

RELIGIOUS TOURISM PROSPECTS IN THE CASE OF ZADAR (CROATIA)

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ABSTRACT

Tourism at the beginning of the 21 century shows in the most evident way how fragmented and dispersed is the overall development of socioeconomic life at micro and macro level of human existence. So far we have witnessed almost epical conflict between mass tourism and responsible tourism, between the economy of scale and the sustainable tourism development. Awareness and media dispersion of global crisis, acceptance of the idea that we live in a growing risk societies enables further rise of questions about tourism development and how to manage, shape and optimize all advances of accelerated technological development and change.

Specific tourism development has seen special attention during last two decades and we are facing growing importance in scientific research activities oriented towards tailored tourism experience, hence all range of activities oriented towards specific destination management and marketing of specific tourism products and experiences.

Travels based on religious feeling are profoundly rooted in the evolution of mankind as well as in the whole evolution of tourism. Religious tourism is that form of specific tourism that is strongly motivated for religious purpose and belief. One of the oldest types of human mobility, today it should be differentiated into several distinctive clusters. Different clusters of religious tourism need to be distinguished by their specific characteristics such as number of participants, modes of transport, number of travel per year, social structure of participants, strength of emotions and depth of religious experience.

The research is based on the international meeting of catholic youth in Zadar in May 2010. As one of the most important religious event in the region of Zadar, it has attracted more than 25000 thousand of participants from several countries. In order to determine the motives and satisfaction of participants to above mentioned meeting, a survey was conducted among restricted number of participants. The resulting data were analyzed by methods of descriptive statistics in order to determine the profiles and motivations of religious participants. The scientific aim is to provide valuable information and insight of economic, sociocultural and global development of Zadar and its region due to existing opportunities of religious tourism development.

Key words: tourism, religious tourism, development, specific tourism

1. INTRODUCTION

Tourism is multifragment socioeconomic phenomenon whose complexity also induces the complex relationship between tourism and religion. The relationship between tourism and religion was almost inexistent within scholar and scientific research in Croatia until last two decades (Vukonic, 1990). However, travels based on religious feeling are profoundly rooted in the evolution of mankind as well as in the whole evolution of tourism. Tourism and its following activities and practices interact more and more with religious life and feelings of modern mobile „neighbours“ in the global village. Not only in our professional life, but even more in growing flexibility of leisure time, our spiritual self is more present and overwhelming.

This research is based on the international meeting of catholic youth in Zadar in May 2010. As one of the most important religious event in the region of Zadar, it has attracted more than 25000 thousand of participants from several countries. In order to determine the motives and satisfaction of participants to above mentioned meeting, a survey was conducted among restricted number of participants. The resulting data were analyzed by methods of descriptive statistics in order to determine the profiles and motivations of religious participants. The aim of this research is to provide valuable information and insight of economic, sociocultural and global development of Zadar and its region due to existing opportunities of religious tourism.

This research paper is a modest proposal of necessary measurements which can provide the religious tourism a validated opportunity to confirm itself as a possible local agent for further development. Religious tourism in Zadar has an opportunity to be accepted as a sustainable development agent who can provide wide long-term benefits not only for local catholic community, but for the whole residents and regional society.

2. RELIGIOUS TOURISM

Religious tourism should be analysed in several broad approaches in order to understand relationship between religion and tourism (Lindsay, 2005: 9262). Those approaches are spatial, temporal, socioeconomic and cultural. At the dawn of civilisation one of the first motives for leaving its home and travel to rather distant destinations was religious pilgrimage. Today, some authors (MacCannell, 1999; Cohen, 2004; Vukonic, 1990; Hitrec, 2006) find even more confusing to analyse differences of experience of tourist and religious traveller or pilgrim. At the beginning of 21st century the main motivators for visiting other destinations are undergoing significant changes that show growing interest for edutainment and infotainment within enjoyable and less time-consuming travels. And we can witness rising interest and fascination within religious arts, sights and experiences. As Lindsay (2005:9692) points out „Early travellers of the European Renaissance regularly visited churches, cathedrals, shrines, and other religious sites in their studies of art, architecture, culture, and history of the nations they visited“. All these religious sites remain almost inevitable motivators for cultural tours and visits weather we are thinking of those tourists who are vacationers or sightseers.

Temporal approach also proves significant correlation between tourism travel and religious travel. Both of those virtual and real travellers, spiritual and religious pilgrims chose to be mobile on specific and distinct moments in their lives and within socially, culturally and economically feasible chronological sequences within a year. *Homo turisticus religiosus* chose to travel on special dates or, should we better say on especially triggered intrinsic moments in his life with aim to confirm his religion in his travel of and for faith.

Socioeconomic approach integrates analyses and research of social and economic spheres of human existence. It can be quite fluctuating and debatable due to its waste areas of research opportunities. At the same time, it is probably the most rewarding approach since it offers a wide range of analytical and scientific areas that can provide an insightful understanding of religious tourism and better approach to connective and unconnected elements of tourism as a global paradigm of twenty-first century human existence on one side and, religious travel and tourism as a permanent quest for understanding of one's inner religious spirituality.

Cultural approach is as wide as socioeconomic one. Sometimes, it's even more questioning and contemplative than other approaches. It is quite paradoxical how within the process of uniqueness of Western civilization and almost global process of homogenization the quest for cultural otherness, including religious otherness is growing trend within mobility motivators. Modern and highly flexible tourists are difficult to separate from full or part-time religious pilgrims because they both use the same communication networks and other forms of modern mass communication, consume the same products and services like accommodations or food practices, travel mainly with airlines, buses, automobile and trains and communicate almost the same epistemological authenticity or inauthenticity of their travel experiences. According to Lindsay (2005:9263) „tourism and religion are not mutually exclusive, and in fact they often reside together in individuals who remain at once both tourists and religious adherents“. Religious tourism is a complex social conduct that can be seen as a twenty-first century version of religious pilgrimage from medieval and renaissance times. As Cohen points out

“Religious feasts and festivals, especially in Third World countries, are being advertised as major tourist attractions, and are increasingly dominated by touristic concerns: rituals and performances, and even timing, are frequently adapted to the visitor's interests and convenience” (2004:154).

Growing interests produce growing amount of ambivalence within religious authorities as the process of commoditisation of religious sites and practices inevitably lead towards change in belief of local residents. Therefore the existance paradoxical and sensitive situation within the acceptance and eventual development of religious tourism. Religious tourism can play a significant part in conservation, protection and enhancement of local tangible and intangible heritage. If Zadar could organize religious manifestations, gatherings and conferences every second or third year, this would inevitably deepen the feelings of local population for their local and religious identity. Even so, all those potential religious tourists could, in the realm of their positive experiences, promote Zadar's tourism and hospitality sectors.

Tourism has a reputation as a resource-intensive industry, but by our opinion, the real question is how tourism can be seen as culturalising-intensive industry. Whether religious tourism is going to be a part of sustainable and responsible special interest tourism activity or it will act as socioeconomic agent of degradation within host community, it whole depends on how it is going to be perceived and managed by local authorities, both religious and profane.

Religious tourism is that form of specific tourism that is strongly motivated for religious purposes and beliefs. One of the oldest types of human mobility, today it should be differentiated into several distinctive clusters. Different analytical clusters of religious tourism need to be distinguished by their specific characteristics such as number of participants, modes of transport, number of travel per year, social structure of participants, strength of emotions and depth of religious experience.

Travel for religious purposes can be analytically distinguished into three main but highly flexible and alterable clusters: (1) as religious pilgrimage of individuals or organized group to sacred sites and destinations; (2) as massive religious gatherings in order to celebrate important religious dates or to celebrate religious events and, (3) as visiting and sightseeing of religious monuments, cathedrals, churches, tombs, shrines or other religious sites or events within regular vacation trips.

3. CATHOLIC CHURCH IN CROATIA AND ZADAR

Croatia has relations with Catholic Church from its very beginning. Rich and long lasting history of Catholic presence on its territory testify many sacred objects, sacred treasure and cultural heritage. By *Milanese edict* from year 313, when Christians were free to profess their faith, have begun to form first Catholic metropolises in old Croatia (Kolaric, 1998). First ever metropolis in Croatia was founded in Roman province Dalmatia, in old city Salona, near to today's Split. Within Salona metropolis, significant role played Diocese of Zadar, placed in city of Zadar which had function as capital city and humanistic and cultural centre of province Dalmatia for many centuries. During its boom, Zadar had 30 churches on very small (only 2 km²) city field (Kolaric, 1998). Near to Zadar was situated Diocese of Nin, founded in 9th century, in small town Nin which had 16 churches during its greatest growth and still has probably the smallest cathedral in the world (Kolaric, 1980). Later, Diocese of Nin abolished while Diocese of Zadar became Archbishopric under the direct jurisdiction of the Holy See. Some of churches in Zadar and Nin remained ruins but mostly they are preserved despite the permanent destroying and collapsing.

During turbulent Croatian history it's necessary to mention some occasions that have established Catholic Church in Croatia and its relation to Pope and Vatican. One of them is certainly Testament between duke Branimir and Pope John VIII from 879 which considered as national Baptism, recognition of the Holy See and belief in One God (Oblak & Perincic, 1980). Religious life was very hard in Croatia in middle ages; it was subjected and limited by political matters and continual disturbance, wars and ethnical leavening. Preserving Catholicism Croatian dukes and kings have never forgotten oath to one God and one Church – they were permanently building churches and monasteries. Great thanks have also merited monks and nuns from different Orders, especially Franciscan's Order, Dominican's and Templar's Order and Benedictine's female Order. They have also built churches and monasteries, schools and hospitals where have taught and taken care for Croatian people spreading the faith continuously.

Croatia has carried heavy burden fighting against Turks, because, defending itself it has defended neighbouring countries like Austria, Italy and Hungary. Therefore, it was named "*bulwark of Christianity - antemurale christianitatis*" (Kolaric 1998:50).

Specially inferior and difficult time Croatian Catholic Church has lived in 20th century. After Treaty of Rapallo in 1918, some territory was occupied by Italians and many metropolises were limited or have ceased to operate. Even in these circumstances was guaranteed religious freedom and equality, Catholic Church was ostracized, forbidden and restricted. In socialism and communism similar conditions have continued. Agony deepened and everything Catholics was tried to exterminate. In effort of regime relations with Vatican to be broken, Croatian Catholic Church has managed to preserve its vitality and by persistently activities defended national interests, cultural and sacral heritage.

New age of Croatian Catholic Church is associated with Croatian independency where Croatia declared as catholic country. According to Census from 2001, 87.83% of population has declared as Catholics (CBS, 2001). Recent years Catholic Church invested much effort in ecumenism in order of rapprochement and understanding between different religious communities and nation spreading religious and entity tolerance. Tourism could certainly consider as possible method of ecumenism.

Even religious migration considered differently in the past, enunciating jubilee of year 1300 Catholic Church gave strong incentive of pilgrimage development (Hitrec, 2006) followed by thirty similar manifestations and last one held in 2000. Pilgrimages are certainly developed and characteristic to Croatia. Even incomparably with some world famous pilgrimage centres like Lourdes and Fatima, Croatia has many religious

places that attract large number of believer. Considering number of pilgrims from all over the world Medjugorje and Mary Bistrica are most important.

In its rich religious history Croatia could boast of Pope's three visits, realized in period of eleven years; first visit in 1994, second in 1998 and third and also the last in year 2003 (Zubovic, 2003). The city of Zadar could be proud of the fact that a Pope visited it for two times. First time was really significant as it happened in long 1177 when Pope Alexander III visited it (Zubovic, 2003). In that time no Croatian city had honour to be visited by Pope. Second time was in the recent history, precisely in year 2003 when Pope John Paul II stayed in Zadar during his pastoral visit to Croatia (Zubovic, 2003).

Mentioned town Nin is famous as place where Croatian kings were crowned, but it will be remembered as place where Croatian Catholics in 1979 celebrated 1100 anniversary of fidelity of Croats, Testament between Duke Branimir and Pope John VIII, ceremony called Year of Branimir. In that hard time of socialism and communism, where non God belief was proclaimed, Croatian Catholic Church managed to organize ceremony which was attended about 250 000 Croatians Catholics from all over the world (Oblak & Perincic, 1980).

Every year area of Zadar attracts more and more tourist. It's not only see, sun and sand any more, but continuously is trying to expand tourism offer and season period. Although it's not its priority, richness of cultural and sacral attractions certainly has potential and achieves certain effect. During past decades some attempts were made in order to connect Catholic Church, its inheritance and tourism. Some improvement was achieved but with constant rejection of Catholic Church, as a measure of conservation of spiritual values and non-commercialisation, what is understandably.

With mentioned events, Year of Branimir and Pope's arrival some large and significant meetings were maintained recently in area of Zadar, organized by Catholic Church. In actual crisis of morality meetings were organized with aim to stimulate and proclaim correct youth behaviour. For this purpose twice in a row (2009 & 2010) Zadar was host to Croatian World Sport Games which gathered every time more then 1 000 Croatians from all over the world (Archdiocese of Zadar, 2011). Main celebration was held in year 2010 when more then 25 000 Croatian youth Catholic participated Croatian Catholic youth Meeting (Archdiocese of Zadar, 2011). Meeting lasted two days and was directed to the central event of the Meeting: celebrating common liturgy in praying and singing.

4. METHODOLOGY

Within the framework, a research was conducted on a random sample of participants of the Meeting and realized electronically by anonymous questionnaire appointed by link on social network Facebook or sent by email to personal email addresses in period 1st of December to 31st of December 2011. The questionnaire approached 112 participants. The questionnaire tried to investigate participants' experience of Meeting and motives of their participation.

A structured questionnaire was composed of four parts. Primary part requested personal information about participants, their gender, age, education and working status and place of permanent residence. Motives of participation were evaluated in second part of the questionnaire. In third part participants have assessed degree of satisfaction of relevant meeting components and have given their impression of the Meeting. Finally, fourth part has tried to examine participants' attitude about religious life in Croatia and possibilities and purpose of organizing such meetings.

The research results were processed by Microsoft programme Excel and statistic programme Statistic and explained by methods of descriptive statistic, tabular illustrated. Interpretation is settled in the theoretical framework and assumption that even the Meeting was strongly organized by Catholic Church, participants were not strongly religious motivated and such meetings had tourism potential.

5. RESEARCH RESULTS

In a random sample of respondents were represented 63.6% of women and 36.4% of men. Most of them were in age 20-24 (36.4%), then in age 25-30 (29.1%) and at last in grade 31 and more years (19.1%). Even Meeting was assigned to youth people up to age of 30, it's obviously it has also attracted all Catholics no matter to age. Considering place of resident there was Catholics from all over Croatia and even from outside the country (B&H, Slovenia, Austria, Germany, Netherlands, Romany). Further, gathering information about level of education even 61.8% of examinees was high educated (bachelor, master & Ph.D.). Rest of them attended or finished elementary or high school (38.2%).

During the Meeting even 88.1% of examined participants were situated at hosts and 11.9% of them at their own home or at friend and relatives. Nobody was situated in hotel, motel, hostel or similar accommodation facility. This confirmed the fact that Meeting was religious motivated and organized under the authorities of Catholic Church. Delegating responsibilities, Catholic domicile population has participated in organizing accommodation. It seems nobody came as tourist, considering mentioned facilities had quite tourism character.

Relevant meeting components participants were assigning with marks 1 to 5. Generally, all components were assigned with high marks or as high quality (4.47). The best average mark was assigned to hospitality (4.80), then food (4.69) and safety and quality of accommodation (4.65). The worst assigned components were cleanness of the city (4.33) and prices (3.57).

In part of the questionnaire participants have also given their impression about the influence of the Meeting. 54.1% of participants really experienced Meeting where have perceived their faith deeper and stronger. Unlike them, 19.1% found their faith the same after the Meeting and 26.1% of participants have not seen any influence, but have realized Meeting as nice experience.

Although Meeting was ultimately evaluated as well organized, participants were provided opportunity to express their own dissatisfaction, if existed. Personal visions could be identified. Complains were given mostly on few components. One of complains was closely related to organization of Meeting until other was completely independent and related to the bad weather conditions. Furthermore, some participants were complaining on insufficient time for leisure (personal) activities and sightseeing, alluding on certain tourism components. Crowded on the roads, which was also part of dissatisfaction confirmed the fact that Zadar with its transport infrastructure can not tender such population at the same time. This is regular summer season problem that occurs with phenomena of seasonality (seasonal negative consequences).

Trick question was asked in order to understand distinction between terms hospitality and affability. Assessment of those categories was different (4.80 versus 4.51 in favour of hospitality) which confirmed participants' complains on affability of the local population.

Finally, much dissatisfaction was sent to behaviour of youth people, who had intention to spend their time primarily in fun (sometimes inappropriate and deviant) and shopping. These opinions are connected with results of examined participation motives.

A part of questionnaire was trying to get participants' personal opinion and attitude about religious life in Croatia. According to them such youth meetings have influence on domicile population (53.2%) but only for Catholic community (32.4%). Other think there is no influence on local population. 79.3% of them also think Croatian religious life needs more similar meetings and occupies unsatisfactorily publicity (also 79.3%). Contrary view expressed 20.7% of examinees which found satisfactory representation of such meetings in religious life in Croatia and also in public (media). Considering almost 90% of participants were housed at domicile population, it could be concluded such meeting had influence on domicile population.

Regarding participants' assigning of Meeting components, even 91.9% would like to participate the youth meeting, if it would be organized in Zadar again. Other have declared negative or without opinion.

At the end participants have given open proposals in order to improve youth meetings. Mostly, propositions were directed in improving, expanding and structuring meetings programme, especially religious matters, such as more singing, more and different praying, organizing workshops, necessity of religious preparing for meeting etc. Interest view expressed several participants describing inappropriate behaviour of youth people calling them "tourism youth", not Catholic. They did not give any advice or proposal but certainly stressed actual problem.

Results connected with assumption that participants were not strongly religious motivated were rather interesting. Participants were ranking participation motives in scale 1-7 and majority of examined found the most important participation motive association (friendship) in common prayer and singing. Purely religious motive was second ranged. Third rank shared three motives: shopping, fun and sightseeing categorized as purely tourism motives. Last ranked were personal motive (visit to town) and visit to relatives and friends.

In further analyses it was trying to relate gender, age, education and status with participation motives where have found different data than overall observed. Table 1 shows different ranking depending on determined categories.

Table 1
Relations between gender, age, education, status and participation motives – ranking participation motives (1-7)

RANKING PARTICIPATION MOTIVES (1-7)	Purely religious motive	Association in common prayer and singing	Personal motive (visit to town)	Cultural motive, sightseeing	Visit to relatives and friends	Fun	Shopping
GENDER							
MALE	1	2	7	4	5	3	6
FEMALE	2	1	6	4	7	5	3
AGE							
1-14	2	1	4	3	7	6	5

15-19	4	3	5	6	7	2	1
20-24	6	1	5	4	7	2	3
25-30	1	2	6	3	7	4	5
>30	1	2	6	3	7	4	5
EDUCATION							
ELEMENTARY	2	1	4	3	7	6	5
HIGH SCHOOL	4	1	6	5	7	3	2
BACHALOR	7	1	5	4	6	2	3
MASTER	1	2	6	3	7	4	5
PHD	2	1	3	5	6	4	7
STATUS							
SCHOOLAR	6	2	4	5	7	3	1
STUDENT	3	1	7	5	6	2	4
EMPLOYED	2	1	5	6	7	3	4
UNEMPLOYED	1	2	6	3	7	4	5

Source: own research

Some differences are visible between male and female, especially when it comes to shopping motive. Motives were also changed considering age; older participants were more religious motivated. It could be also said about education and status – with increasing of education and status motives were changed in the religious motivated direction.

Table 2
Correlations between participation motives

Spearman Rank Order Correlations (Spreadsheet1) MD pairwise deleted Marked correlations are significant at $p < .05000$

Participation motives	Purely religious motive	Association in common prayer and singing	Personal motive (visit to town)	Cultural motive, sightseeing	Visit to relatives and friends	Fun	Shopping
Purely religious motive	1,000000	0,557550	0,117915	0,009326	-0,685041	-0,503665	-0,852184
Association in common prayer and singing	0,557550	1,000000	0,193995	-0,228876	-0,784174	-0,240398	-0,806157
Personal motive (visit to town)	0,117915	0,193995	1,000000	-0,130549	-0,363954	-0,285888	-0,221873
Cultural motive, sightseeing	0,009326	-0,228876	-0,130549	1,000000	0,102970	-0,413473	0,182602
Visit to relatives and friends	-0,685041	-0,784174	-0,363954	0,102970	1,000000	0,185339	0,624480
Fun	-0,503665	-0,240398	-0,285888	-0,413473	0,185339	1,000000	0,300983
Shopping	-0,852184	-0,806157	-0,221873	0,182602	0,624480	0,300983	1,000000

Source: own research

Measuring correlation in the Table 2, connection between some motives is obvious. Positively most significant correlation is visible between shopping and visit to relatives and friends assuming, even surprising, participants motivated by shopping were also motivated by visiting relatives and friends. Negative significant correlation is found in two cases, also interrelated. The most negative correlation is between motive of shopping and purely religious motive. It makes sense that association in common prayer and singing, perceived also as religious motive, is also related with motive of shopping. Both correlations show reverse excluding motivation, where religious motivated participants are not shopping motivated at all.

In order to support facts about differently motivated participants and correlation between motives, Chi-Square test was implemented. Even results of descriptive statistic showed participants are motivated differently

depending on gender, age, education and status, χ^2 test confirmed opposite situation. Testing all categories with a significance level of 5%, it has been confirmed that there was no statistically significant difference between each individual category (gender, age, education and status) and motives.

6. CONCLUSION

The city of Zadar was certainly not a place of pilgrimage, but was place of meeting, peace, fellowship and friendship and especially place of experiencing the faith. Even meeting was strongly organized by Catholic Church results indicate some possible tourism components. Changing place of residence considers beginning phase of tourism travel. In this case, participants were not typical tourist primarily because of using different kind of accommodation. Also, meeting had different intention than leaving participants to enjoy in usual tourism activities. Considering mentioned facts it is obvious Meeting was strongly religious motivated, especially by its organizers, however not for all participants. Sample of participants was not structured optimal, by gender, age, education and status, but certainly gave enough information about the Meeting and its connection with tourism. Researching participation motives by applied methods, gathered results have shown participants were differently motivated. Regardless there was not statistically significant difference between categories (gender, age, education and status) and motives it could be concluded some participants were not strongly religious motivated. Meeting in Zadar included tourism activities and if Catholic Church allows stronger connection with tourism offer such meetings could have tourism potential.

If the future of twenty-first century tourism resides in some kind of flexible and creative tourism, than Zadar can surely develop a strategy for religious tourism as one of sustainable method how to create a new brand, how to enhance the existing image of the city, and how to decrease seasonal negative consequences. The conclusion based on the research results is that with integrated quality management Zadar could become important destination for religious tourism.

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