficiencies were noted and studied. First, the most of hiking trails in each of the regions have an insufficient number of signs for orientation and direction of movement. The hiking on trails without a GPS device or similar mobile applications could be an unpleasant experience and there is a possibility that the user might get lost.⁷ Similarly, all trails should be equipped with basic facilities, such as an availability of water, rest areas, benches, and information tables. The second deficiency is the inadequate quality of specialized websites (*istria trails*, 2023). In comparison to similar Slovenian websites (*slovenia-outdoor.com*, 2023), the Istrian portal does not have enough information for the average tourist, i.e. people without specialized professional knowledge, skills, and tools. Last, on some trails that pass by private land belonging to the locals certain aversions were noted.

Despite the technical and organizational shortcomings of Istrian hiking trails, tourist infrastructure, attractions, and accommodation capacities could be a basis for slow tourism development. The most crucial measures for enhancing the hiking trail supply are the implementation of more efficient regionalization, the establishment of a denser network of facilities along and around the trails, and, ultimately, the establishment of more informative websites for average users.

CONCLUSION

The research confirmed the supply of 84 officially marked and promoted hiking trails in Istria County that are geographically distributed across six regions. Respecting the dimensions of the slow tour-

Istra (Sl. 3). Alternativno, općine u pograničnoj zoni dviju regiju mogu se smjestiti u susjednu regiju. Na primjer, općine bez izlaza na more, kao što su Grožnjan, Kaštelir-Labinci, Vižinada, Višnjan i Sveti Lovreč, mogu se uključiti u regiju Unutrašnja Istra. Slično tomu regija Zapad može biti podijeljena u dvije regije: Rovinj i Poreč.

Tijekom terenskoga rada uz korištenje autoetnografije kao dijela istraživačkoga procesa (Humberstone i Nicol, 2020) uočeni su i proučeni tehnički i praktični nedostaci. Prvo, većina pješačkih staza u svakoj regiji ima nedovoljan broj znakova za orijentaciju i smjer kretanja. Pješaćenje tim stazama bez GPS uređaja ili sličnih mobilnih aplikacija može biti neugodno iskustvo i postoji mogućnost da korisnik zaluta.⁷ Slično tomu, sve staze trebaju biti opremljene osnovnim sadržajima kao što su dostupnost vode, odmorišta, klupa i informativnih ploča. Drugi je nedostatak neadekvatna kvaliteta specijaliziranoga internetskog portala (*istria trails*, 2023). U usporedbi sa sličnom slovenskom internetskom stranicom (*slovenia-outdoor.com*, 2023) istarski portal nema dovoljno informacija za prosječnoga turista bez specijaliziranih stručnih znanja, vještina i alata. Na kraju, na nekim stazama koje prolaze pokraj privatnih zemljišta u vlasništvu mještana uočene se određene averzije prema tom vidu turizma.

Unatoč tehničkim i organizacijskim nedostacima istarskih pješačkih staza turistička infrastruktura, atrakcije i smještajni kapaciteti mogli bi biti temelj razvoja sporoga turizma. Najvažnije su mjere za povećanje ponude pješačkih staza provedba učinkovitije regionalizacije, uspostava gušće mreže sadržaja uz staze i oko njih te, u konačnici, uspostava informativnijega mrežnog portala za prosječne korisnike.

ZAKLJUČAK

Ovim je istraživanjem utvrđena ponuda 84 službeno označene i promovirane pješačke staze u Istarskoj županiji koje su geografski raspoređene u šest regija. Uvažavajući dimenzije sporoga

⁷ Characteristic examples of such experiences are hiking trails in the municipalities Vižinada, Kaštelir-Labinci and Cerovlje.

⁷ Tipični su primjeri pješačke staze u općinama Vižinada, Kaštelir-Labinci i Cerovlje.

ism, these hiking trails could develop an important segment of this form of tourism, unifying environmental modes of travel, natural and cultural attractiveness of destination and deeper interconnection with local communities.

The analysis of the relevant elements of slow tourism supply has clearly shown that there is a favourable network of natural protected areas and sites and tangible cultural heritage, as well as commercial tourist accommodation capacities in the vicinity of Istrian hiking trails. However, this research has also confirmed that hiking trails in the vicinity of the most prominent Istrian tourist destinations such as Rovinj, Vrsar, Poreč Umag and Pula have more favourable conditions to develop slow tourism using the denser network of tourist accommodation.

The identified deficiencies, such as the large number of tourism-oriented towns and municipalities lacking hiking trails, the illogical distribution of hiking trails, and consequently, the confusing regionalization, could be overcome with greater efficiency in spatial organization. Likewise, technical deficiencies such as efforts to better inform potential tourists and the deficiencies along trails could be solved by taking in account solutions and practices from other countries or regions similar to Istria.

From a methodological standpoint, it was necessary to apply several mutually connected methods in this research. Using the fieldwork, participant observation and autoethnography in geographical and outdoor studies was demanded by the complexity, abundance and geographical layout of hiking trails. Although the collected official data and the mapping supported by GIS gave an initial perspective of the interconnections of trails, facilities and attractions, in terms of suitability for slow tourism, it was necessary to use autoethnography as a research process. The implementation of this methodological pluralism could provide possibilities for testing real-life scenarios, in this case, the potential and attractiveness of hiking trails for slow tourism as well as the shortcomings. Considering the lack of official statistical or geographical data needed in outdoor and tourism studies, these methods have added applicability.

Practical values of this research are the possibilities of application in local, regional and national

turizma, te pješačke staze mogle bi razviti važan segment ovog oblika turizma objedinjujući ekološki način putovanja, prirodnu i kulturnu atraktivnost destinacije i dublju povezanost s lokalnim zajednicama.

Analiza relevantnih elemenata ponude sporoga turizma jasno je pokazala da oko istarskih pješačkih staza postoji povoljna mreža prirodnih zaštićenih područja i lokaliteta te materijalne kulturne baštine i komercijalnih turističkih smještajnih kapaciteta. Međutim, istraživanje je potvrdilo da pješačke staze u blizini najpoznatijih istarskih turističkih odredišta poput Rovinja, Vrsara, Poreča, Umaga i Pule imaju povoljnije uvjete za razvoj sporoga turizma korištenjem gušće mreže turističkoga smještaja.

Uočene nedostatke, poput velikog broja turizmu orijentiranih gradova i općina bez pješačkih staza, nelogične raspoređenosti pješačkih staza i posljedično zbunjujuće regionalizacije, moguće je premostiti učinkovitijom organizacijom prostora. Tehnički nedostaci poput informiranja potencijalnih turista i nedostaci uzduž staze mogli bi se riješiti primjenom rješenja i prakse iz drugih zemalja odnosno regija sličnih Istri.

S metodološkoga stajališta u ovom je istraživanju bilo potrebno primijeniti nekoliko međusobno povezanih metoda. Složenost, brojnost i geografski raspored pješačkih staza iziskivali su upotrebu metoda terenskoga rada, sudioničkoga promatranja i autoetnografije u geografskim i *outdoor* studijima. Iako su prikupljeni službeni podatci i kartiranje podržano GIS-om dali početnu perspektivu međusobne povezanosti staza, sadržaja i atrakcija, u smislu prikladnosti za spori turizam, bilo je nužno poslužiti se autoetnografijom kao istraživačkim procesom. Implementacija ovoga metodološkog pluralizma mogla bi pružiti mogućnosti testiranja scenarija iz stvarnoga života, u ovom slučaju potencijala i atraktivnosti pješačkih staza za spori turizam kao i nedostataka. Uzimajući u obzir nedostatak službenih statističkih ili geografskih podataka potrebnih za *outdoor* i turističke studije, ove metode dobivaju dodatnu relevantnost.

Praktične su vrijednosti nalaza ovoga istraživanja mogućnosti primjene u lokalnim, regi-

studies, tourism and spatial plans and similar documents, using developed tourism regions as the geographical model. In the same way, this research can be the framework, applied for the purpose of introducing new hiking trails in hitherto non-valourised Istrian towns and municipalities, but similarly in other Croatian tourism regions where such facilities are not yet implemented. Practical implication for planners and local administration could be applications of this work as a template for reaffirmation and repositioning of established tourism supply considering the significance of the hiking trails, attractions and facilities for slow tourism development.

The study's potential shortcomings are due to the extensive, complex, and demanding field research, which included simultaneous use of other methods. The challenging outdoor study was often realized in an uncomfortable environment, which is something that future researchers have to take in the account. Certain limitations were represented in terms of the material and financial obstacles that emerged during realization of this research. However, these shortcomings did not endanger the elaboration and use of the methods, tools, and techniques in achieving of research results and objectives.

onalnim i nacionalnim studijama, turističkim i prostornim planovima i sličnim dokumentima upotrebom turistički razvijene regije kao geografskoga modela. Ovo istraživanje takođe može biti okvir primijenjen u svrhu uvođenja novih pješačkih staza u do sada nevalorizirane istarske gradove i općine, ali slično i u drugim hrvatskim turističkim regijama gdje takvih sadržaja još nema. Praktična implikacija za planere i lokalnu upravu mogla bi biti primjena ovoga rada kao predložka u reafirmaciji i repositioniranju uspostavljene turističke ponude s obzirom na važnost pješačkih staza, atrakcija i sadržaja za razvoj sporoga turizma.

Potencijalni nedostaci studije proizlaze iz opsežna, složena i zahtjevna terenskoga istraživanja koje je uključivalo istovremenu primjenu drugih metoda. Izazovna studija na otvorenom koja se često provodi u neudobnom okruženju nešto je što istraživači moraju uzeti u obzir. Zastupljena su određena ograničenja u smislu materijalnih i financijskih prepreka koja su utjecala na tijek realizacije ovoga istraživanja. Međutim, ti nedostaci nisu ugrozili razradu i korištenje metoda, alata i tehnika u postizanju rezultata i ciljeva istraživanja.

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