

Glamping: An Active Back to Nature Trend in the Post-Pandemic Tourism Reality

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Abstract: Although that today most people reside in cities, megacities, megalopolises or urban agglomerations, they are striving to experience nature more often and in a significantly ways following new forms of tourism. Sustainable going back to nature is one of them and it allows inhabitants of both cities and countryside to find more differentiated ways to be on their own and recharge spirit and soul. A tent in nature is a favourite vacation imagination for many Americans and Western Europeans. Innovations in this type of recreational activities are exciting push stimulus for the experienced and future camping fans. Being still a neologism for the linguists, glamping is not any longer an unknown term for the tourism practice and the admirers of nature and well-being know it. Being a new kind of luxury campsite and having revived the old-fashioned camping life means attracting newcomers especially those who get tired due to the long coronavirus outbreaks and those who desire to give rise to this fresh tourism trend. Glamping is also a kind of a boutique camping living. It is a trend that brings together the comfort of a hotel combined with nature and freedom of camping. The contemporary facilities can go far beyond most usual tents of campers combining new with old experiences. Thus, the purpose of this article is to reveal the potential of glamping in the scope of active life and well-being tourism, whereby a snapshot observation technique has been applied.

Keywords: glamping, well-being, typology, geographical distributive analysis, post pandemic, tourism form

1. Introduction

Although glamping is often considered as one of the latest trends and an alternative to mass tourism, regardless its classification, it gains a special attention especially today after the outbreak of the Coronavirus disease pandemic. In the context of social constraints, the concept of glamping finds additional motives for reorganization even in sense of reengineering processes. Although the origins of this tourism form are built upon analogies to camping and as regarding its origin, glamping goes far back to the dawn of human history. Today glamping can hardly be perceived as an entirely new tourism form, but as the new camping version that offers lots of opportunities, plenty of experiences and most of the advantages of the nature-based tourism. Glamping fans consider this variety of factors to be its most important appeal, together with the offering of excellent landscapes, ample spaces, luxury, magnificent ambience, and outdoor environment. Authors agree on the uniqueness of these factors, which glampers, practitioners, service providers and analysts unmistakably define as conditions of exclusivity. Along with the promises for unique experiences, intimacy sharing with nature, entering the fairy tales' world, rural imaginaries and a set of other dimensions, glamping belongs to comfortable outdoor experience. If seen through the lens of the environmentalist perspective, the consumption theory or hospitality management, glamping advocates magic of the natural element. Here the authors believe that its exceptionality is due to the successful combination of all of the aforementioned factors. In our opinion, these factors can be commented as primary factors. Along with them, there are some others that we describe as secondary factors which deserve new viewpoints of researchers, critical thinkers, admirers, and community developers. Secondary factors can be identified at three main levels: at the level of the individual, at the level of society, and at the level of humanity. The present paper claims for an increased attention to the first level, which can be successfully revealed through the prism of the concept of well-being as a representative of the secondary factors' level. The constructive features of combining openness and privacy, peace and tranquility, brilliant scenes and accommodation beneath, luxury and space, intimacy with nature and space within, health and safety caring are all present in a very specific way for the individual to go on a glamping vacation. The authors believe that looking at the secondary factors there reveals main potentials for gaining attractivity. Applying some reengineering methods to glamping has just started on many campsites and is spreading. In addition to the present situational dimension, glamping offers a rich dosage for variety of interests such as water sports, cycling, climbing, and observing flora and fauna. The prospects for these activities are practically unlimited, unlike just camping, just recreation, just observation, just sightseeing, just open-door overnight staying. Much in this vein, the authors reflect on the current situation of glamping in Bulgaria and involve to its overall notion the concept of well-being. In this sense, the main purpose of this research is to describe the potential of Bulgaria's tourism,

leisure, and hospitality opportunities as opportunities for glamping. In addition to the stationary analysis, some discussions are provided in view of the main competitive destinations in South Europe.

Since in fact glamping sites comprise luxury tents in bright colors, modern caravans, and bungalows, they can also offer the highest quality of gourmet restaurants, including dinner under the stars, breakfast on the grass, etc. Glamping sites can be located near the sea or other water springs, near or in the middle of a picturesque landscape, they can have unique scenes, or they can emerge practically everywhere including in urban settings. This piece of evidence is confirmed by all fans of glamping, by the websites of glamping spots, as well as by the theoretical novelty in the literature sources on the subject.

The article also offers a new look at the way how literature sources are treated and rationalized. This is made by providing a geographically distributive (comparative) analysis. The applied methodology is the synthesis and deductive approach to glamping. Last but not least, our goal is devoted to the presentation of a glamping typology based on the tourism practice of a specific investigated region.

2. Literature review: Directions of the glamping camp establishments

In his entertaining reading, and without entering the scientific fields of tourism, recreation and hospitality, Jackson (2014) identifies some essential facts and gives basic tips for being a camper. He states main practical points and shares experiences of how unforgettable the camping experience can be. Undoubtedly and even in this technological 21st century, each of the readers can agree on having not forgotten their own story of spending a night in nature. Additionally, this outdoor staying can be a great experience, it can become a nightmare, or it may not necessarily be associated with a campsite, but it does have some rules and a checklist. A successful open-air experience in nature, on the other hand, also needs tools and tips, rules for cooking, but to become a successful tourist product more than a tent and stars up above will be needed. An important segment is the uniqueness of the experience and the inclusion of primary factors (luxury, price, location, service) and secondary factors (popularity, attendance, social, cultural, and environmental value, innovation). When choosing the appropriate accommodating outdoor form an important role plays the additional effect of well-being as one of the secondary factors' representatives.

Relevant, but already from the point of view of tourism theory and reality, many authors treat the evolution of camping tourism and rationalize the emergence of glamping. Very often the starting point is oppositional and justified by the presence of weaknesses and strengths of SWOTs (Miller, 2017; Pannel, 2017; Igoe, 2016). For the most part of these authors, the idea of transformation for camping practice has to be seen as the main discourse. Only a few researchers support the increasing trend of the active tourism in natural ambience and relate it to the role of well-being. And only few of the scholars perceive a connection between glamping, nature-based tourism, consumption and requirement of post-pandemic recovery in the lens of their interconnectedness.

Not only the evolution of glamping tourism (Cassiel, 2016), but also the diversification of tourist behaviour, visible in the growing demand for a more comfortable and luxurious accommodation; due to the perceived service quality Brochado and Pereira (2017) justify the growth of glamping in outdoor recreation and tourism.

Glamping all over the world is a fast-growing form of tourism and it is represented on the tourist market, not as well-established for now. Tourism theorists, as well as practitioners, have long known about this holiday activity which offers the best opportunity for tourism and outdoor recreation (O'Neil et al., 2010), that participants travel to spend time living in tents, motor homes, or other types of informal, rural accommodation (MacLeod, 2017).

The justification for this viewpoint is the direct relation to the very nature of camping. In addition, some indirect changes in tourists' behaviour and tourist experience are to be respected, including the possibility to combine more opportunities than the ones offered by camping. This combinative reveals the chance to stay in nature while implying a better component of frantic camping. Therefore, the definitions of glamping themselves are growing, and there are no such definitions as luxury camping (Vres and Vres, 2015: 42; Pereira, 2013: 1, Kuhar, 2016); boutique camping (Engama and Mauricette, 2013), five-star camping (STO, 2010), comfortable camping, adult camping, prima camping and other similar colloquial definitions. In Slovenia, even at the national level, they are introducing their parallel concept of glamorous camping, and in Turkey they say that thanks to glamping tourism, travel enthusiasts can live in the desert without sacrificing certain amenities (Göktaş & Kızılırmak, 2017).

As a result, the supply of this mixed type of tourist product, which includes camping outdoors, has an environmentally friendly effect, and at the same time includes a greater dose of comfort and luxury for campers. This view of the nature of glamping is mentioned by almost every writer on its issues, so the question “What makes a glamping experience great?” cannot remain unanswered.

Another major issue of interest to researchers is the type of tourists who prefer glamping tourism. In this way, they can better offer solutions in the preparation of regional and national strategies, or marketing tips for business and stakeholders. According to a large-scale study in Croatia, Cvelic-Bonifacic et al. (2017) managed to register 14 types of glampers. Thus, it turns out that glamping is a concept for fans of different tourism forms, and that glamping can make good use of tourism segmentation. In their study Lyu, Kim and Woo Bae (2019) identify different management strategies for developing satisfactory glamping travel sites. Glamping provides an answer to another important question for the tourism industry. This is the question of overcoming the seasonality of supply. Camps around the world are considered seasonally limited, but with the introduction of luxury and innovative products, glamping is a positive step in this direction. Innovations not only increase their competitive advantage, but by bringing luxury and comfort, the camps become independent of time. In this way, innovations have a direct contribution to reducing the impact of seasonality in campsites (Cvelić-Bonifačić, Milohnić and Cerović, 2017), but at the same time open the door to new and creative ways of accommodation. There is, of course, something to be desired from tourism research in this direction, and not so much in terms of tourism supply and demand (price-quality ratio of service). The identified gap lies in the sphere of the secondary factors of the development of this niche tourism form (Kiryakova-Dineva, Vasenska, and Koyundzhiyska-Davidkova, 2021). One next idea that remains undiscovered so far, or at least not entirely, is to trace the evolutionary nature of glamping through the prism of the whole cycle of economic values, environmentalism, sustainability, social significance, and human health, including well-being. It is the detailed examination of the relationship between nature-based tourism and the new social and health realities, including in times of crisis that will contribute to the better understanding of the complex matter of natural friendliness and social responsibility. It is certain that this research direction will give rise to a wider scope of interdisciplinary research.

Integrative connections between all spheres of human life, time for recreation, and the search for sustainable values are an integral part of human activities in today’s reality. The activities of the modern tourists and travelers are likely to change, and it can be expected that the tourism industry will continue to change. In glamping, however, new requirements, such as more security, social exclusion, protection and hygiene, are meeting these requirements very quickly, incorporating new, innovative solutions and becoming the key to sustainable growth and development. Tserovich (2014) believes that the new type of camping will necessarily include innovative products. This, in turn, can create an entirely new type of search for recovery, which will establish as a reception spending the holiday as time being in nature. Today, we are not far from this possibility, as we are increasingly witnessing how constraints create a new kind of demand. Security, human health and harmony can be found through many different concepts. One of them is the concept of well-being.

3. Glamping typology in South Europe

As camping, glamping offers a variety of comfortable amenities, they can differ in terms of shape, materials and location. There is still no research on the classification of glamp camps and their types. One possible classification could apply the shape criteria, including glamping pods, glamping cabins, glamping domes, glamping tree houses, glamping tents, glamping bubbles, glamping yurts, glamping safari tents, glamping towers, glamping hobbit homes, glamping vintage trailers, glamping gipsy homes to mention a few among the popular ones. Another classification factor may be independence or integration with another type of accommodation, such as a campsite or another type of hospitality facilities.

Our stationary analysis for glamping facilities in South Europe and upon the suggested criteria is presented as follows:

Table 1: Glamping typology in South Europe

Type and subtype	Material	Shape	Location	Accommodation facilities
Tent Glamping (normal tents, yurts glamping, tips and teepees, safari)	Tent	Yurts, A- Form tents,	No limited location	Individual
				attached to other hospitality facility

Type and subtype	Material	Shape	Location	Accommodation facilities
Pods glamping (huts, barns)	Tent, mixed	Various, not specified	On ground	Individual or attached to other hospitality facility
Tree glamping	Wood	Various, not specified	On trees	Attached to a common areas (baths, bath tubs, kitchen, living area)
Bubble glamping Geo-dome Glamping	Transparent structure made of steam bent wood	Circular shaped	On ground bubbles or on water bubbles	Attached to a common areas (baths, bath tubs, kitchen, living area)
Glamping on water (huts on water, floating huts)	Wood, metal mixed,	Rectangle	On water or floating on water	Attached to a common areas (baths, bath tubs, kitchen, living area)
Caravan Glamping	Gypsy caravans, wagons, roulottes with exquisite furnishings, or rustic and basic facility	Circular or rectangle	On ground	Fully individual, no need common areas and facilities

Source: authors' own collaboration

4. Connecting academic research and practice

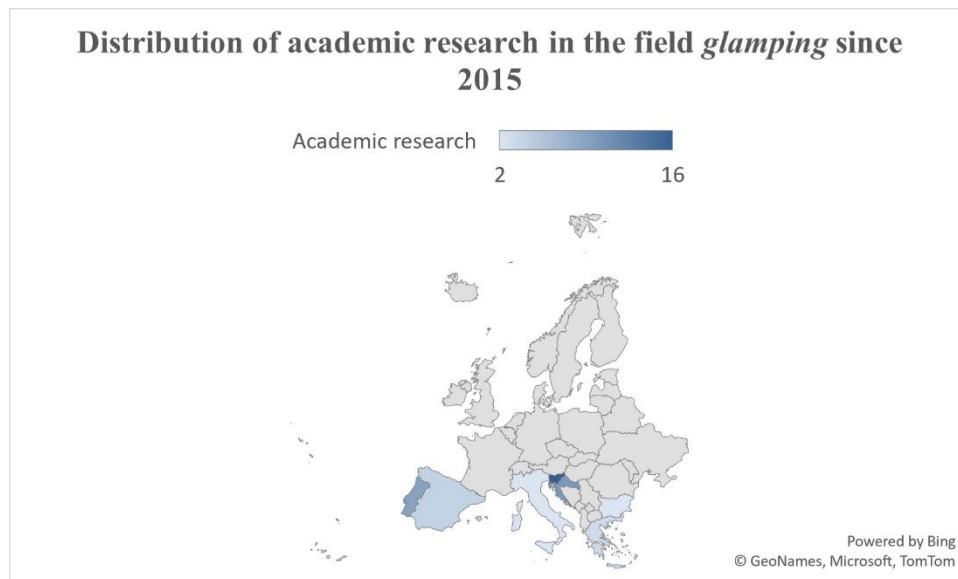
Modern tourists are becoming more aware and have a more pro-active attitude both to their own well-being and to the way they consume natural resources. Today's tourist takes these two points into account more and more, even when choosing a place to rest. Therefore, whether in a natural evolutionary way or thanks to an innovative tourist solution, glamping can accommodate conscious tourists, without much excess, without cement and concrete. In addition, glamping responds well to the different needs of tourists for profiled practice of a particular type of tourism, such as recreational, ecological, cultural, mountain, sea, extreme, etc. Carefree stay in the untouched nature can be rooted in the search for specific typical blacks, but the search for closeness and intimacy with nature is always inherent, especially since the small addition of luxury facilitates the goals of the tourist.

There are many views of tourists who are aware of the main intersections of the dichotomy of nature and well-being. The following parts of the physical aspects "physical health and wellness, lived experience and shared meanings, social lives and political realities" are of special importance to the prominence of the latter and as Dasgupta definitively approaches it. It is this kind of relationship between realities that can be spoken of through the manifestation of glamping, where human awareness and nature-based experience go hand in hand.

Along with the research conducted via mapping and the prospects achieved, another fact is to be regarded as even much more important. The authors were able to establish this fact thanks to a slightly different synthesis of research literature. This review was made on the bases of the literature on glamping synthesis over the period of the last 7 years. The exploratory analysis provided by the authors established some main lines in the research thus being in the direction of service, experience, and luxury. These features reflected the well-known nature of glamping. However, the scientific novelty here discovered through the application of the geographical distributive analysis shown in the next figure.

Using the principle of geographical distribution of the academic research on the national level for the region of South Europe there emerge countries with explicitly greater interest in the topics related to glamping. These countries are Slovakia, Croatia, Portugal, Spain, Italy and Spain. Our bibliometric analysis of the literature sources could embrace 44 scientific articles related to glamping. Bulgaria is represented by only 2 sources so far. A special case are Slovenia and Croatia. There, the topic of glamping is particularly well developed as an emphasis not only on scientific fields such as marketing, service and practice, but also in the scope of university education and research. Given that the graduates are the future specialists in tourism, it can be expected that there is a special kind of potential and a kind of transfer of knowledge between theory and tourism practice. For example, at the University of Maribor for the last 7 years, there have been 12 publicly published theses related to various aspects of glamping. Main direction of these works are sustainable operations and realization of sustainable tourism development in glamping, conceptual design of glamping and architectural interaction of nature - glamping, marketing of innovative, nature-related tourism products and cases studies related to glamping sites located at

Lake Zajarki in the town of Zaprešić, at Lake Velenje and in Kamenško and Medvedce, opportunities for glamping and motivations to visit a glamping site in connection with sustainability.

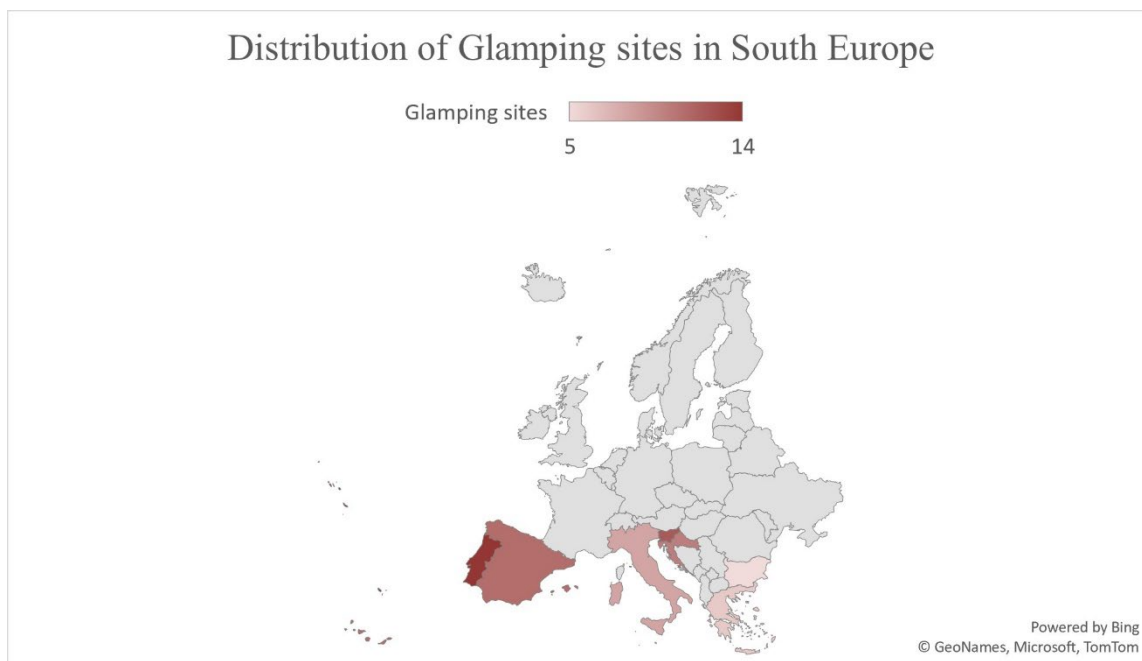


Source: Authors' own model estimation

Figure 1: Geographically distribution of glamping literature since 2015

This specific feature in university research seems to be very important for the future research of glamping. Additionally, the cases studies can significantly contribute to the better understanding of its potentials.

The next step of our investigation is related to the model of the distribution of the glamping sites in some South European countries. It was established again upon the geographical principle of regional distribution. We investigated some main marketing medias, namely according to the data from glampinghub.com, glamping.com and booking.com. In interesting point of investigation was again the geographical distribution of the glamping sites. Our idea was to look in a deeper detail into the kind of glamping sites and their dispersion. Although in her study Sommer (2020) was identified Portugal, Slovenia, Greece, and Croatia as main marketing destinations for Europe. According to our summary of primary data we can visualize the following geographical distribution:



Source: Authors' own model estimation

Figure 2: Distribution of glamping sites in South Europe

The presented two models confirm the possibility of a first comparative attempts for geographical distributive analysis. This analysis shows a direct proportional relationship between the development of glamping tourism and research in the glamping sector. In conclusion, it is clear that in the regions where glamping has a good pace of development, the academic interest in the respective country is greater.

5. Conclusion

In this regard there are some limitations. As regarding the first restriction, many of the offers have not been promoted on the specific web-cites, as these are promotional channels, which are not free of charge. Very often the glamping camps themselves have not yet realized the need for more active marketing and positioning activities on Internet and do not participate in glamping networks. Another limitation is that many glamping sites are positioned in the national language and for this are difficult to be recognized by glampers using English as lingua franca. Because in our case we are talking about countries such as Greece, Slovenia, Croatia - where due to linguistic peculiarities there is a great obstacle in the search for glamping tourism offers. Our idea here is to discuss the dispersion of glamping sites in South Europe which is on a regional level and to open the perspective for future research on European and global level. Some of the glamping establishments have positioned themselves as such in the tourism market and have a relevant marketing policy, but some of them are still in the beginning of marketization. The approach applied for that reason was the geographical distributive analysis with combined with the techniques of synthesis and comparison. Other and more sophisticated statistical methods can be applied in future research on the area. There is an additional restriction with regard to the proposed typology, because it is based on examples at the regional level and therefore it is not exhaustive. Future guidelines, comments and affirmation of glamping as a category of tourism are also to be a matter of future discussions. Some other limitations can be expected in regards of the literature review which appear due to the linguistic issues, because many authors publish in the national languages, and this cannot easily be followed.

This article confirmed the importance of a very interesting niche type of tourism - glamping. An analysis of geographically distributive analysis was attached to the topic, both in terms of the literature sources developing the topic of glamping and the specific sites positioned in Bulgaria. Along with the other different approaches to glamping, this study found that glamping is developing more and more in destinations that have good traditions and natural resources. In view of the literature and cartographic analysis, the authors confirmed the existing opinion that glamping is a promising form of camping with discomfort. This fact is confirmed for the relatively small in size, but large in terms of tourist offer destination Bulgaria. As in the whole of Central and Southern Europe, as well as in the Mediterranean part of Turkey, a new accommodation appears here almost every season, which meets the criteria of environmental friendliness, closeness to nature, relatively more amenities, good services and an unforgettable experience. Glamping sites in Bulgaria are located on the Black Sea coast and in mountainous areas. But there are already those who are not positioned among the necessarily attractive natural landscape. Among the glampings there are also those with classic tent or wooden buildings, but there are also new modern solutions such as balloon glamping Sineva. In addition, all glamping destinations in Bulgaria work in harmony with both nature and man, which contributes to the unique application of a well-being adventure. Glamping allows people to make their holiday as comfortable as possible and still enjoy a higher standard of hotel services and individual comfort. Due to the growing trend and the need for competitive advantage, Bulgaria has the potential to develop the marketing offer and promotion of glamping tourism, especially in the post-pandemic reality. Precisely in times of health and humanitarian crises, glamping sites can offer tourists a first-class experience that will offer security, protection, and at the same time ensure the inclusiveness of the experience.

Despite the above-mentioned conclusions, as a result of the author's research, some new perspectives for glamping are open. In the first place, they concern the more serious networking between glamping sites at a national and European level. Glamping should increasingly be seen not only as an alternative but also as a reality with added social, natural and anthropogenic value.

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