

Chapter 19

Cultural Heritage, Tourism and the UN Sustainable Development Goals: The Case of Croatia



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Abstract The chapter analyses the quality of managing cultural heritage sites in Croatia, particularly those inscribed to the UNESCO World Heritage List, which are under growing pressure of *overtourism*. The analysis was performed by using qualitative and quantitative data on visitors of the UNESCO heritage and the most important impacts of tourism on destination areas, compared to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) focused on tourism and heritage. The study investigates the state of safeguarding, protecting and valorizing cultural heritage in relevant documents and in practice, focusing on Dubrovnik as a case study area. The analysis revealed the insufficient plans for managing UNESCO World Heritage Sites in relevant documents and in the field, as well as lack of monitoring of tourism impacts. The selected cases in Croatia confirmed that the most common way for heritage valorization is within the framework of tourism (McKercher and du Cros, Cultural tourism. The partnership between tourism and cultural heritage management, Routledge, New York/London, 2009), where heritage is most often associated with sustainable tourism. However, desirable regenerative tourism, that repairs the harm that has already been done, is still far from the present situation and it will require much effort in its planning, designing tools for its implementation and its management to achieve it in the near future.

Keywords UNESCO World Heritage · Agenda 2030 · Overtourism · Sustainable tourism · Regenerative tourism

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19.1 Introduction

With 1.3 billion international tourist arrivals in the world in 2018 (United Nations World Tourism Organization/UNWTO/, 2019), tourism is inevitably a very important factor of economic, social and environmental transformation of the world. It is one of the most important consumers of natural and cultural heritage, contributor to their safeguarding and protecting as well as their re-use. Built cultural heritage, particularly the one on the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) List of World Heritage Sites, is among the most important attractions for tourists, benefits from their interests and income, but also experiences the strongest tourism pressure.

UNESCO (2020: 1) defines heritage as “our legacy from the past, what we live with today, and what we pass on to future generations”. Heritage is usually divided into natural and cultural heritage, with cultural landscapes often taken as a separate category. In addition to its spiritual dimension and the role in the cultural identity of the community, cultural heritage also has its profound economic role (Afrić Rakitovac & Urošević, 2017; Benhamaou, 2003; Poljanec-Borić, 2017).

Cultural heritage is defined as material signs – either artistic or symbolic – handed on by the past to each culture and, therefore, to the whole of humankind (UNESCO, 1989). Cultural heritage is usually classified as: “tangible heritage (immovable cultural heritage, movable cultural heritage, underwater cultural heritage), and intangible cultural heritage” (UNESCO, 2020: 1). This chapter focuses on tangible cultural heritage in Croatia and, in particular, on immovable cultural heritage, such as monuments and touristic sites, which is explained from theoretical and practical points of view, with a selected case study from Croatia.

The present state of heritage protection in the world owes the most to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, which, in 1972, adopted the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (UNESCO, 1972). The Convention promoted founding the UNESCO World Heritage List that was supposed to include the most precious and unique sites of natural and cultural heritage of the humanity, with universal value in the whole world. At the moment, a total of 1121 sites of natural, cultural and mixed heritage were on the World Heritage List (UNESCO, 2020). Beside protection on the highest level, UNESCO World Heritage Sites represent outstanding attractions for tourists and offer the opportunity to experience authentic natural or cultural heritage of a country.

The important role of tourism is explicitly visible in the most relevant document on global development, Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development published by the United Nations (UN, 2015). In its 17 Sustainable Development Goals, the Agenda emphasizes creating conditions for sustainable, inclusive and sustained growth, prosperity and decent work for all, by considering differences in development and capacities within countries (UN, 2015). Nevertheless, tourism has a very important role in global, national and regional development

strategies, and it is treated as a desirable means of economic development and a contributor to social justice and environmental protection.

The research is based on secondary statistical sources and insights gained by review of relevant national policies and practices, as well as international documents, such as already mentioned, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (UN, 2015), Tourism and the Sustainable Development Goals (UNWTO, 2015), Policy for the Integration of a Sustainable Development Perspective into the Processes of the World Heritage Convention (UNESCO, 2015) just to name a few. Regenerative pillars and principles are based on Naboni and Havinga (2019), taking into consideration climate change, ecology and environmental issues, as well as human well-being. This book chapter gives an overview of present protection of cultural heritage, and on growing pressure of tourism on the UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Croatia. The main goal of this chapter is to analyse the quality of managing cultural heritage sites in Croatia, as well as to provide some insights and offer recommendations to policy-makers.

19.2 Tourism and the UN's Sustainable Development Goals

Tourism causes intensive economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts in destination areas. The most cited are positive economic impacts of tourism – rise in income and number of jobs, as well as increase in general economic activity in the destination area. Taxes from income are directly and indirectly invested into development of infrastructure and public areas used both by hosts and guests. Particularly important are investments into safeguarding, restoring and re-using old and significant buildings, perceived as cultural heritage, that are actively used to increase appeal of cities for tourists. Recently, one of the most important areas of the research in this field is reconstruction and restoration of buildings and architectural monuments. The process of conservation encompasses maintenance, preservation, restoration and reconstruction (Luca, Šulc, Haselsteiner, Kopeva, & Brown, 2017). They have to be maintained and restored to sustain historic integrity and uniqueness in the form and material. These heritage buildings often get a new function with tourism, which contributes to urban renewal of previously shabby and badly maintained historical cores. Motivation of tourists is often deeply behavioural and they require active immersion into the local culture for their personal fulfilling and self-actualization (Pearce, 2005). Host communities benefit from preserved and often re-valORIZED culture, as well as from more dynamic and cultural life, generated by activities organized for tourists (Mason, 2003; Page, 2009; Williams, 2009). Therefore, heritage buildings get a new economic value through tourism.

UNESCO World Heritage Sites rarely fit the Butler's (1980) Life Cycle Model, according to which, tourism areas experience different stages in their development, ranging from exploration, development and stagnation, to potential decline or rejuvenation based on complete restructuring of tourism supply (Šulc, 2016). These sites, on the contrary, often skip decline and enter a new vicious circle that results in

further growth in tourism, particularly in favour of daily visits, *metropolization* of tourism (spread of tourism accommodation and services from the historical core into the urban region), and pushing other business and population out of the historical core. In the last stage, it results with overcrowding of core areas and replacing tourism businesses focused on overnight tourists on simpler services for same-day visitors (see Russo, 2002). These processes have recently entered tourism literature as *overtourism*, which represents the impact of tourism on a destination, or parts thereof, which excessively influences perceived quality of life of citizens and/or quality of visitors' experiences in a negative way (UNWTO, 2019). Negative impacts of *overtourism* can be present in various ways – as large crowds of people near main tourist attractions, traffic congestions, when tourists cannot view landmarks because of the crowds, when local tenants are *priced out* of the city due to renting to tourists, etc. (Responsible Tourism, 2020).

In order to minimize negative impacts of tourism, The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) introduced the concept of sustainable tourism as “development that meets the needs of present tourists and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for the future”. Soon, it becomes obvious that the principles of sustainable tourism are inadequate to address severe problems caused by tourism. As a result, the concept of “regenerative tourism” appeared. It is based on the notion of “regenerative design” presented as a dynamic process of participation, feedback and continual change over time (Lyle, 1994). The regenerative design is seen “both as a change in process and product, as well as a change in attitude towards our relations with environment” (Lyle, 1994: 7–8). Issues of transparency, local control, everyday practices, and democratic negotiations are essential elements for regenerative design. In addition to balance between consumption and production, regenerative design has to contribute to well-being and the whole process has to be politically transparent (Owen, 2007). The implementation of this concept in the field of tourism is complex and relevant. It proposes important guidelines on how to balance sometimes conflicting demands of development, growth and conservation of heritage. Regenerative tourism emphasizes the importance of our environmental impact, but also our relationship with the environment. It aims not just to do less harm, but to go on and restore the harm that our system has already done to the natural world, and by using nature's principles, to create the conditions of life to flourish (Pollock, 2019). Therefore, education and information campaigns are very important tools to introduce the concept in national policy. The relationship between tourism and cultural heritage evolve over time.

Tourism and heritage are explicitly included in four Sustainable Development Goals (8, 11, 12 and 14). As coastal tourism is still globally the most important type of mass tourism, Goal 14 “Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development” treats it as an integral part of development strategies in small and island communities that highly depend upon healthy environment in tourism. Sustainable Development Goal 8 “Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all” is focused on economic impacts of tourism and it recognizes the tourism sector as an opportunity to increase employment. As World Heritage Sites are

important tourist destinations themselves, if managed properly, they have a great potential for inclusive local economic development, sustainability and strengthening social resilience (UNESCO, 2015). In order to meet SDGs, stakeholders should develop inclusive and equitable economic investments in and around World Heritage properties that make use of local resources and skills, preserve local knowledge systems and infrastructures and make local communities and individuals, including marginalized populations, the primary beneficiaries of these investments (UNESCO, 2015). Beside sustainable and responsible tourism, heritage destinations need to encourage economic diversification between tourism and non-tourism activities (e.g., craftsmanship associated with heritage conservation) and to reinvest part of the revenues from tourism in the conservation and management of heritage resources (UNESCO, 2015).

Considering that the World Heritage Sites are often located in or around cities, Goal 11 treats heritage as an integral factor of “making cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.” It explicitly promotes protecting and safeguarding heritage in built (urban) environments and encourages investments into greener infrastructure (efficient transport, lower air pollution, clean energy, conserved heritage, open spaces) aimed for the residents, from which also tourists will benefit (UN, 2015; UNWTO, 2015). Urban development that integrates cultural heritage is more sustainable, diverse and inclusive; it helps to create green economies that enhance sustainability and helps in poverty alleviation. Re-use and restoration of heritage contribute to promoting regenerative initiatives and transition towards de-carbonization of local economies (International Council on Monuments and Sites, 2016). As tourism development and valorization of heritage require a quality monitoring and management, Goal 12 (Target 12.b) promotes sustainable consumption and production patterns by developing and implementing tools to monitor the impacts of tourism on sustainable development.”

In a broader sense, tourism (particularly based on heritage) can contribute to fulfilling all other SDGs. For instance, income tax from tourism can be invested in health care and services, aiming to prevent diseases, improve maternal health, reduce child mortality, etc., which are defined by Goal 3 “Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages” (UNWTO, 2015). Higher employment opportunities in tourism, particularly for youth and women, contribute to “Achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls” (Goal 5). Tourism can also encourage national governments to make their industry more sustainable, resource-efficient and clean, as a means for attracting tourism, and to facilitate sustainable industrialization, necessary for economic growth, development and innovation (UNWTO, 2015).

19.3 The Role of Tourism in Croatian National Economy

Tourism is a significant economic and export activity in Croatia and, since 2002, it has been steadily growing (The Institute of Economics, Zagreb, 2018). The share of tourism in GDP in the period 2012–2016 increased from 3.8 to 4.7 percent. In Croatia, in 2017, there have been 86.2 million overnight stays (which is 10 percent higher than in 2016), of which 80 million stays were of foreign tourists. In 2017, tourism created 9.5 billion euros foreign exchange revenues, which corresponds to a share of 19.4 percent of GDP. In 2017, tourism employed 99,467 persons, representing 7.2 percent of total employment. In the same year, tourism participated with almost 38 percent in total exports (The Institute of Economics Zagreb, 2018).

In 2017, 17.4 million tourist arrivals were registered. On average, in 2017, tourists spent 4.9 nights, which is slightly below the level in 2016 (5 nights). In general, the trend of shortening the average stay has been registered since 2000. On average, foreign tourists in Croatia stayed 5.8 nights, in 2000; 5.2 nights, in 2016; and 5.1 nights, in 2017 (CBS, 2018).

One of the important characteristics of Croatian tourism is a distinct seasonality. This is also revealed by the time distribution of the number of tourist stays per month. In 2017, almost 86 percent of the total annual number of overnight stays was performed between June and September, with July and August accounting for 61 percent of the total annual nights.

Adriatic Croatia is the most important Croatian tourism region according to tourist arrivals and stays. In the area of the seven coastal counties, in 2017, 95 percent of all stays and 87 percent of all arrivals in Croatia were achieved. To optimize tourism supply in Croatia, cultural tourism is seen as a great potential for tourism development. Definitions of cultural tourism are numerous. The most general definition of cultural tourism would relate to the specific interest based on the search and participation in new and significant cultural experiences, whether aesthetic, intellectual, emotional or psychological (Reisinger, 1994). The basic motive for traveling is a cultural attraction. But this motivation can be primary and secondary. According to the nature of the motivation in the typology of cultural tourism, we can distinguish between primary, incidental and unintended motivations. In addition to its spiritual dimension and significance in the cultural identity of the community, heritage has a significant economic role, too (Afrić Rakitovac & Urošević, 2017; Benhamaou, 2003; Poljanec-Borić, 2017). The economic valuation of cultural heritage is predominantly through cultural tourism. A key prerequisite for the development of cultural tourism is a cultural heritage.

According to the Survey of attitudes and tourist consumption in Croatia in 2017 (Institute for Tourism, 2018), 12 percent of tourists come to Croatia due to cultural sights and events. In the Development Strategy for Cultural Tourism from 2003, it is estimated that cultural tourism in total tourism participates with less than 8 percent. The first and only comprehensive research of attitudes and consumption of visitors to cultural attractions and events in Croatia was performed in 2008 for the Ministry of Tourism (Institute for Tourism, 2009). Average daily consumption of

visitors to cultural attractions and events on multi-day trips amounted to 34 euros on average. Research has shown that the vast majority of visitors are satisfied with their visit and stay in Croatia (according to Tomas, 2008, 48 percent of tourists visit experiences exceed expectations, and 47 percent of tourist visits was in accordance with expectations).

Tourists are satisfied with the quality of programs, the professionalism of the staff, and the tidiness, but are unsatisfied with the availability of information (before departure and in destination) and traffic signalization. Most foreign cultural tourists believe that Croatia has a rich cultural and historical heritage (84 percent) and connect Croatia with the richness of museums and galleries (71 percent). Between 50 and 60 percent of visitors identify Croatia with festivals and events and a destination that is suitable for cultural tourism. This is a significant insight that can help the tourism decision-makers. The existing large and unused cultural capital demands the openness of heritage protection policy towards the development of tourism, which assumes the interaction of all tourism stakeholders.

The problems of sustainable use of cultural tourism in Croatia are numerous. Lack of knowledge of local population and tourist coordinators in the field of cultural management is recognized as one of the most significant problems. There are also organizational problems during the preparation and implementation of projects. Although progress in this area has been made since 2003, there is still insufficient presence of cultural resources in the country's tourist supply, and some localities are still hardly accessible for a larger number of tourists (Ministry of Culture, 2003). It can be said that countries with a longer tradition of heritage protection have developed more appropriate models for tourist use of cultural heritage than transition countries. In Croatia today, there is a so-called hybrid or transitional model for the protection of cultural heritage, where the main sources of financing are public funds and monument rent (Poljanec-Borić, 2017).

It is estimated that Croatia has a great potential for growth of market demand of cultural heritage, but still the national authorities and entrepreneurs do not recognize this as a development opportunity.

19.4 Croatian Heritage on the UNESCO List

The aim of this section is to present UNESCO World Heritage sites in Croatia, as well as to present management models, levels of visiting and the issues they face.

The World Heritage List in Croatia comprises ten natural and cultural sites, out of which three belong to group of transnational sites. Natural sites are Plitvice Lakes (inscribed in 1979) and the transnational Primeval Beech Forests of the Carpathians and Other Regions of Europe (2017). Eight cultural heritage sites are the Palace of Diocletian within the Historical Complex of Split (1979), the Old City of Dubrovnik (1979), the Historical City of Trogir (1997), the Episcopal Complex of the Euphrasian Basilica in the Historic Centre of Poreč (1997), the Cathedral of St James in Šibenik (2000), the Stari Grad Plain (2008), the Stećci Medieval Tombstone

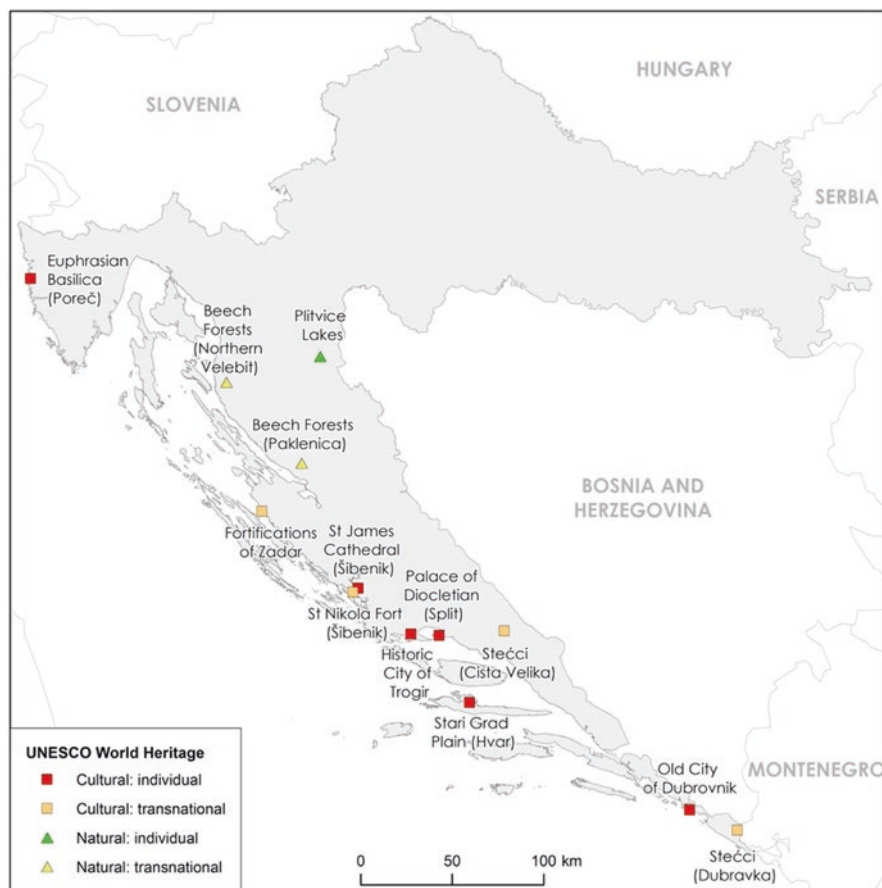


Fig. 19.1 UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Croatia. (Source: UNESCO, 2020)

Graveyards (2016), the Venetian Works of Defence between the 16th and 17th Centuries: Stato da Terra – Western Stato da Mar (2017) (see Fig. 19.1).

The Plitvice Lakes is the only single natural site protected by UNESCO in Croatia and it represents a unique phenomenon of karst hydrography and natural landscape.

Other UNESCO sites in Croatia belong to cultural heritage, featuring historical cores or individual buildings and building complexes in the coastal region of Croatia.

The Historical City of Trogir is a precious example of urban continuity on a small island located between the mainland and Čiovo Island. Another UNESCO cultural heritage site in Central Dalmatia is the Palace of Diocletian within the Historical Complex of Split (today the second largest city in Croatia), which was constructed as a typical Roman fortified city (*castrum*) by the emperor Diocletian (third-fourth century AD). In the subsequent centuries, the palace continued to

develop as a living city. The Episcopal Complex of the Euphrasian Basilica in the Historic Centre of Poreč in Istria represents a unique preserved early Christian sacral complex, constructed from the fourth to the ninth centuries. The Cathedral of St James in Šibenik (2000) is a remarkable example of pure Renaissance sacral architecture that witnesses exchanges in the monumental art between Dalmatia, North Italy and Tuscany in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The Old City of Dubrovnik was inscribed to the UNESCO List of World Heritage in 1979 due to its historical core with preserved fortifications from the fifteenth century and its significance as a Mediterranean Sea power since the thirteenth century.

Beside single sites of cultural heritage, UNESCO protected two groups of transnational sites as World Heritage. In 2016, the sites Velika and Mala Crljivica, near Cista Velika in Central Dalmatia and St. Barbara in Dubravka, Konavle have been included to the transnational World Heritage Site of Stećci Medieval Tombstone Graveyards, along with 26 other sites in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro. In 2017, the newly established transnational site Venetian Works of Defence between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: Stato da Terra – Western Stato da Mar included three sites in Italy, two in Croatia (Defensive system of Zadar and Fort of St. Nikola near Šibenik) and one in Montenegro (UNESCO, 2020).

19.5 Results and Discussion

19.5.1 *Management and Visiting of UNESCO World Heritage in Croatia*

Tourism has a very important role in the Croatian economy, with UNESCO World Heritage Sites and main promoters in tourism markets and attractions for potential visitors. These sites are managed in several different ways, but only few have own management plans, which points out the importance of heritage in political priorities on different government levels in Croatia. Lack of data on visitors in many heritage destinations makes monitoring and managing tourism impacts difficult and inefficient, ranging from an almost neglected Stećci to *overtourism* in Dubrovnik and Split). Here we discuss in more detail policies and management of UNESCO Sites in Croatia and impacts of growing pressure of tourism on UNESCO cultural heritage in Croatia, by presenting the case study of Dubrovnik.

UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Croatia are managed in several different ways, and they differ significantly in terms of their functions and level of visiting. National and nature parks are managed by their own public institution (*javna ustanova* in Croatia) and have special spatial plans, while natural heritage outside these parks is managed by public institutions on the counties' level (21 in Croatia), aimed at nature protection. The UNESCO cultural heritage in Croatia (except Stećci) is located within cities and, therefore, are managed by local administrative units, whose governments are in charge of managing the cities.

As regards the protection and management of cultural heritage, it is important to have a starting point based on the critical principles in this area, which have already been established and internationally accepted. Some of the key issues for the management of the world heritage are included in the Handbook for the World Heritage - Management of the World Cultural heritage (UNESCO, 2013). The basic principles of efficient management of the world heritage are: placing heritage concerns in a broader framework, recognizing the role in sustainable development, protection and management based on values and participation of stakeholders. According to this Manual, there are nine key elements that are common to all management systems: elements (legislation, institutions and resources), processes (planning, implementation and monitoring) and results (UNESCO, 2013).

The starting assumption is that there are all necessary elements in the Croatian policy, such as the legislative and institutional framework, as well as available resources. We are primarily interested in the management planning process, and whether there is a management plan for the UNESCO sites in Croatia. Formulating a management plan, implementing it and monitoring its implementation is essential for the good management of the world heritage. Preparation and implementation of the management plan enables systematic care and management of cultural goods, and helps to identify shortcomings of the existing management system.

Among the UNESCO sites, only the natural national sites have formulated the management plans, while the formulation of management plans for cultural heritage is still in progress. In December 2015, the draft of the Management plan of the historical centre of Split and the Basements of the Diocletian's palace were presented, but the document has not yet been adopted by the City Council. The contract for drafting the management plan for the city of Dubrovnik was signed in July 2019. The plan will encompass the period 2020–2025. The fact that there are no management plans clearly shows that heritage preservation is not high on the priority list of urban policies in Croatia.

Number of visitors of UNESCO World Heritage sites is very difficult to estimate, as most of them are located in public areas (e.g., cities), while only some objects require an entry fee and are not attended by all visitors. Even in those cases, statistical data are generally not available to scientists.

Therefore, the estimated number of visitors included registered number of tourist arrivals in the local administrative units in which the UNESCO sites are located and the number of cruise ship passengers in the cruise ports Zadar, Šibenik, Split and Dubrovnik (in 2018). Same-day visitors are excluded from estimations, as their arrivals to the destination is usually not reported, although they make quite a large share of total visits (e.g., Dubrovnik).

UNESCO World Heritage represented by historical cities of Zadar, Trogir, Split and Dubrovnik has mixed functions, ranging from a place for living, accommodation for tourists (hotels, hostels, apartments for rent, etc.), shops, restaurants, bars, to museums and other public functions (e.g., churches, cultural centres, seats of local government, theatres, museums, etc.). These are also the largest coastal cities in Dalmatia, famous for their sun and sea tourism. Cultural tourism based on UNESCO Sites overlaps with coastal tourism, and therefore it is impossible to

determine main motivation for visiting. Only some visit monuments that require a ticket (e.g., Dubrovnik City Walls (managed by the Society of Friends of Dubrovnik Heritage), Basements of the Diocletian Palace in Split and Split Walls (managed by the Museums of the City of Split), Kamerlengo Fort and the belfry of the church in Trogir). Dubrovnik is the most visited UNESCO Site in Croatia with 2,072,000 visitors, out of which two thirds are overnight tourists and a third comes on day trips from cruise ships (see Table 19.1). Beside historical street, the most famous monuments are the City Walls that were among the most visited tourist attractions in Croatia, with 1.3 million visitors in 2018 (Society of Friends of Dubrovnik Heritage, 2019).

The second most visited is Split with 1,646,000 visitors, with almost equal ration of overnight tourists and cruise ship visitors (see Table 19.1). However, historical monuments in Split are much less visited by tourists – only 247,000 visited the Basements of the Diocletian Palace in Split in 2016 (Slobodna Dalmacija, 2017). The Defensive System of Zadar is today a consistent part of urban fabric and it has a public function (as parks or public streets), which are available to everyone. The city itself recorded 725,000 tourists in 2018 – 558,000 staying in the destination and 167,000 from cruise ships (see Table 19.1), but only few actively visited the fortifications. Trogir is least visited among UNESCO heritage cities, with only 147,000 registered arrivals.

Individual cultural monuments on the UNESCO World Heritage List are also located in coastal cities (Poreč and Šibenik), where cultural tourism overlaps with much more intensive coastal tourism. The Euphrasian Basilica in Poreč and the Cathedral of St. James in Šibenik have kept their original sacral functions as seats of bishoprics, while the Fort of St. Nikola in Šibenik opened for public in 2019, after a two-year-long restoration, with the main purpose of visiting. Even though all three sites are available for visiting with an admission, statistical data on the number of visitors is not available. Slobodna Dalmacija (2017) has only a rough estimation that the Šibenik Cathedral is visited by 100,000 visitors annually. However, these sites are included in sightseeing by a much higher number of visitors, with potential market of at least 551,000 registered tourists in Poreč and 376,000 in Šibenik (90 percent of which are overnight tourists) (Table 19.1).

Table 19.1 Number of visitors of cities with UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Croatia in 2018

| Local administrative unit | Number of visitors | |
|---------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|
| | Overnight visitors | Cruise ship visitors |
| Dubrovnik | 1,340,000 | 732,000 |
| Split | 859,000 | 787,000 |
| Zadar | 558,000 | 167,000 |
| Trogir | 147,000 | – |
| Poreč | 551,000 | – |
| Šibenik | 340,000 | 36,000 |

Source: CBS (2019) and MedCruise (2019)

19.5.2 *Tourism Pressure*

Despite exceptional value of heritage, positive economic impacts of tourism and predominantly good management of heritage sites themselves, most UNESCO sites in Croatia suffer from high pressure of tourism. Most of them face large crowds of visitors during the tourist season, particularly next to main attractions (e.g., Dubrovnik, Split), generated mostly by cruise ship visitors who have only a few hours in the destinations and are less informed on tourism supply. Overcrowding affects both local residents and tourists, whose experience is deteriorated by crowding together with other tourists in the same place and by waiting in long queues to enter the attractions. Furthermore, most destinations occasionally experience large traffic congestions, as streets and roads that had originally been planned for a smaller number of local users, are heavily pressured by numerous cars and buses with tourists. Those destinations often lack enough parking places on the outskirts of historical centres, as well, which contributes to *overtourism* (e.g., Poreč, Split, Dubrovnik).

On the other hand, due to high tourism demand, historical cores are gradually transformed into tourism enclaves. These processes particularly affect local residents, whose quality of life diminishes with large crowds of tourists, noise and lack of services for them. Furthermore, motivated by growing prices of real estates, they often sell or rent their properties and move outside the historical core and these properties are increasingly converted into hotels and other accommodation for tourists (particularly in Dubrovnik). Historical centres slowly stop being places of living and working and become open-air museums (*musealization*) with business and services catering only to tourists. In a later stage, services for all tourists give place to those that cater same-day visitors (usually from cruise ships), e.g., fast food and street food facilities, souvenir shops, etc. (see Russo, 2002). At the same time, large areas of former public spaces are largely given into concession to tourism businesses (e.g., terraces of restaurants or cafés) and they become unavailable for the local population and tourists.

Another huge problem that has affected the entire Croatian coast is illegal, abusive and/or anaesthetic construction of houses with accommodation for tourists, often oversized and unadjusted to vernacular architecture and cultural landscape. Although the UNESCO sites themselves are perfectly conserved and maintained, very close surrounding areas have been more or less severely affected or even degraded by these processes, particularly in Zadar, Šibenik, Split, Hvar and Plitvice Lakes. Those areas generally lack urbanist planning and appropriate organizations of transport, as well.

19.5.3 *The Case of Dubrovnik*

To get an insight into the dynamics of tourism and management of UNESCO World Heritage Sites in Croatia, we present the case of the Old City of Dubrovnik as one of the most famous tourist destinations in Croatia, with a population of 28,000 (CBS, 2011). It has an almost two-century-long tourism tradition and is one of few coastal destinations in Croatia that has recorded continuous tourism growth since the mid-1990s (Šulc, 2016; cf. Russo, 2002).

Dubrovnik is also one of the most important ports of call in the Adriatic and wider. For instance, in 2005, the city recorded 420,048 tourist arrivals and 1,665,732 overnight stays and registered 168 cruise calls and 121,148 cruise passengers (CBS, 2006; Port Authority Dubrovnik, 2019; Šulc, 2016). In 2013, the city reached the maximum in cruising tourism with 553 calls and 942,909 passengers (Port Authority Dubrovnik, 2019); while the overnight visitors made 646,295 arrivals and 2,173,539 overnight stays (CBS, 2014). After 2013, overnight tourism continued to grow and reached 1,139,725 arrivals and 3,484,667 overnight stays, putting Dubrovnik as one of the most visited destinations in Croatia in 2018 (CBS 2019). At the same time, the intensity of cruising tourism slightly decreased, with 414 cruise calls and 732,431 passengers (Port Authority Dubrovnik, 2019).

Considering that the Old City covers an area of less than 1 km² and used to host more than 10,000 people at the same time, the city has faced a serious problem of *overtourism*, for which cruising is usually blamed, as in many other cruise ports in the Mediterranean. After a cruise ship visits the Dubrovnik Port the visitors are transferred by organized shuttle buses to the Pile Gate, the western entrance to the Old City. Considering the large size of most cruise ships, such high number of visitors in the Old City at the same time causes large overcrowding in the historical core and traffic congestions in the Pile area, as many cars and buses are supposed to leave or pickup groups of visitors.

Most cruise visitors are less informed of everything that the city offers and have only a few hours for sightseeing, which is additionally reduced by waiting in traffic congestions. Hence, they tend to group next to main attractions (Stradun, Luža, City Walls) and cause congestions, which deteriorate the experience of all visitors (Fig. 19.2). Since their cruise package usually includes all meals on the ship, they make little use of restaurants and bars in the city, making very small economic benefits for the city, while their pressure on the historical core is huge. At the same time, certain segments of the Old City that are worth visiting remain almost empty even on peak days.

The case of Dubrovnik confirms previously described transformation of businesses, from those oriented on services for the local community towards services for overnight visitors (restaurants, bars, etc.) and, eventually to services for same-day visitors (fast food restaurants, souvenir shops, exchange offices ...). At the same time, prices of real estates have reached the sky due to large demand for flats and buildings that are converted into hotels and Airbnb accommodation, galleries, restaurants, etc. As less than 1500 people remained residents there, the historical core

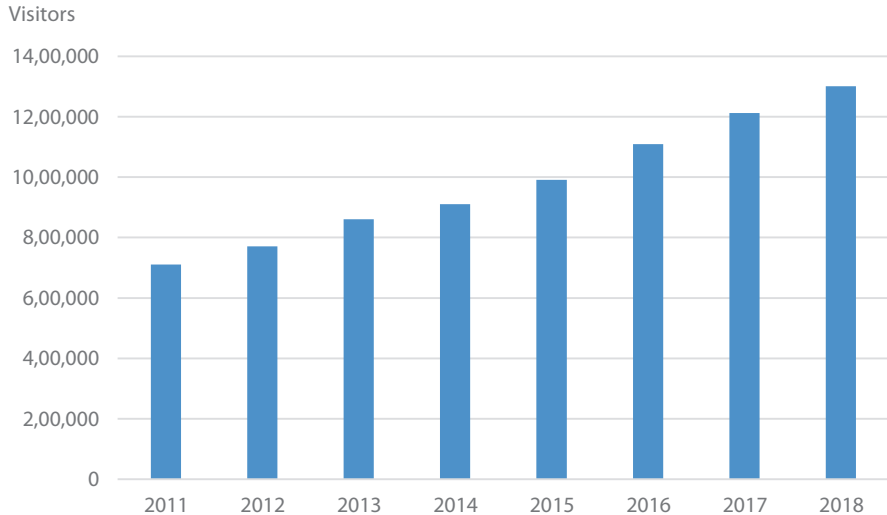


Fig. 19.2 Annual number of visitors in the period 2011–2018. (Source: Society of Friends of Dubrovnik Heritage, 2019)

has lost the character of a vivid city and has been transformed into an open-air museum, with a large difference between overcrowded streets in summer and empty streets in winter. Furthermore, tourism has pushed the prices so high that the real estates in the whole city has become unavailable to the local population and newcomers. Those who have not inherited a house or a flat can hardly afford to buy or lease a flat for a long term. Eventually, the population is pushed out of the city, which contributes to the urban sprawl in the whole urban region.

In 2016, UNESCO warned the city stakeholders to put the Old City on the List of World Heritage Sites in Danger. The reasons were growing pressure of (cruising) tourism in the historical core and the proposed greenfield project of a golf resort on the Mt. Srđ that would include construction of rather large buildings with apartments for rent to tourists and would change the cultural landscape of the city observed from the sea (UNESCO, 2016). UNESCO recommended to limit the daily number of visitors to the Old City to 8000 (Responsible Tourism, 2020), while main tourism stakeholders additionally decided to reduce the limit to maximum 4000 visitors a day. Even though the latter goal has not been accomplished yet, it demonstrates that the city authorities are well aware of the problem. They also partially limited cruising tourism, by making a schedule of cruise ships that visit the city, with maximum two cruise calls a day and a maximum of 5000 passengers per ship (Responsible Tourism, 2020). In 2019, due to large traffic congestions, the city authorities put restrictions on stopping cars and getting daily visitors on and off Thursdays and Saturdays (when cruise ships usually come to the city) and plan to ban private shuttle bus companies to transfer cruise tourists between the cruise port and Pile Gate, which will be organized by the city public transport service Libertas (Dulist, 2019). It is still too early to claim if the implemented restrictions will reduce the pressure

of tourism on the historical core or additional restrictions will be needed. However, these measures are not expected to influence significantly the quality of life of the population living in the Old City and to attract newcomers.

19.6 Concluding Remarks

The preservation of cultural heritage is the prerequisite for further development, while it is included in many social processes. Any damages will be manifested on quality of life of current and future generations. Heritage preservation should be integrative in its scope. It will be effective only if it is a part of the framework of entire public policy. It requires coordination of national and local stakeholders, in private and public sector. Implementation of the principles of circular economy to management of cultural heritage enhances development in accordance with UN SDGs. In addition, it could enable transition from sustainable to regenerative tourism. Implementation of restorative and regenerative principles in tourism (including cultural tourism) is still very limited and practically non-existent in Croatia. In more developed countries, it is considered as an alternative to sustainable tourism.

Therefore, we evaluate the management of cultural heritage based on the principles of sustainable use of cultural heritage. The relationship between tourism and cultural heritage develops over time. Based on the Handbook for the World Heritage – Management of the World Cultural heritage (UNESCO, 2013), the chapter identified that the basic principles of efficient management are still not fully implemented. This is especially true for incorporating the heritage in a broader framework of economic evaluation. Although some progress in balancing protection of cultural heritage and economic valuation is visible, it can be concluded that appropriate models for tourist valuation of cultural heritage are still missing. Lack of knowledge in the field of cultural management is recognized, therefore more research is still needed.

Formulation of a management plan, its implementation and monitoring are essential for the good management of the heritage. Lack of participation of all relevant stakeholders is evident, as well as organizational issues during the planning and monitoring process. Education and information campaigns are, therefore, crucial for mobilizing the non-governmental sector, citizens, etc.

In Croatia, management plans for world heritage are formulated only for natural heritage. Preparation of management plans for historical city centres are in progress, while plans for individual buildings and building complexes are still neglected. Relevant ministries (Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Construction and Physical Planning, Ministry of Tourism) and state agencies are responsible for this part of the process. Measures for the sustainable use of cultural heritage are also insufficient, and if they exist, they are sectoral and fragmented. Furthermore, the interaction between complementary sectoral policies (such as spatial, regional and rural) is weak and random and reflects insufficient cooperation between national authorities and other stakeholders. Elaborating different metrics for tourism statistics that will

support shift from quantitative to qualitative could be a part of solution for excessive *overtourism*.

European heritage cities that faced excessive *overtourism* have already introduced measures that can partially be implemented to heritage sites in Croatia. For instance, online booking with limited number of tickets for major monuments (e.g., Sagrada Familia in Barcelona or The Royal Path in Andalucía) proved to be efficient in limiting the daily maximum of visitors and spreading the pressure to the whole day. Programs of de-marketing, in terms of complete absence of advertising (e.g., Amsterdam) or changing image of the destination (e.g., Dublin) are yet to be tested. Venice implemented even more severe measures that include visitor tax in a form of ticket for visiting the city. These measures fit previously analysed SDGs that aim to develop tourism as generator of economic development and contributor to heritage protection, with strict monitoring. Increasing prices of accommodation and admission for main attractions are also used by many destinations, including Croatia, but the problem is these destinations is that it attracts those who can afford and not those who are the most motivated.

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