
SUSTAINABLE-RESPONSIBLE TOURISM VALUES AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT: ISSUES AND CRITICAL REFLECTION

Romina Agbaba

*Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management,
University of Rijeka, Croatia
romina.agbaba@fthm.hr*

Abstract:

In recent years, the world has undergone major changes in terms of economic, technologic, and touristic development. With the constant emergence of crisis situations, it is evident now more than ever that these changes need to be addressed and tackled with in a way that would ensure long-term stability and prosperity. As a result, the concept of sustainable-responsible tourism has emerged, which, among other things, addresses many important and complex issues, such as mass tourism, natural and social heritage preservation, environmental change, global warming, pollution, etc. SRT values also refer to a responsible and sustainable approach to crisis management, which is the topic of this paper. In order to keep up with the constant changes and establish a healthy tourism development that would be in line with ethical and responsible behaviour, an experienced and qualified destination management is of great importance. Sustainable-responsible tourism should therefore not only be considered a new trend in the tourism industry, but also a new norm.

The methodology used in this paper consists of an analysis of secondary data sources such as academic articles, documents, and reports relevant to the topic of the paper, all written in the period between 2004 and 2021. The purpose of using this methodology is not only to highlight the transfer and dissemination of knowledge about tourism with the goal of adding to the already existing knowledge. By focusing on both academic articles and practical reports of work experiences, as well as official documents, this paper also aims to promote critical thinking about the already existing knowledge. The ultimate goal of the paper is to promote the creation of knowledge in designing sustainable tourism development strategies, agendas, and monitoring the implementation process of sustainable development in tourism.

Key words: *Psustainable-Responsible Tourism; Sustainomics; Crisis Management*

INTRODUCTION

Even though the perpetually developing and growing world we live in, in terms of technology, economics and lifestyle creates a positive impact on the society, it also leads to instability, feelings of insecurity, and non-sustainable actions. Feelings of instability and insecurity, in turn, might cause frequent crisis situations that can have a negative impact on the development of touristic destinations and tourism in general. This can harm the general perception of the destination, which lowers the destination's attractiveness and safety, causing potential tourists and stakeholders to avoid certain locations and invest their resources elsewhere. As a result, economic growth and the development of tourism are suffering. In order to tackle crisis situations, destination managers need to plan ahead so as to mitigate consequences of current and potential crises and to accelerate the recovery process. A responsible and sustainable approach to crisis management is therefore needed, which offers various benefits oriented towards a greener and more sustainable future.

By reading numerous research papers on sustainable-responsible tourism (SRT), it was noticed that crisis management is rarely mentioned as a part of the SRT model. Unless discussed in a broader and more general sense, a connection between crisis management and sustainable-responsible tourism has not been successfully established yet. There evidently lacks research and sufficient experience that would connect the two concepts and study them in a joint context, rather than separately. The goal of this paper is to explore existing theoretical knowledge and practical application of the notion of sustainable and responsible tourism (SRT), as well as to provide new insights into the field by connecting SRT with crisis situations and management, offering a perspective that sees the SRT model as an integral part of crisis management. Since this is a conceptual paper, the goal is to integrate and synthesize existing theoretical and practical understandings of the notions of sustainable and responsible tourism, as well as to provide potential new theoretical perspectives to help understand those theories in a more coherent manner. The findings of the study show that sustainable tourism encompasses a set of principles, policy prescriptions, and management methods which focus on tourism development in such a way that a destination's environmental resource base (including natural, built, social and cultural features) is not drained, but rather preserved for future development. A sustainable destination needs to offer a range of different activities and "tourism experiences" which both enhance the well-being of the local population and offer new experiences to tourists. The implementation of sustainable development in tourism depends greatly on the involvement, cooperation, and interests of all stakeholders within a tourism system or destination. Stakeholders and their interests are therefore an important necessity when thinking of the implementation of sustainable development in tourism.

Tourism is vulnerable to a wide range of crises. This paper highlights how difficult it is to establish what form crisis management provisions in tourism should take. It

also suggests that regular monitoring of tourism trends and prompt action on the received information tend to keep the sector healthy, diversified, and well-regulated, which makes it more resilient in periods of crisis. Another major factor to the resilience and, should a crisis occur, rapid recovery of the tourism sector are good media relations, the diversification of tourism products and offers, and competitive travel options. An important challenge for sustainable development is developing regional planning to improve urban services, regulate the pressure on the land, and reduce the impact of tourism on the natural environment. Public sector recycling services and better waste management are also central to any sustainable development plans. As the paper points out, all professionals who work within the industry (employees, industrialists, traders, and elected government representatives) need to be fully informed about potential issues and need to convey necessary information to tourists, as good communication is central to the survival and development of a destination. The analysis in this paper shows that, through close monitoring and experimentation, methods to increase system resilience can be learned, which are central to maintaining the tourism system in a productive state for as long as possible and resisting a potential decline by adapting to changing circumstances in a timely manner. In the first chapter of this paper, the general concept of sustainable-responsible tourism is described, as well as the important Triple-A model. The second chapter deals with sustainability as an aspect of destination management, whereas the third chapter discusses destination crisis management from the perspective of SRT values. The literature this paper is based on are secondary data sources available online which helped develop a critical perspective on this field of study as well as broaden the already existing understanding of this field by learning from both the academic and practical side.

1. SUSTAINABLE-RESPONSIBLE TOURISM (SRT)

Sustainable tourism is a type of tourism based on principles of sustainable development, which strives to make all aspects of tourism sustainable. It identifies the needs of local communities, industries, different stakeholders, and potential visitors and addresses the current and future impacts on the economy, culture, society, and the environment. Taking the needs of various parties into account as well as trying to reduce negative impacts of crises requires a lot of work and is often a great challenge for touristic destinations and their management. Therefore, it is important to note that sustainable development is a long-term process of bettering the tourism branch which is based on the combination of sustainability pillars and triggers.

When looking from the perspective of responsibility, sustainable tourism is based on environmental knowledge, ethics and being aware of the notion of sustainability and what it encompasses. It also includes a political aspect which requires all destination stakeholders and their leadership to participate and move towards a more sustainable and responsible society. In addition to that, sustainable tourism should also

focus on tourist satisfaction as well as catering to their needs. Responsible and ethical behaviour is a shared responsibility and “includes concerns of firm consumers, employees, shareholders and the community” (Mihalic, 2016). Only when all of them act accordingly, can sustainable tourism exist.

However, responsible tourism should not be mistaken with sustainable tourism. By acting responsible one is heading towards being sustainable. Responsible tourism therefore depends on sustainability-based strategies and actions. In order to tackle the notion of sustainable-responsible tourism, a new approach called sustainomics emerged, which offers an interdisciplinary (including natural and social sciences, engineering, and humanities), comprehensive, and practical framework to make development more sustainable. According to Mihalic (2021), the key principles of sustainomics include the balanced and consistent consideration of the social, economic, and environmental sustainability, a better integration of discipline, space, time, stakeholder viewpoints and operational needs, as well as the practical application of sustainability into the real world.

According to Guerreiro (2019), sustainable tourism is a concept approached from different perspectives that reflect economic interests, ethical beliefs of different actors and the strength and effectiveness of various lobbies. UNWTO’s definition of sustainable tourism and its development lies on the economic, socio-cultural, and environmental pillar, which became the main focus of many scholars and the base of many tourism strategies and policies. It addresses the economic, environmental, and social responsibility tourism has, as well as its responsibility towards tourists. The popularity of this theory resulted in a positive and responsible approach towards touristic destinations, communities, visitors, and the environment, and, according to Mihalic (2016), include energy savings, recycling, a reduction of waste and emissions and attempts to improve the livelihood of the local population. Irresponsible behaviour, however, slows down the process of being responsible and therefore sustainable.

Sustainable development emerged as a solution to optimise the residents’ standards of living conditions by promoting local economic benefits, protecting the environment, and meeting visitors’ needs to have a high-quality experience. Responsible tourism uses tourism for sustainable development and focuses on what people, businesses, and governments do to maximize the positive economic, socio-cultural, and environmental impacts of tourism. Operators, hoteliers, governments, locals, and tourists need to take responsibility and actions to make tourism more sustainable. Because the main objective of responsibility is to promote sustainability in all its dimensions, the discourse on responsibility is searching for implementation triggers that should lead to sustainable tourism in practice.

The first, so-called socio-political implementation trigger, refers to ‘Awareness–Agenda–Action’ implementation phases (TSG, 2012). Tourism must recognise its responsibility to the environment, host community and economy. Environmental benefits include support for preservation of the landscape and a stimulus for the preser-

vation, protection, and improvement of the natural environment (Sedaghat et al., 2015), while the other two pillars aim to provide sociocultural and economic benefits. In order to reach the state of responsibility, destinations must act according to the Triple-A model: Awareness –Agenda – Action, which is a part of the SRT-model. It is a pyramid-shaped model that presupposes that the starting position is placed at the bottom and moves towards the top. It consists of three pillars of sustainability which address awareness, agenda, and action in the economic, environmental, and socio-cultural areas of tourism. Mihalic (2016) explains the model and its stages as follows: “First stage is environmental awareness, where destinations are sufficiently aware of tourism impacts that cannot be longer denied. Next is the conceptual inclusion of sustainability issues or agenda which includes specifically defined actions, meaning that it codifies the sustainability principles into a strategy and policy and offers policy instruments.” The Triple-A model emphasises the fact that all of us are dependent on each other and underlines the responsibility each being has towards the environment and others.

To sum up, sustainable - responsible tourism which goes towards responsustainable tourism connects two existing terms and shows that the understanding of responsible tourism behaviour is based on the concept of sustainable tourism. Concept of “more responsibility” includes alternative tourism forms which have many names, such as alternative, soft, quality, eco, responsible, minimum impact tourism, green and ethical tourism, where all of them present an opposite concept to mass tourism, which is environmentally, socially, ethically, and politically intolerable. Responsustainable tourism or SRT strives to make tourism more sustainable by implementing certain responsibility triggers. Responsibility implies mutual dependency and responsible behaviour is based on the Triple-A model.

2. DESTINATION MANAGEMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY

A destination is a “group of actors linked by mutual relationships with specific rules, where the action of each actor influences those of the others so that common objectives must be defined and attained in a coordinated way” (Klarin, Krce Miočić & Razović, 2016). Nowadays, the sustainable development of tourist destinations is the goal of tourism and since it is a fast-growing industry that exists in almost every part of the world, there needs to be awareness of the negative impact it may create. Downsides of tourism include “overcrowding, waste generation, depletion of wildlife, damage to vegetation, human rights issues, and unfair trade practices” (Ibid.). The actions of tourists can also intervene with the everyday lives of locals and local species. Damaging the natural habitat of plants and animals, as well as polluting the environment pose a serious problem for a tourist destination and its development. Being unaware of how one’s actions affect the world can have long-term consequences for the one being affected, in this case destinations. Tourist destination develop-

ment depends on environmental and cultural resources that need to be maintained in a responsible way in order to achieve sustainability (Su & Swanson, 2017).

Sustainable development of touristic destination depends on the responsible behaviour of local organisations and the support of tourists. The end goal of sustainable development is the protection of resources and the local environment. Naturally, different destinations are faced with different problems, which means that each destination needs to embark on the sustainability journey by catering to the specific needs of their natural resources, local community, and potential visitors. Sustainability strategies and policies cannot be universal and should be created by having a specific destination and issue in mind.

It is important to mention the economic value of tourist destinations. Every natural resource and cultural heritage in a destination can lead to economic gain. Therefore, it is crucial not only to preserve the natural environment and the cultural and social heritage of tourist destinations, but to exceed the expectations of visitors. Economic sustainability plays an important role in catering to tourists' needs and achieving satisfaction. "This general view of economic sustainability is closely related with destination management. This management represents a tourism strategy which deals with the destination with aiming a long enduring improvement" (Genç, 2014). Only when all involved parties act together towards bettering their behaviour, can a destination achieve economic and general sustainability in the long run.

Tourism management is an important link in the tourism chain that aims at connecting and coordinating stakeholders with different interests in order to achieve competitiveness and sustainability of tourist destinations. Moreover, "tourism needs to be managed in order to minimise negative impacts and to maximise positive ones by balancing between environmental, social, and economic considerations." (Unforgettable Nature Experiences, n.d.). Destination management needs to take several aspects and characteristics of the destination and stakeholders into account to be able to boost the economic and social progress, as well as create sustainable competitiveness of a destination. Destination management "implies a long-term process of change management, which includes optimal economic development of a destination, a higher level of life standard, ecological preservation, social and cultural heritage preservation and its valorisation with the aim of economic and general development of a tourism destination" (Klarin, Krce Miočić & Razović, 2016). Both tourists and stakeholders need to be aware that their actions matter and that only by (re) acting responsively can tourism thrive on sustainability. All stakeholders have the common task to preserve the resources and heritage to boost the attractiveness of a tourist destination. "Sustainable management looks toward a holistic and integrated level where the individual performance contributes to the greater goal of the destination as a whole" (Conaghan, Hanrahan & McLoughlin, 2015). This means that every action and reaction, no matter how small or insignificant it is, can contribute to the sustainable development of the destination. The integrated level of sustainable man-

agement aims at providing for the needs of visitors, protecting the economic interests of the industry, reducing negative impact both from stakeholders and tourists, and protecting the natural, cultural, and social heritage of a touristic region.

Furthermore, “destination management represents an activity at the micro regional level, where all stakeholders have individual and organisational responsibility to undertake measures and efforts to create future vision contained in the policy and development at the macro regional level” (Klarin, Krce Miočić & Razović, 2016). It implies different planning tools and strategies, approaches and problem-solving tactics that shape the management and daily activities related to tourism. Sustainable management also presupposes transparency in who is managing a destination and in which way. The only way to reach sustainability is through cooperation between the private sector and the community. Sustainable decision-making on a regional level also requires expertise and volition in order to prevent possible problems and reduce risks, and to be aware of the possible consequences of every decision.

In short, everyone taking part in tourism management is required to be informed and proactive, as well as involved in the planning process and its implementation. Leadership and management ensure the continuing sustainability of the tourism industry and local environments. This also affects future planning and actions involving scanning of the environment, identifying threats and problems, and dealing with them in order to establish long-term sustainability.

3. DESTINATION CRISIS MANAGEMENT FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF SRT VALUES

The previous chapter tackled the issue of sustainability in destination management and how to establish it. It was concluded that establishing sustainability is a long-term process that requires great expertise, effective teamwork and good planning skills. The following two subchapters discuss the topic of how to ensure and maintain sustainability in crisis situations.

3.1. Crisis management

Crisis management is a proactive process which involves dealing with the crisis before it happens, during the crisis and its aftermath. As a process, crisis management comprises a variety of mutually connected activities. Its purpose is to protect the destination and stakeholders from damage and to prevent or diminish the negative outcomes of crises. Crisis resolution requires informative communication and actionable procedures. In order to act quickly, destinations need to prepare a crisis management plan with flexible, pre-identified responses and actions. Therefore, it is crucial that a basic crisis management framework, response measures, and communication strategies are in place and exercised before a crisis actually occurs. Most successful responses result from a prepared strategy, with a cooperative understanding of response roles and responsibilities, where there is minimal threat to life,

property, or the environment and minimal estimated property damage to company facilities or equipment (Jensen Hughes, 2013). The situational crisis communication theory should strategically respond to a crisis situation based on an understanding of how the public attributes responsibility for the crisis. If the public perceives a crisis to be more intentional, more responsibility to a destination is attributed and *ceteris paribus*. Managing a crisis in a positive manner requires a deep understanding of the local cultural environment and its characteristics, as well as the values and ethics of the society to which they belong which is a part of ethical leadership. The ethical aspect of crisis management is one of the most important components, knowing that the ethical element is crucial to the mental image rebuilding process. Thus, ethical rationality is a habit that must be integrated in the culture and daily operations of the destination.

Crisis management process requires many skills and expertise because it is the process of changing reality and convincing. Moreover, it requires crucial social, legal and communication knowledge in searching for possible solutions. Knowledge includes collecting information, analysing the information gathered, sharing what is learned and decision-making. Process of managing crises also requires some basic knowledge in psychology, mainly because managing some crises needs a great extent of controlling emotions and sentiments, self-control, patience, calmness and keeping away from anxiety and carelessness. Secondly, knowledge of the surrounding environment is necessary as well as the knowledge related to the specific cultural, social, and political system of the community. In addition to that, crisis managers should be familiar with the nature of local laws and regulations related to libel, defamation, disinformation, and copyrights which are connected with moral and value aspects of the society (Serra Gorpe & Zamoum, 2018).

Crisis situations are, unfortunately, always present and the need for crisis management is constantly on the rise. It helps stakeholders to identify imminent threats and successfully mitigate them. Although every crisis or threat is unique to the region at hand, theoretical frameworks help guide stakeholders and everyone involved towards correctly responding to crisis situations by mitigating damage and speeding up the recovery process. Crisis management models help prepare for, prevent, cope with and recover from crises. Models are actually representations of the structure or application of crisis management (Marker, 2020). Only when plans are developed in advance, can a destination physically prepare for a crisis and without proper knowledge or understanding this is not possible. Since crises are unpredictable, an already formed crisis management plan can help elevate the confidence of the team and lower the feelings of uncertainty and helplessness. Therefore, a crisis team should be formed in advance - before it is even needed. In this way, the team can prepare for any damaging situation and decide the roles of every member. Team-working is fundamental to effective crisis management as a commitment to shared situational awareness, clearly defined roles and responsibilities, shared visions and values, a commitment

to learning what they are doing, the ability to cooperate well and to be flexible and adapt quickly when the goals have to change (Leigh, 2016). In this case, teamwork and advanced communication and managing skills play a very important role. Crisis management is coming more and more into focus of scientific research. Globally, it can be analysed from different approaches, e.g., a historical, ethical, and societal that is comprehensive for all aspects of crisis, including leadership, ethics, and communication (Serra Gorpe & Zamoum, 2018). Learning from previous crises can lead into recovering and rebounding more efficiently in the future. Strong government commitment to the tourism industry, as well as leadership in terms of strategy, policy, and understanding of the market trends, is essential for the success and sustainability of the sector. Countries that have developed tourism specific contingency or emergency plans, or that have included tourism as a key part of Disaster Risk Management (DRM), for example, have more effectively addressed unexpected challenges (Levy, 2020). Governments that adopt a holistic approach to tourism development and management will be more likely to develop coordinated policies in support of the sector. Close collaboration between the public and private sectors and general public support is a must and it is imperative that governments work and engage all tourism-related businesses and trade associations in the preparation, implementation and monitoring of emergency policies and other procedures in times of crisis. In addition to this, it is very significant to have regular training programs in order to build human resource capacity and social awareness. They should be developed not only to enhance preparedness, but also to increase awareness and improve understanding of risks, promote capacity building and ultimately change attitudes and behaviours concerning security. Diversification of tourism products, for example, shifting from sun-and-beach models to cultural models where beaches have been affected by natural disasters can enhance cultural and natural heritage-based tourism (Levy, 2020). Contexts of crisis inevitably open the doors for “rethinking development”. The crises have sparked a global awakening and an acute awareness of what a crisis looks and feels like. By focusing time and energy on identifying and changing destructive behaviours and patterns that contributed to current crises, managers can learn to lead a productive post-crisis life. A future crisis cannot be prevented if there is no change of the behaviours, processes, habits and environment that created the current one. Most important is consistent and dutiful action. Individuals and employers need to make mental and emotional wellbeing a priority to avert or minimize the potential of a future crisis. This requires a targeted strategy to provide actionable information and training to change the habits, behaviours, and attitudes of those dealing with significant mental and emotional issues. Ability to manage a crisis requires learning new behaviours and a relentless focus on transformative change (Forbes Councils, 2020). For example, a crisis may induce a reliance on prior beliefs and cognitive rigidity, which may reduce innovative thinking and creativity.

Crisis managers establish situational awareness and impose effective strategy, direction and action in situations that are exceptionally volatile and uncertain. Shared situational awareness implies creating and maintaining a common understanding of what is going on, what that means (in terms of its implications) and what it might mean (in terms of reasonable deductions that can be made about future developments). Any mechanism, process or tool used by the crisis manager to achieve these things needs to be applied sensitively, using reflective, analytical, and structured thought processes. In many cases, managers understand situations by looking for things in them which match their past experiences and comparisons between them and the current situation. Since crises are likely to be “flashbulb” moments, they have implications for their long-term memory, and therefore for what they come to regard as the learning experience they draw from them (Leigh, 2016).

From all of the above it can be concluded that crises raise a number of issues related to responsibility, fairness, trust, and justice where learning can be achieved only through effective multilevel relational management (Bundy et al., 2017). Preventing or dealing with crises is a means of stabilising the environment in its widest sense and moving towards a more sustainable situation. Complex adaptive systems are unstable, unpredictable, multidimensional and in a state of constant change. Stability in the system indicates a lack of resilience and an inability to adapt easily to change that results in vulnerability to unexpected events, such as a crisis. It aims to provide benefits to all stakeholders and to protect host communities and habitats (De Sausmarez, 2007). Crisis management focuses on how the core paradigmatic views on management and business can be flawed and ultimately fail, thus challenging notions of control, and questioning the validity of core destination assumptions about performance. High moral awareness is necessary because crises prompt questions about the legal and ethical responsibilities of corporations and managers to their immediate stakeholders as well as to the larger social system, the natural environment, and even future generations. However, management also implies a comprehensive, strategic worldview that we believe is fundamental to understanding crisis. Any crisis is a function of the interaction between the destination, its core capabilities and resources, and the environment in which it operates (Fischbacher-Smiths, 2016).

3.2. SRT and crisis management

Sustainable tourism as a concept, and responsible tourism as its successful implementation represents a popular sustainable-responsible tourism (SRT). Sustainability is a paradigm for thinking about the future in which environmental, social, and economic considerations are balanced in the pursuit of an improved quality of life. Sustainable tourism development also requires the informed participation of all relevant stakeholders, strong political leadership and consensus building and should maintain a high level of tourist satisfaction (Mihalic, 2016). The concept has emerged

with the aim of reducing the negative effects of tourism activities, which has become almost universally accepted as a desirable and politically appropriate approach to tourism development. Its purpose is to make a balance between protecting the environment, maintaining cultural integrity, establishing social justice and promoting economic benefits, meeting the needs of the host population in terms of improved living standards both in the short and long term. Sustainable tourism requires both the sustainable growth of tourism's contribution to the economy and society and the sustainable use of resources and the environment, which will be gained by a deep understanding and proper management. Making optimal use of environmental resources is the key element in tourism development, and maintaining essential ecological processes and helping to conserve the natural heritage and biodiversity are the core foundational concepts for sustainable development.

Nowadays, tourism is faced with new challenges and crises. Thus, in order to become sustainable, tourism must take full account of both, current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities where a suitable balance between these three pillars must be established to guarantee its long-term sustainability. Sustainable tourism can be achieved only by constant planning and monitoring of both positive and negative impacts and actions. Maintaining positive stakeholder relationships is essential, as negative relationships can cause or escalate crises (Welford & Ytterhus, 2004). It is important that both stakeholders and the members of the management team work together since both of them have a common goal and that is to mitigate and prevent crisis situations. Moreover, total responsibility management approach is focused on the importance of recognizing destination responsibilities to stakeholders in order to enhance crisis detection and prevention. Only by communicating important information to stakeholders, can they adequately prepare for any imminent situation, be it positive or negative.

Destination is a complex system that articulates various stakeholders seeking to develop a set of natural, cultural, built and intangible resources within physical and administrative boundaries. It is a network of actors more or less articulated, dependent upon them in a political, economic, technological, environmental, cultural and social system which relies on collaborative, flexible and learning-based approaches or adaptive destination co-management. Tourism destinations are facing numerous crises caused by climate change, natural disasters, economic recession, political instabilities, internal turmoil, and terrorism. They considerably affect inbound tourism flows and consequently the tourism industry (Fabry & Zeghni, 2019). When tourism destinations are well managed, skill development can provide important benefits to local communities and contribute directly or indirectly to nature conservation (Sedaghat et al., 2015). Tourism stakeholders in destinations are responsible for sustainable tourism planning, policies, actions, and outcomes. During the phase of reconstruction and returning to normal activities, the promotion of destination resilience and

the adoption of ethical and responsible behaviour are the two key skills. Lessons may be learned about the strengths and weaknesses revealed during the crisis and there may be a review of errors committed that should be avoided in future. Even more importantly, the acknowledgement of these shortcomings will truly raise the stakeholders' support and confidence. Training sessions, as well as coaching and mentoring, are interventions that could be designed specifically with the goal of developing communication skills of managers, as well top management, to deal with the public and media nature of the crisis (Lalonde, 2014). Therefore, educational and training programs are of great importance. Main priorities are to minimise the negative economic, socio-cultural, and environmental impacts of tourism through awareness raising and more effective management of resources and infrastructure and to develop alternative forms of tourism that will have less impact on ecosystems than the '3S tourism' (sea, sand and sun) model. Emphasis is on raising the awareness of all the stakeholders, introducing green incentives, adopting standards and strategic plans that take into account all aspects, enforcing sanctions for non-compliance and rewarding efforts through labels and environmental charters. Triple A regarding crises and its management is presented through: crises force us to change our thinking and explore new ways of governing and doing business (awareness), combating crises in general requires effective partnerships between governments, the private sector and civil society at the global, regional, national and local levels (action); commitment to implementing the 2030 Agenda and the 17 sustainable development goals by making progress on the global roadmap for a more inclusive and sustainable future, enabling the world to respond better to future crises (agenda).

Croatia, for instance, by developing the special interest tourism (e.g., rural, cultural, gastro, nautical...) should respond to the specific needs of specialized tourism segments by creating unique experiences through responsible and sustainable tourism based on protected nature and local culture. As a sustainable alternative to mass summer tourism, SRT should help address the key challenges of Croatian tourism: extreme seasonality and concentration in coastal areas, sustainability issues and low tourist expenditures. Crisis represents a chance for special interest tourism, which disperse tourist demand from the coast to the continent: e.g., rural and agrotourism, which also strengthen local economies, offering the possibility of marketing agricultural products. Ecotourism also shows a tendency to grow because tourists will avoid crowds when traveling and choose destinations in protected areas that allow distance and isolation (Kravarscan, 2020). It can be concluded that the crisis also can be a positive opportunity as it can be a basis for innovation, reset and a new beginning - this has the potential for development tourism on SRT values.

The current COVID-19 pandemic has drastically changed the tourism industry and the strategies and policies on how to deal with crisis situations. Moreover, it also created an opportunity for a greener and more sustainable tourism development. The crisis made tourism almost non-existent, and by starting from scratch, destinations

can implement new policies that can steer them towards sustainability and a greener environment. “Rebuilding destinations and getting the tourism system back up and running, stronger, more sustainable and more resilient, will require a concerted and integrated effort by government across policy areas and levels, and with the private sector” (OECD, 2021). Backed up by the government and the private sector, rebuilding destinations and restoring the tourism system can lead towards a more sustainable and resilient industry. Various destinations recover at different speeds and in order to mitigate the potential consequences this can have for the tourism industry, it is important to prioritise destination management and develop a long-term plan and strategy. “The importance of effective governance and destination management, including marketing and product development, has been increasingly underlined in country strategies to promote sustainable tourism” (OECD, 2021). Therefore, teamwork is of crucial importance in managing destinations to be more sustainable.

CONCLUSION

All things considered, the destination management must act responsibly in order to become sustainable in the long run and, not only set an example for other destinations, but also reap the numerous economic, social, and environmental benefits of sustainable development. Such development minimizes the negative effects of the already established socio-economic system and positively impacts the local natural and social heritage. Acting responsibly means preserving natural resources of a destination as well as being prepared for potential crises and long-term recovery-processes. Responsible-sustainable tourism offers an opportunity to act in line with nature and to recognize what is truly important.

Furthermore, emerging crises pose an opportunity for reimagining the tourism industry and existing policies so as to achieve important environmental goals. Responsible recovery leads to a better future. In spite of the negative impact emergency situations have, one needs to adopt the stance that every situation, no matter positive or negative, is a chance to increase knowledge, reassess the already set rules and redirect the management to a more sustainable future. Since it may take years to establish sustainability, it is important to begin with the process of transformation as soon as possible and to raise awareness of how the existing non-sustainable tourism system cannot be maintained. Sustainable management contributes not only to the environment and local communities, but to economy as well, and in order to reap the benefits of responsible behaviour and sustainable tourism, destination managers need to constantly work on educating themselves and their team to improve the quality of destinations and to mitigate the effects of emergency crises.

Economies and communities cannot possibly thrive when nature is suffering. Therefore, sustainable tourism should be the new norm and not only an aspect of the industry. Changing our actions and attitudes might not be easy, but only through

cooperation and advocating for the common good can we inspire others to follow suit and better our future.

This article highlights that tourism has outgrown its limits in many places around the world, and local communities are suffering as a result. Crowded places like Venice, Barcelona or Reykjavik are the result of unsustainable development. The need for tourism growth continues constantly because the dependence of local communities on tourism “locks” them into a system in which they survive solely off this industry and its related branches. Such a view of tourism is part of the cultural ideology of constant, never-ending growth, and tourism is an important pillar in the campaign to achieve that goal. However, in recent times more sustainable forms of tourism have started developing throughout Europe. Such has also been the case in Croatia, where isolated cottages, nautical tourism, as well as camps that allow social distancing and offer an active vacation in nature have already emerged as a very popular model for tourists from Germany, Slovenia, Austria, and neighbouring Central European countries, who rushed to take their place under the sun as soon as the borders opened. It would be worthwhile to conduct future research on this topic, which could benefit not only the tourism industry in Croatia, but also in other tourist destinations throughout Europe.

REFERENCES

- Bundy, J., Pfarrer, M. D., Short, C. E. & Timothy Coombs, W. (2017). Crises and Crisis Management: Integration, Interpretation, and Research Development. *Journal of Management*, Vol. 43 No. 6, pp. 1661 – 1692
- Conaghan, A., Hanrahan, J. & McLoughlin, E. (2015). The sustainable management of a tourism destination in Ireland: a focus on county clare, *Advances in Hospitality and Tourism Research (AHTR)*, 3 (1), pp. 62-87
- De Sausmarez, N. (2007). Crisis Management, Tourism and Sustainability: The Role of Indicators. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 15 (6), pp. 700 -714
- Fabry, N. & Zeghni, S. (2019). Resilience, tourist destinations and governance: an analytical framework https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331832424_Resilience_tourist_destinations_and_governance_an_analytical_framework
- Fischbacher-Smith, D. & Fischbacher-Smith, M. (2016). Crisis management as a critical perspective. *Journal of Management Development*, Vol. 35, No. 7, pp. 930 – 940
- Forbes Councils (2020). This Expert Is Shifting The Crisis Management Paradigm When Leaders Need It Most <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesmarketplace/2020/07/27/this-expert-is-shifting-the-crisis-management-paradigm-when-leaders-need-it-most/?sh=709fe7b34e78>
- Genç, R. (2014). Sustainable Strategies for Destination Management. *Acta Universitatis Danubius. Œconomica*, 10 (3) <http://journals.univ-danubius.ro/index.php/oeconomica/article/view/2436/2695>
- Guerreiro, M. (2019). Sustainable destination management: a commitment for the future of world tourism. *Worldwide Hospitality and Tourism Themes*, Vol. 11, No. 6, pp. 685-691
- Jensen Hughes (2013). The critical response time of crisis management planning <https://www.jensenhughes.com/insights/the-critical-response-time-of-crisis-management-planning>
- Kravaršćan, K. (2020). Upravljanje krizama u turističkom sektoru u Hrvatskoj, Sveučilište u Zagrebu
- Klarin, T., Krce Miočić, B. & Razović, M. (2016). Management of sustainable tourism destina-

tion through stakeholder cooperation. *Management: Journal of Contemporary Management Issues*, Vol. 21 No. 2, pp. 99 - 120

Lalonde, C. (2014). Changing the Paradigm of Crisis Management: How to Put OD in the Process https://www.researchgate.net/publication/253760447_Changing_the_Paradigm_of_Crisis_Management_How_to_Put_OD_in_the_Process

Leigh, M. (2016). Critical Thinking in Crisis Management. *Emergency Planning College Occasional Papers*, No. 15 <https://www.alnap.org/system/files/content/resource/files/main/Occ15-Paper-AUG-2016.pdf>

Levy, D. (2020). Resilience in tourism: Learning from crisis management experiences <https://blogs.iadb.org/sostenibilidad/en/resilience-in-tourism-learning-from-crisis-management-experiences/>

Marker, A. (2020). Models and theories to improve crisis management <https://www.smart-sheet.com/content/crisis-management-model-theories>

Mihalic, T. (2016). Sustainable-responsible tourism discourse – Towards ‘responsustainable’ tourism. *Journal of Cleaner Production*, 111, Part B, pp. 461- 470.

Mihalic, T. (in print 2021). *Sustainomics in Tourism: ecological, economic and political sustainability issues*. Ljubljana: Ekonomska fakulteta, Univerza v Ljubljani <https://publizr.com/seblu/eet-sustainomics-in-tour-02022021-final?html=true#/170/>

OECD (2021). *Managing Tourism Development for Sustainable and Inclusive Recovery* <http://www.iztg.hr/files/file/RAZNO/Managing-tourism-developmen-for-sustainable-and-inclusive-recovery.pdf>

Sedaghat, M. et al. (2015). Sustainable tourism: a comprehensive literature review on frameworks and applications. *Economic Research-Ekonomska Istraživanja*, 28 (1), pp. 1-30

Serra Gorpe, T. & Zamoum, K. (2018). Crisis Management: A Historical and Conceptual Approach for a Better Understanding of Today’s Crises <https://www.intechopen.com/chapters/60813>

Su, L., & Swanson, S. R. (2017). The effect of destination social responsibility on tourist environmentally responsible behavior: Compared analysis of first-time and repeat tourists. *Tourism Management*, 60, pp. 308–321

TSG. (2012). *European Charter for Sustainable and Responsible Tourism*. Tourism Sustainability Group; European Commission: Brussels, Belgium

Unforgettable Nature Experiences. *Destination: Wildlife, Responsible Tourism in Destinations Shaping sustainable spaces into better places* <https://www.destinationwildlife.com/responsible-tourism>

Welford, R., & Ytterhus, B. (2004). Sustainable development and tourism destination management: A case study of the Lillehammer region, Norway. *International Journal of Sustainable Development & World Ecology*, 11 (4), pp. 410–422.