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## FROM MASS TOURISM TO SUSTAINABLE TOURISM: A COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY OF THE ISLAND OF BRAČ

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### Abstract

*Island communities in Croatia are becoming increasingly tourism-oriented which has complex consequences for the local population and socio-economic structure. The aim of this paper is to explore the different types of tourism development and their impact on local communities. The paper is based on the results of a multiple case study of three local communities on the island of Brač: Povelja, Postira and Bol. These three places were selected as they exemplify the different types of local development and stages of tourism development. Semi-structured face-to-face interviews were conducted with various local stakeholders. The analysis focuses on the perceptions of tourism development in local communities and its advantages and disadvantages related to long-term sustainable development. The findings demonstrate that in places that are already mass tourism destinations this type of tourism is still considered as a desirable type of development. In contrast, in places where tourism is not the main economic activity or has reached a phase of stagnation and decline, there are efforts being made towards a sustainable development of tourism and the entire community.*

**Keywords:** *Adriatic islands, local development, mass tourism, sustainable development, sustainable tourism*

### 1. INTRODUCTION: FROM MASS COASTAL TOURISM TO SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

Ever since the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED, 1987) defined the concept of “sustainable development”, there has been continued debate on its application in various sectors, including tourism. Basically, sustainability in relation to tourism may be regarded as the application of a sustainable development framework to tourism development (Weaver, 2006). According to Swarbrooke (1998), sustainable tourism includes those forms of tourism which meet the needs of tourists, the tourism industry and host communities today without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. What is important to note here is that the first applications of sustainability ideas to the tourism sector emphasised the economic sustainability of tourism and its impact on the physical environment, while the social and cultural dimension was ignored. However, newer approaches to sustainable tour-

ism emphasize that it should lead to the management of all resources in such a way that economic and social needs can be fulfilled while biological diversity, life support systems and cultural integrity are maintained (Oriade and Evans, 2011). For instance, the UNWTO's definition of sustainable tourism encompassed the "triple bottom line" of economic, environmental and socio-cultural sustainability. From this point of view, sustainable tourism should: 1) make optimal use of environmental resources and help to conserve natural heritage and biodiversity; 2) respect the socio-cultural authenticity of host communities, conserve their cultural heritage and values, and contribute to inter-cultural understanding and tolerance; and 3) ensure long-term economic operations, providing a fair distribution of socio-economic benefits to all stakeholders, including stable employment, income-generating opportunities and social services to host communities (UNEP and UNWTO, 2005).

Since the mid-1990s the concept of sustainable tourism has dominated both the study of tourism and the policy agenda at the local and national level. In particular, it provided a comprehensive policy opposition to mass coastal tourism whose numerous disadvantages have become visible (Bramwell, 2004).<sup>1</sup> For instance, it has been connected to spatial concentration and environmental pressure, economic dependency on tourism, restricted employment opportunities, seasonal unemployment and abandonment of other economic activities. Moreover, in many host communities in which mass coastal tourism was used as a catalyst for economic development, it has been connected to the marginalization of the local community and increasing separation between hosts and guests (Marson, 2011; Bramwell, 2004). According to Bramwell (2004), there are several threats to the economic strength of mass coastal tourism, including a deteriorated infrastructure, environmental degradation and reduced profitability due to the growing competition between similar holiday destinations. Furthermore, tourist expectations also changed as many tourists rejected the idea of packaged holidays in favour of individualised forms of travel. Therefore, in order to differentiate tourism products and to cope with the reduced economic returns of standard "sun and sea" tourism, various policy responses were encouraged by local policy makers. Bramwell (2004) identified two main policy responses: the development of new large-scale products for up-market visitors (e.g., golf courses, marinas, conference centres), and the development of small-scale alternative types of tourism products such as agro-tourism facilities or hiking trails. The main idea behind such policy was in the development of specialised products that are considered better adapted to the changing tastes and specialised interests of tourists (Bramwell, 2004). This trend towards more individualised and flexible

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1 The costs and benefits of mass tourism development in southern Europe have long been framed within discourses on sustainable development (Bramwell, 2004). Similarly, the concept of "responsible tourism" has started to emerge as a policy framework which promotes responsible behaviour of those involved in tourism for the consequences of tourism development (Leslie, 2012).

forms of tourism is sometimes considered as part of the more complex transition to post-Fordist forms of production and consumption (Urry, 1995). In this perspective, it has been argued that diversity in holiday options and development of specialised types of tourism, such as sports tourism, ecotourism or cultural tourism, reflects the individualization of lifestyle choices. It was also believed that specialised and small-scale types of tourism are more environmentally friendly and more appropriate for tourists who are concerned about the environment. However, Marson (2011) elaborates that specialised and more diverse tourism products are not necessarily sustainable as they can also have both negative and positive impacts on sustainable development.

Although the concept of sustainable tourism has been the main policy orientation in the last two decades, it is open to many interpretations and is sometimes considered as a controversial concept (Oriade and Evans, 2011). Thus, sustainable development can be considered as a “socially constructed and contested concept that reflects the interests of those involved” (Bramwell, 2004: 17). Therefore, there can be no single and precise definition of sustainable tourism. Instead, it should be conceived as a flexible and adaptive paradigm according to specific contexts (Hunter, 1997). Following this adaptive view of sustainability, the appropriateness of different types of tourism depends on the context of each destination. Moreover, from this standpoint, it would seem that the balance of advantages and disadvantages of mass tourism and specialised tourism for sustainable development depends on a destination’s unique qualities and circumstances. The different aspects of tourism development and their implications for sustainability of the Adriatic islands are discussed in further sections.

## **2. TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY ON THE ADRIATIC ISLANDS**

Island destinations have long been considered as being especially attractive for tourism development. Butler (1993) notes that there are four key factors that explain tourist interest in islands: physical separation, cultural difference, attractive climate and environment, and, in some cases, political autonomy. At the same time, the impact of tourism is nowhere more transparent and perhaps even irrevocable than on smaller islands and their fragile habitats and communities (Baldacchino, 2013). In particular, islands often face structural problems due to their peripheral and isolated locations as well as their small size and limited resource base. Additionally, an island destination cannot really compete with mainland destinations due to transportation costs and limited transfer options, and as a consequence increased transportation costs result in higher prices which reduce an island’s competitiveness on the tourism market (Andriotis, 2004). There is much evidence to support the claim that island tourism is often confronted with multiple challenges and that it can be considered not only an economic blessing but also a socio-cultural and environmental blight (Lockhart, 1997; Andriotis, 2004). According to Lockhart (1997) many islands have experienced irreversible landscape

changes due to uncontrolled tourism development and growing demand for accommodation and other facilities. Besides ecological destructions, both marine and terrestrial, uncontrolled tourism development on islands presents many economic and social disadvantages, including low-paid and seasonal employment, dependency on tourism and the abandonment of traditional agricultural activities (Baldacchino, 2008; Carlsen and Butler, 2011). Due to limited resources and isolation, island tourism development is often faced with increasing pressure on the social, economic and environmental capacity (Carlsen and Butler, 2011). Therefore, it is of special importance to control the intensity and type of tourism development on the islands.

Although the development of island tourism in Croatia dates back to the first half of the 19th century, it was not before the early 1960s that a more dynamic development of tourism in the Adriatic archipelago began (Mikačić, 1994). Tourism development in that period mainly followed the coastal one, although it took a more modest form so that the islands escaped many of the negative effects of uncontrolled development and mass tourism (Mikačić, 1994; Šulc, 2014). Thanks to the moderate development of tourism together with its high seasonality, many island communities, at least on the largest islands, partly preserved other economic activities, including agriculture, fishing or fish-processing industry (Šulc, 2014). However, the dependence of the local economy on tourism was still higher on the islands than on the coast (Mikačić, 1994).

Since the 1990s Croatian tourism has been very deeply affected by globalization, transition and privatization processes up to the present. These processes have resulted in the changed ownership structure and the disappearance of many accommodation facilities, substituted by private accommodation (Pirjevec and Kesar, 2002; Vukonić, 2005). Record numbers of tourist arrivals from the 1960s and the 1970s were followed by more modest numbers in the 1980s. The regional conflict and instability in the early 1990s seriously affected tourism development and brought it to a halt (Hall, 2004; Šulc, 2014). After the decline of tourism in the first half of the 1990s, Croatian tourism was faced with the need to pursue both structural and spatial diversification and upgrades at destination and national levels (Hall, 2004). Island destinations also tried to diversify away from “sun and sea” tourism and to enrich their tourism offer. Today, island communities in Croatia are mainly tourism-oriented and the local economic structure is rather restricted, with neglected agriculture, fishing and other traditional activities (Podgorelec and Klempić-Bogadi, 2013; Grković, 2005; Radinović, 2001, Defilippis, 2001; Radinović et al., 2004; Stiperski et al., 2001). Besides infrastructure shortcomings, the islands have been faced with a decline in population and demographic imbalance (Fabjanović, 1991; Lajić, 1992; Magaš, 1996; Babić et al., 2004; Lajić and Mišetić, 2005; Podgorelec and Klempić-Bogadi, 2013; Šulc and Zlatić, 2014). Considering all these disadvantages, sustainable development has been recognised as the most suitable policy framework on the Croatian islands, at least in academic discussions (Stubbs and Starc, 2007; Mackelworth and Carić, 2010). Similarly, sustainable tourism has been accepted as a desirable form of tourism development, mostly in academic discourse but also in some local and regional development strategies and public policies (Kuveždić, 1999; Kušen, 2001; Starc, 1994;

Vidučić, 2007; Tišma et al., 2004; Zlatar, 2010). However, projects based on sustainability principles are sometimes considered as a threat to more lucrative projects and the “business as usual” development model (Mackelworth and Carić, 2010).

Although the above problems of island development have long been recognized in national acts and policies (National Programme of Island Development, 1997; Island Act, 1999), most of the islands have no adequate strategies which would combine top-down planning with bottom-up activities of the local population. Also, some islands are divided into two or more municipalities, without joint planning and coordination which contributes to the uncontrolled development. At the same time, due to an insufficiently diversified economy, some island communities sink into stagnation, characterized by economic and population decline.

### 3. RESEARCH SITE AND METHODOLOGY

Brač is Croatia’s third largest island, with a population of 12,663 (Croatian Bureau of Statistics). Due to the favourable natural and social conditions for development, tourism on the island of Brač has become one of the most important economic activities during the 20th century (Kuveždić, 1999). Besides tourism, the island’s economy has traditionally been based on wine production and olive growing, stonemasonry, fishing and fish-processing industry (Šimunović, 2007). However, with the expansion of tourism, agriculture-related jobs have become less popular and considered as a second source of income. In comparison with other central Dalmatian islands, tourism on the island of Brač shows polycentric development, with Bol as the most popular destination on the southern coast of the island while the largest settlement on the island (Supetar) together with several less-visited destinations are situated on the northern and western coast (Glamuzina, 2011). Comparing tourist arrivals in the late 1980s, in 2008 the island of Brač had 52.1% more arrivals (178,072 compared to 117,043). Of all the coastal towns and municipalities, only Povlja and Sumartin recorded a decrease in the number of tourists: Povlja from 4,126 in 1988 to 1,776 in 2008 and Sumartin from 1,194 to 483 (Glamuzina, 2011: 207). Further analysis of the tourism trends on the island demonstrate decentralization and spatial dispersion which is reflected in the lower share of tourist arrivals to Bol in the total number of arrivals: from 40.2% in 1988 to 36.6% in 2008 (Glamuzina, 2011).

Case studies are vital for the examination of local communities because they offer analytical insights that lead to broader trends and may open new research paths (Yin, 2003). The case study approach was used in this research in order to gain in-depth insights into different aspects of local development and sustainability dimensions. For this multiple case study three local communities and tourist destinations on the island of Brač were selected: Povlja, Postira and Bol.<sup>2</sup> These three places were chosen as they exemplify the

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<sup>2</sup> This paper is partly based on previous research (Zlatar, 2010; Tonković and Zlatar, 2014).

different types of local development and different stages of tourism development not only on the island of Brač but also on the Adriatic islands in general. In particular, Bol was selected as an example of mass tourism, Povelja as an example of stagnation, and Postira as an example of diversified local economy and development towards more sustainable and responsible types of tourism.

Povelja is a small place on the north-east coast of the island with nearly 400 inhabitants (CBS, 2011). In the past, it concentrated more on fishing, olive-growing and quarrying. Tourism has been developing continuously in Povelja since the 1960s (Vlahović, 2007), reaching its peak in the 1980s, while it is presently in stagnation. Postira is situated on the northern side of Brač with 1,559 inhabitants (CBS, 2011) and a diversified structure of local economy in which tourism, the fish processing industry and agriculture have developed simultaneously. Our third research site, Bol, is located on the south coast of Brač and has 1,630 inhabitants (CBS, 2011). Throughout history, the local population was mainly concentrated on fishing, winegrowing and shipping. Tourism development started soon after World War II, when the hotel company Zlatni rat was established and reached very high figures from the 1960s onwards. Thanks to Zlatni rat (today Blue Sun) Bol has developed from a rural and fishing place to a popular tourist resort (Vlahović, 2005).

The fieldwork was conducted in three phases: from 2008 to 2010 (Povelja), 2013 (Postira), and 2015 (Bol). More specifically, semi-structured interviews with key actors in three local communities were conducted, including representatives of local governments, tourist board representatives, hotel owners and managers, apartment owners and other tourist workers, entrepreneurs in agriculture and fish processing industry, cultural workers and NGO leaders. The aim of the qualitative research was to explore and compare the various opinions of the actors who participate in different aspects of local development. Besides, the objective of the research was to compare different models of local development. All interviews were recorded and later transcribed and analyzed. The data included 66 interviews in total (10 in Povelja, 26 in Postira and 30 in Bol).

Table 1. *Population and tourism statistics for Bol, Povelja and Postira in 2014*

	Bol	Povelja	Postira
Population (in 2011)	1,630	332	1,559
Accommodation capacity (beds)	7,242	500	1,754
Tourist arrivals	81,770	2,530	13,208
Tourist overnights	506,099	22,449	102,888
Share of total nights in hotels	59.3%	0%	29.2%

(Source: <http://www.dzs.hr>)

## 4. THREE TYPES OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

### 4.1. Stagnation: example of Povelja

In many places on the Croatian islands the 1990s were a period of stagnation and depopulation. According to Butler (1980), stagnation is a phase in the six-phase development cycle through which an area passes from the start of tourism development.<sup>3</sup>

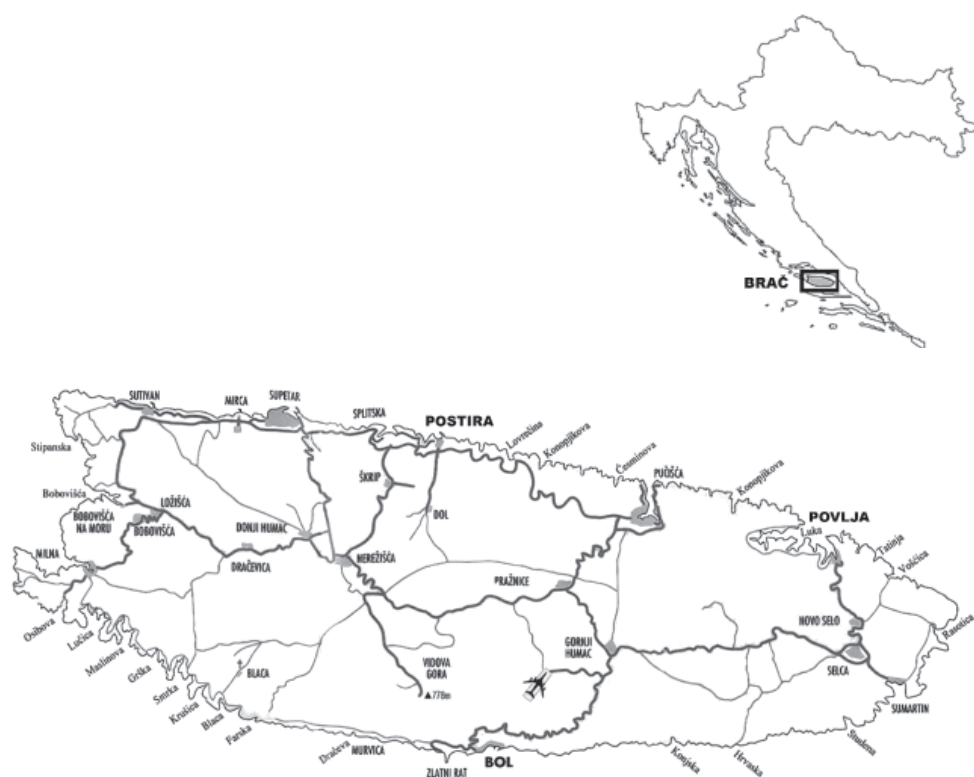


Figure 1. *Map of the island of Brač* (Izvor: BRACinfo. com)

Tourism development begins with exploration, followed by involvement, development and consolidation, and finally stagnation.<sup>4</sup> After exploration of a place and its involvement in tourist flows, development and consolidation, a simple tourism product based on natural attractions (“sun and sea”) such as what was offered as part of the Adriatic coastal tourism in the 1980s, weakens tourism development and leads to stagnation.

<sup>3</sup> It should be clear that in this case stagnation is more than just tourism stagnation. It is part of the development cycle which encompasses the complete ecological, economic, cultural and social development of the place.

<sup>4</sup> This model attracted most attention because it is credited with providing “an analytical framework to examine the evolution of tourist destinations within their complex economic, social, and cultural environments” (Cooper and Jackson, 2002:26).

Among other possible reasons for stagnation, we can mention consumption changes, shifts in production and flexibility of production (Urry, 1990; Poon, 1993) which mark the appearance of the “postmodern tourist”, no longer interested in the standardized set of holiday offers.

Stagnation is characterized by a number of features, including economic, social, and environmental problems, surplus bed capacity, heavy reliance on repeat visitations and an image that is no longer fashionable (Butler, 1980). All this is clearly visible in the example of Povlja, as illustrated by the following quote from a municipal official:

The main attraction today in Povlja is, unfortunately, the sun and the clean sea. There are numerous opportunities, of course, but no one takes advantage of them.

Since Povlja has been neglected for so many years, it is ecologically preserved in the sense that there are no new tourist facilities. A significant part of the landscape (old, authentic architecture, the sea and the beaches, etc.) has remained untouched but this alone, without social and economic development, cannot ensure the prosperity of a place. Although there are vast potentials for agricultural development and agrotourism, valuable ecological landscapes are being neglected. As one interviewee stated:

*We use 10 to 15% of all potential. The reasons are many. Tycoon privatization of the hotel and the apartment complex Punta resulted in their closing down for tourists and everybody else. (Artisan, male)*

Butler (1980) proposes five possible scenarios after the stagnation period, with decline and rejuvenation at the extreme ends. The present state of the place (stagnation) can therefore ultimately lead (and in our example it does lead) to decline of the place. The alternative to decline is rejuvenation which can happen only with changes in the existing tourism offer which is no longer adequate. The phase of rejuvenation can be considered as reorganization and it promotes new characteristics and attractions of a tourist region (Garay and Cànoves, 2011; Agarwal, 2002). Morgan (1991) notes that in order for rejuvenation to happen, it is vital to work on new, diversified niche markets, such as sport tourism, cultural tourism or agrotourism.

In our case, most local residents believed that a diverse tourism offer (with a special emphasis on eco and agrotourism) could be a solution for the current problems as Povlja has a preserved natural environment, visual identity, cultural heritage and vast agricultural possibilities. On the other hand, seasonal inhabitants were more critical and pessimistic, pointing to the stagnation of tourism and possible destruction of the place in the future. For example:

*Povlja is currently characterized by stagnation which is unfortunately the most likely future scenario as well. (Seasonal resident, female)*

While the research uncovered some differences between permanent and seasonal residents, it should also be noted that both groups participate in the social and cultural life of the community, especially during the tourist season. Active participation is important because it can improve communication and social cohesion which could encourage the local community to initiate renewal of the place. As stated by Agarwal (2002), the



engagement of all social actors is necessary for a successful restructuring of the tourism offer and renovation of the place. Therefore, in order to continue any course of action, the local government and local actors need to be involved.

#### 4.2. Mass tourism: example of Bol

In this comparative case study, Bol was selected as an example of local development that is highly dependent on mass tourism. The research results show that there are several problems related to mass tourism development in Bol. The first problem is connected to uncontrolled development in terms of the continuing construction of accommodation facilities. Due to speculative investments and a lack of urban planning, the local environment has been disrupted by many inappropriate constructions and spatial interventions. As demonstrated by a study from 2007 (Čorak et al., 2007), carrying capacity has been exceeded which has serious consequences for the identity of the place and ecological dimension of sustainable development. The results of the qualitative field research, which for this study was conducted in 2015, indicate that these problems are still present and are often recognized by locals:

*The historical center is well preserved. However, I am very sad because of the part west from the beach Zlatni rat, that part has changed a lot. It is now very devastated. I don't understand why the owners were allowed to do whatever they want.* (Apartment owner, female)

A second problem relates to the reduction of economic benefits for many locals who are involved in tourism, especially for small apartment owners, and this can be considered as a consequence of the uncontrolled development. In particular, where there is an over-supply of accommodation facilities, accommodation providers try to protect their occupancy levels by offering their facilities to tour operators and agencies at very low prices. As Bramwell (2004) pointed out, such reductions in prices may cause insufficient returns to reinvest and consequently lead to the deterioration of the local infrastructure, accommodation facilities and in the tourism product in general. Although the full consequences of this model of tourism development are not yet clearly visible in Bol, many participants in our case study point out that the occupancy rate is low and prices are reduced so that economic benefit is under question. Also, the trend towards mass tourism is changing the perception of Bol among tourists. As one of the case study respondents stated:

*Bol has lost the image of an elite destination because the construction of accommodation facilities has not been under control.* (Hotel manager, male)

A third problem is related to complex socio-economic consequences of the dominance of tourism in the local economy and employment structure. The dependence of other economic sectors on tourism is a common problem in insular regions that have been developed on the basis of mass tourism (Tsartas, 2003). In comparison with the other two examples, this problem is most clearly visible in Bol, in which the transition from a "mixed insular economy" (Šimunović, 2007) to a "tourism monoculture" is now completed. In short, Bol is an example of the uncontrolled development of tourism at the expense

of the preservation of spatial resources and overall ecological dimension of sustainability. Social sustainability is also weakened because many respondents mentioned the lack of cooperation within the local community. For instance:

*I don't think the locals take part in making decisions which affect all aspects of the community. I never participated in anything. I don't think there are any public debates, at least I was never involved.* (Restaurant owner, female)

Also, a lot of respondents believe that the cultural aspects of local development are partly compromised too, which is visible in the abandonment of some local traditions, values and norms and in the dominance of commercial entertainment. When the cultural offer is considered, it is important to note that there are efforts being made towards improvement which could possibly lead to the development of cultural tourism. However, several younger respondents expressed dissatisfaction with the insufficient cultural and social life outside the tourist season and the negative perception of youth culture. As stated by one young cultural activist:

*I'm trying to offer something different, but it's barely going. (...) In the summer, people do not communicate with each other, they all run after profit. In the winter, they all leave the island or simply do not go out. I'm talking from the perspective of a young person who wants to give something to the community and it is difficult.* (Cultural activist, male)

Today, there is no clear plan for the development of Bol as a tourist destination, although there is a strong potential for the development of specialized forms of tourism, especially for recreational tourism, including cycle tourism and windsurfing. Confronted with the contested meanings of sustainable development, from “very weak” to “very strong” positions (Turner, 1993), the tourism development model that is taking place in Bol can be considered as in line with the “very weak”, economic growth-oriented vision. Reliance on mass tourism threatens the environment and natural attractions upon which Bol has gained the reputation as one of the most popular destinations on the Adriatic islands. For a more balanced development, it would be important to realize that the long-term economic prosperity of a place cannot be achieved regardless of the ecological and social component. For this reason, the carrying capacity of local resources should be taken into account when planning any new investment.

#### *4.3. Towards sustainable tourism: example of Postira*

Postira presents an example of an island community in which the local economy is diversified and depends on the fish-processing industry, tourism and agriculture (Tonković and Zlatar, 2014). For this reason, unlike the other two cases, Postira has never experienced a total dependence on tourism. Its slower development has also helped to mostly avoid the negative consequences of over-construction and environmental degradation. When the social and cultural aspects of local development are considered, there is no tendency towards the “touristification” of local life and social structure. Contrary to

the previous example of Bol, in which agriculture has been downgraded and other economic sectors have become dependent on tourism, a traditional multi-employment strategy and “mixed island economy” have been preserved in Postira. For instance, there are families in which women are employed in a local fish-processing plant and are active in the tourism sector (by renting or maintaining apartments). At the same time, the family cultivates its own land and produces olive-oil or wine for sale. As one interviewee emphasized:

*We have never aspired to the development of a monoculture. In Postira there is a long tradition of fishing and fish-processing industry as a driver of development. Agriculture has also been maintained despite the unfavourable conditions. All this has created a sound basis for tourism development.* (Apartment owner, male)

Considering tourism development in the last decade, it has been characterized by an increasing activity, mostly due to private investments in the accommodation infrastructure. Public investments in infrastructure related to tourism have also been of great importance. Despite these positive trends, tourism in Postira is faced with similar problems and obstacles as other destinations on the islands: it is mostly “sun and sea” tourism with a short season and a lack of distinctive attractions which could help it to succeed in the increasingly competitive market. For this reason, both the local government and key actors in tourism are interested in further diversification of the main tourism product. In particular, the local government is willing to invest in infrastructure that is essential to extend the season and to develop specialized forms of tourism. What is important to note is that a great part of the case study participants declared themselves to be in favour of the development of specialized types of tourism. Moreover, actors in the local community perceive mass tourism development as being inappropriate for a place like Postira. However, when new investments are considered, there is a disagreement on the impact of a new hotel construction which is planned but has not yet been realized. While one part of the respondents considers it as a possible threat to the natural resources and carrying capacity of the place, some perceive it as a desirable investment that could prolong the tourist season which is now too short.

*The relocation of the factory in the industrial zone has created a great location for a new hotel. We can expect new jobs to be created. From this point of view, I can only see the positive effects.* (Apartment owner, female)

The ecological dimension of sustainability is visible in the preservation of natural resources and the visual identity of place (built and natural environment). Besides preserved natural surroundings, Postira’s advantage in the ecological domain is in its connections between agriculture and tourism which are expected to be stronger in the future and lead towards specialized types of tourism. Furthermore, there are several organic producers while the majority of the local community considers environmental protection as one of the priorities. When it comes to the social aspects of local development, many respondents stated the strong sense of community, shared values and

cooperation between various local stakeholders, including actors engaged in tourism, agriculture and local government (Tonković and Zlatar, 2014). In addition, the strong community cohesion in Postira also leads to projects that encourage the preservation of local cultural heritage and infrastructure which in turn helps to improve the cultural offer and to promote the place as a destination suitable for cultural or heritage tourism.

*Luckily for us, in the last ten years we have had good people in the local government and businesses who really care about the community.* (Fish-processing factory employee, male)

## 5. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

This paper has focused on the perceptions of the role of tourism from the different aspects of local development in island communities. The three places were purposefully selected for this comparative case study in order to compare different types of tourism development and their impact on local communities. We adopted a case study approach and used qualitative methodology based on semi-structured interviews. Despite the differences in the level of tourist activity and approaches to the development of tourism, all three places were found to be facing many of the problems typical of island tourism development, including the dominance of “sun and sea” tourism, high seasonality and insufficient use of accommodation facilities. Taken together, these problems and challenges of tourism development call into question not only the long-term sustainability of tourism but also the island’s economy, which is largely based on tourism. Therefore, it is not surprising that “sustainable development” has been adopted as a desirable form of tourism development. However, it is often implemented only declaratively, without much effort to seriously reconsider the tourism development and its consequences on environmental resources and the economic, social and cultural dimension of local development.

This comparative case study has focused on the differences in approaches to tourism development and sustainability in three local communities. In the case of Povelja, it is discernible that the local population see its future in the redevelopment of tourism towards small-scale and green tourism, which could be done by careful planning and the restructuring of existing facilities. A similar approach has been accepted in Postira, where the local government, in cooperation with other local stakeholders, is paying attention to sustainable development in all of its four dimensions and is trying to diversify the tourism offer in order to improve the connection between tourism and other sectors of the local economy. On the other hand, in the case of Bol, there is no clear support for the sustainable development of tourism that would imply a certain reduction in number of tourists during the high season and protection of environmental resources.

The three case studies presented in this paper provide insights into the different perspectives of tourism development and sustainability issues. The obtained results suggest that economic sustainability of tourism is considered more important while the social and cultural dimensions are often ignored. In fact, the only example in which all pillars of

sustainable development are considered equally important is in the case of Postira, in which there is awareness of the importance of environmental protection, social sustainability and responsible development of all sectors of the economy. The three case studies also provide an understanding of the role of local governments in supporting and encouraging the adoption of sustainable development ideas. Again, in the case of Postira, the local government is trying to achieve a balance between the demands of conservation and local development projects. In contrast, in the case of Bol, it seems that the role of the local government is primarily to encourage new investments in tourism, while the socio-cultural elements of sustainability are somehow being neglected. According to Prayag (2011:166), “besides environmental sustainability, social sustainability is a critical aspect of tourism development for island destinations”. At the same time, with the focus on community participation and sharing of the economic benefits of tourism, social sustainability is most often difficult to implement unless there is a political will and strong support from local and national governments (Prayag, 2011).

Following the “adaptive paradigm” of sustainable development (Hunter, 1997), the aim of this paper was not to propose a single set of guidelines for sustainable tourism development in different island communities but rather to provide some general recommendations. To begin with, tourism development on islands should be integrated into quality-of-life objectives (Prayag, 2011). All forms of tourism, including mass tourism and specialized tourism, require careful planning to ensure that tourism development is considered as an integrated part of the sustainable development strategy (Bramwell, 2004). Special attention should be directed to carrying capacity and to ensure that the local community participates in the decision making process. When the pathways to sustainable island tourism are considered, there are no simple solutions, therefore, development policies should be formulated and implemented according to specific locations and the needs of local communities.

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## OD MASOVNOG PREMA ODRŽIVOM TURIZMU: KOMPARATIVNA STUDIJA SLUČAJA OTOKA BRAČA

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### Sažetak

*Hrvatske otočne zajednice sve se više okreću turizmu, što dovodi do složenih posljedica za lokalno stanovništvo kao i socio-ekonomsku strukturu. Cilj je ovog rada istražiti razvoj različitih oblika turizma i njihove učinke na lokalne zajednice. Rad se oslanja na rezultate provedenih studija slučaja triju lokalnih zajednica na otoku Braču: Povlja, Postira i Bola. Ova tri mjesta odabrana su kao primjeri različitih oblika lokalnog razvoja te faza razvoja turizma. Provedeni su polustrukturirani intervjui "licem u lice" s različitim lokalnim dionicima. Fokus analize u radu usmjeren je na percepciju razvoja turizma u lokalnim zajednicama te na prednosti i nedostatke tog razvoja u odnosu na dugoročni održivi razvoj. Rezultati su pokazali da se u mjestima koja već jesu odredišta masovnog turizma taj tip turizma smatra poželjnim oblikom razvoja. Međutim, u mjestima u kojima turizam nije glavna gospodarska aktivnost ili je ušao u fazu stagnacije i opadanja ulažu se naponi prema održivom razvoju turizma kao i zajednice u cijelosti.*

**Ključne riječi:** *jadranski otoci, lokalni razvoj, masovni turizam, održivi razvoj, održivi turizam*

## VOM MASSEN- ZUM NACHHALTIGEN TOURISMUS: EINE VERGLEICHENDE FALLSTUDIE DER INSEL BRAČ

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### Zusammenfassung

*Kroatische Inselgemeinden wenden sich immer mehr dem Tourismus zu, was sowohl für lokale Bewohner als auch für die sozioökonomische Struktur zu komplexen Folgen führt. Das Ziel der vorliegenden Arbeit ist es, die Entwicklung verschiedener Arten des Tourismus und deren Wirkung auf die lokalen Gemeinschaften zu untersuchen. Die Arbeit beruht auf den Ergebnissen der Fallstudien von drei lokalen Gemeinschaften auf der Insel Brač: Povlja, Postira und Bol. Diese drei Orte wurden als Beispiele unterschiedlicher Formen der Entwicklung und der Entwicklungsphasen des lokalen Tourismus gewählt. Es wurden auch halbstrukturierte Gesicht-zu-Gesicht-Interviews mit verschiedenen lokalen Teilnehmern geführt. Im Fokus der Analyse steht die Wahrnehmung der Tourismusentwicklung in den lokalen Gemeinschaften, sowie Vorteile und Nachteile dieser Entwicklung im Bezug auf die langfristige nachhaltige Entwicklung. Die Resultate haben gezeigt, dass in den Orten, die schon Destinationen des Massentourismus sind, diese Art des Tourismus als erwünscht gesehen wird. In den Orten jedoch, wo der Tourismus nicht die wirtschaftliche Hauptaktivität ist oder sich in der Stagnations- bzw. Rückgangphase befindet, bemüht man sich um eine nachhaltige Entwicklung des Tourismus sowie der Gemeinschaft generell.*

**Schlüsselwörter:** *adriatische Inseln, lokale Entwicklung, Massentourismus, nachhaltige Entwicklung, nachhaltiger Tourismus*