

# The Development of Tourism on Large Croatian Islands: The Case of Hvar Town on the Island of Hvar

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## Abstract

This paper examines the special characteristics of tourism development on the Adriatic islands, focusing on Hvar Town, the largest town and port on the island of Hvar and its busiest destination. The research was carried out using the method of semi-structured interviews. A total of 30 interviews were conducted with the local residents (mostly employed in the tourism sector) and temporary/seasonal visitors. The intention was to learn about the current state of tourism in the town and look at the possible scenarios for the future development of sustainable tourism, based on its three inter-connected aspects: environmental, economic and socio-cultural. The research also considered the influence of various tourism actors on the development, the possibilities of agritourism, the role and importance of cultural tourism and, finally yet importantly, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the last year's drastically shortened summer season. The results show that mass tourism (and its subset party tourism) have dominated the tourist offer since 2000 onwards, changing the reputation of Hvar as the elite travel destination or the family holiday destination it used to have before.

## Keywords

Tourism development, the Adriatic islands, the island of Hvar, the town of Hvar, mass-tourism

## Introduction: Tourism on the Adriatic islands

### Development and challenges in the last two decades

A lot of research has been done over the past several decades on the transformation of island space with a special emphasis on the Adriatic islands (Źupančić, 2000; Defilippis, 2001; Starc, 2001; Radinović et al., 2004; Vidučić, 2007; Lay, 2007; Źimunović, 2007; Zlatař, 2010; Baldigara et al., 2012; Roggen and Zlatić, 2013; Źnidar et al., 2014; Starc and Stubbs, 2014; Krajačić et al., 2018). The islands have been influenced by globalization and modernization but the impact of tourism has been equally important. After World War II the process of modernization led to intensive urbanization trends



and they resulted in the depopulation of the Adriatic islands. It refers to a process (most common in under-developed rural areas) in which the population density of an area decreases steadily over time due to a low population growth or migration from rural areas to cities. It is caused by long-term emigration from the islands driven by economic (agricultural overpopulation, mainland industrialization, deagrarianization, crises of certain agricultural activities, monoculture on some islands, etc.) and political causes (political emigration) (Lajić and Mišetić, 2013). It is no coincidence that nowadays islands are the least populated regions of Croatia. As far back as the 1960s “islands, especially the small ones, were already facing a sharp demographic decline” (Friganović, 1962: 37). There was a mass exodus of young people from the islands, particularly the ones that did not readily embrace tourism (Lajić, 1992). For comparison with the Adriatic islands, the typology of youth departures from other rural island areas shows different reasons for leaving the islands. The key factors affecting individual decisions are local employment, education and career options, as well as local lifestyle options. Some of the 'leavers' are (Cook and Peterson, 2019: 113–115):

1. The Cosmopolitans— desiring the lifestyle of an urban (or metropolitan) centre.
2. The Urbanites— the ones who simply do not like rural living.
3. The Reluctants— they want to stay locally, but there is not a sufficient local employment option.
4. The Disappointed Learners— the ones who are emotionally bound to their home community, but cannot find the education option that suits their ambitions.
5. The Conflicted— They have calculated that, when considering education, employment and lifestyle options, moving would seem to yield a net benefit, but are uncertain.

Some of these reasons have also been present on the Adriatic islands in recent years, especially those of further education and finding a job that cannot be found in the island communities.

A steady island population decline remained constant between 1900 and 2011. Croatia is the EU member state with 1, 244 islands in the Adriatic Sea but only 50 of them are inhabited. Significant depopulation trends are obvious: the number of people living on the islands decreased from 173, 263 people in 1900 to 124, 955 in 2011 (Krajačić et al., 2018). Economic stagnation, typical for small and remote island places, is a direct result of depopulation, migration and population ageing (see: Fabjanović, 1991; Magaš, 1996; Kušen, 2001; Tišma et al., 2004; Lajić and Mišetić, 2013; Grković, 2005; Cosgrove, 2006; Podgorelec and Klempić Bogadi, 2013; Nejašmić, 2013; Kapusta and Wiluš, 2017; Lewis et al, 2019).

One of the main goals of tourism development on the Adriatic islands has always been to fight depopulation. The goal has been achieved on the Kvarner Bay islands, islands of Korčula, Hvar and Brač but remains an unfulfilled dream for many others (Lajić, 1992: 182). Successful projects in tourism are naturally linked to the size of islands and their location. Small, remote islands, especially places in their interior, suffer from this disadvantage and have never been able to fully realize their economic potential. There is a big competition among tourist destinations, which constantly improve their tourist offer with innovative products in order to cater for the specific needs of their customers and enhance their holiday experience (Đogić and Cerjak, 2015). Tourism offer is diversified according to every island's natural characteristics and possibilities (beautiful scenery, agricultural production, holiday apartments).

In summer months, the negative environmental impacts of tourism are substantial as too much pressure is put on the limited island resources and infrastructure (Krajačić et al., 2018). The overwhelming numbers of visitors in the world's leading island destinations pose a threat to sustainability (Theng, Qiong i Tatar, 2015) because mass tourism develops randomly generating a large income for the local community. Bol, a place of outstanding natural beauty on the island of

Brač, is a good example. In summer Brač is overcrowded, there are far too many holiday apartments built and rented, the place has lost its identity and uniqueness because of unacceptable spatial interventions, profit has won over ecological sustainability (Kušen, 2001; Zlata Gamberožić and Tonković, 2015).

Based on the concept of carrying capacity of various environments, different models of tourism development have been identified (Miljan, 2019: 19–20): free (random) development; intensive development; alternative tourism development; balanced, sustainable development; “status quo” development model; restructuring and repositioning model. In this research the first and (partly) the second model are examined as they are the most common on big Adriatic islands. Random tourism development model basically means exceeding the limits of carrying capacity, crossing the boundaries. It is considered unacceptable and harmful for a tourist destination. Intensive development model, on the other hand, comprises substantial spatial intervention to ensure the highest income. Up to a point, it is controlled by the state and the local community interests.<sup>1</sup>

Authors such as Baldacchino (2015: 8–11) indicated several points of the multi-island reality that island tourism typically unfolds in contrast of the general, fake fairy-tale rendition that islands have had for a long time (Baldacchino and Ferreira, 2013):

1. Visibility— the basic principle of marketing, since no one travels to the place that does not exist.
2. Tweaked representation— this involves the physical rendering of island/s that is not in conformity to the physical size, location, proximity or proportionality.
3. Domination and subordination— a follow-up to the previous point, since there is always inequality in the representation of one island in relation to the other.
4. Nature and expression of differentiation between islands— the multiple geographies need to be rendered and branded, and there is always a 'conflict' between offering an archipelago to appeal to multi-island visitations and a more authentic relationality that is grounded in other, inter-island relations.

Some authors, for example Haven-Tang and Jones (2012: 31), point out in their texts about rural tourism that it is a complicated undertaking that often appears to be based on random decisions rather than knowledge and strategic planning. The same is true for the development of island tourism where various local actors cannot define their goals together or come to an agreement on their best interests.

*“Small business owners and other actors in tourism do not fully understand the importance of a coherent local development policy, which has to highlight the advantages of their place (scenery, arts, crafts, food, drinks, traditions etc.) positioning it as a highly competitive and desirable destination for visitors.” (Pröbstl-Haider et al. 2014: 218)*

The focus of this paper was on the development and current state of tourism in the town of Hvar on the island of Hvar as an example of free/random development and mass tourism, which is an increasingly present type of tourism on the Adriatic islands. The overview refers to the period from 1945 to the present, in which the changes and causes of different types of tourism that appeared on Hvar were examined within and across four dimensions of sustainability (social, economic, environmental and cultural).

The purpose of the study was to demonstrate how the current trends in tourism in the town of Hvar fit into the dimensions of sustainability, and how these trends affect its identity and further development. When applied to places,

identity refers to the ways in which various actors, both internal and external, perceive that place, and is shaped by shared history and traditions, cultural foundations, the environment(s), and the sense of community (Campelo et al., 2014; Nunkoo and Gursoy, 2012). Baldacchino (2016) argued that island brands and islands are often presented as exotic and project themselves as idyllic, so many islands grow their economic base by exploiting the sun, sand, and sea. This claim proves important especially in terms of reduced quality of products, offerings and branding, and an increasingly strong identity built only on the 'fun' content, sea, sun and sand in the case of Hvar, but also on other Adriatic islands.

## Tourism development in the town of Hvar

Hvar (Figure 1) is a large mid-Dalmatian island covering an area of 110km<sup>2</sup>.<sup>2</sup> According to the 2011 census<sup>3</sup> there were 4,251 inhabitants in the town of Hvar compared to 4,143 in 1991 and 4,138 in 2001. There was a slight 2.6% rise in the number of people living in the town from 1991 to 2011 and 2.7% from 2001 to 2011.<sup>4</sup>



Fig 1. The town of Hvar on the island of Hvar. [Source: <http://primi-hvar.com>]

In the period between 1945 and 1990 Hvar turned from a small provincial town into a fashionable summer resort attracting large numbers of visitors and opening its doors to mass tourism. From 1961 onwards, however, due to increased litoralization (economic and social activities clustering along the coastline) and the development of mass beach tourism in the town of Hvar, inner (non-coastal) rural villages have experienced a more intense population drop than the entire island in the past 50 years. Moreover, two island settlements (out of a total of 27), namely Malo Grablje and Humac, have completely lost their inhabitants (Morić-Španić; Fuerst-Bjeliš, 2017: 379).

Between 1970 and 1980 tourist arrivals and overnight stays on the island increased by 192% (Table 1) but in the second half of the 1980s there was a decline in the overall quality within the hospitality and tourism sector. The reasons were high inflation rates in former Yugoslavia, mounting debts in the hotel industry and a vague and uncertain concept of the future tourism development. All those facts led to a further drop in visitor numbers in the 1990s.<sup>5</sup> During the Homeland War (1991–1995), unsurprisingly, the decline was even more significant. When the hotel company Sunčani Hvar was founded in 1994 (10 hotels in Hvar, 6 in Stari Grad, 3 in Jelsa and 2 in Vrboska), it was a strong impetus to tourism investment.

Table 1. Tourist arrivals and overnight stays in the town of Hvar from 1970 to 2013

	1970			1980			1990		
	total	foreign	% foreign	total	foreign	% foreign	total	foreign	% foreign
Hvar Town	32,932	19,987	60.69	70,897	38,384	54.14	63,235	42,999	68
Hvar Island	79,958	43,077	53.87	153,547	74,497	48.52	129,835	86,757	66.82
Tourist arrivals	2000			2006			2013		
	total	foreign	% foreign	total	foreign	% foreign	total	foreign	% foreign
Hvar Town	90,265	74,642	82.69	124,640	111,322	89.31	129,736	121,660	93.78
Hvar Island	170,173	142,441	83.7	231,206	204,036	88.25	213,397	197,092	92.36
Tourist overnight stays	1970			1980			1990		
	total	foreign	% foreign	total	foreign	% foreign	total	foreign	% foreign
Hvar Town	376,023	216,964	57.69	718,888	424,032	59	561,766	400,325	71.26
Hvar Island	926,141	499,028	53.88	617,100	842,459	52.09	1,260,865	917,501	72.77
Tourist overnight stays	2000			2006			2013		
	total	foreign	% foreign	total	foreign	% foreign	total	foreign	% foreign
Hvar Town	443,327	363,766	82.05	480,787	419,075	87.16	549,370	518,233	94.33
Hvar Island	981,682	832,592	84.81	1,204,385	1,061,299	88.12	1,186,818	1,093,470	92.13

Source: Historical development of tourism on the island of Hvar<sup>6</sup>

The first decade of the new millennium saw the recovery of tourism on the island. New actors and fresh ideas appeared on the local level promoting the *elite tourism* project (Dehoorne and Theng, 2015), focusing on luxury hotels, expensive restaurants, apartments and yachts. This type of tourism catered to wealthy visitors, extravagant needs and luxury consumption. Hvar was soon back as an elite destination welcoming the world's celebrities. The number of bed places on the island increased. In 2006 there were 19,392: 12,165 or 62.7% in private rented accommodation, 4,458 or 23% in hotels and aparthotels and 2,769 or 14.3% in camping resorts.<sup>7</sup> The number of tourist arrivals in the town of Hvar equalled those in the 1980s. In 2013 the numbers dropped slightly but tourists opted for a longer stay (5.56 days compared to 5.23 days in 2006).<sup>8</sup>

Those years were also marked by the arrival of young visitors (*backpacker tourism*, see: Ooi and Laing, 2010) who stayed in Hvar for a short time and were mostly interested in partying. In part, this type of tourism is caused by the arrival of celebrities and influencers.<sup>9</sup> The arrival of British Prince Harry on Hvar and his jumping into the pool on Veneranda in 2011 is considered an informal cumulation of such tourism. The world media then began to cover Hvar and promote it as a party-tourism destination. In the second part, attracting party-tourists has largely depended and still depends on the construction of various nightclubs that have young people and partygoers as their target visitors. This type of tourism was certainly not compatible with family or elite holidays and was far more suitable for places not as rich in historical and cultural heritage as Hvar Town. Nightclubs and beach clubs (Carpe Diem, Hula Hula, Carpe Diem Beach) became the hot spots of clubbing and party tourism.<sup>10</sup>

In 2000, the local company Nautical Centre Hvar was founded to promote nautical tourism on the island.<sup>11</sup> Although the tourists' length of stay increased between 2006 and 2013, with the average stay of 4.2 days, Hvar is still below the Croatian average of 5.2 days.<sup>12</sup>



Fig 2. Saint Stephen's Square (called Pjaca), the largest square in Dalmatia. Picture taken by the author.

The project *Hvar – the Fortress of Culture* (2016–2018) promoted another type of tourism on the island: cultural tourism for the new millenium. It emphasized the vast cultural heritage of the town and its long tradition in tourism and hospitality. “This project aims to present the town of Hvar as the cradle of Croatian culture and tourism for more than 150 years.”<sup>13</sup>

Ever since 2000 mass tourism has been growing steadily regardless of the ecological and socio-cultural capacity of the town. Between 2010 and 2017 the number of overnight stays increased by 62% in Hvar Town in comparison with 40% on Hvar Island and 53% in Croatia.<sup>14</sup> Such rapid growth of tourism is harmful to the existing ecological, social and economic resources of the town as well as damaging to the image of Hvar as a cultural and historical destination (for example, the oldest public theatre in Europe was opened in Hvar in 1612). (Figure 3) This type of tourism puts a lot of strain on the environment, identity and infrastructure management of the whole island.



Fig 3. The oldest public theatre in Europe (Hvar 2019). Picture taken by the author.



The combination of different types of tourism caused Hvar to have the record number of foreign and domestic overnight stays in 2019 (Table 2).

*"In 2018 we celebrated 150th anniversary of organized tourism in Hvar, held the most successful Days of the Croatian tourism ever and achieved the best tourism results so far. As for 2019, we can proudly say that the town of Hvar reached the previous year's numbers 45 days earlier. By the end of the year we obtained the best results since gaining independence with the total increase of 2% in arrivals and 1% in nights."*<sup>15</sup>

Table 2. Arrivals and overnight stays of domestic and foreign tourists in 2018 and 2019

TOURISTS	ARRIVALS		NIGHTS	
	2019	2018	2019	2018
Domestic	9,560	10,368	49,729	47,178
Foreign	201,382	196,422	713,900	712,679
<b>Total</b>	<b>210,942</b>	<b>206,790</b>	<b>763,629</b>	<b>759,857</b>

Source: Hvar Tourist Board<sup>16</sup>

A slight growth, especially in foreign tourist arrivals and both domestic and foreign overnight stays was recorded in 2019 in comparison with 2018. Those results place the year 2019 on top. As to different types of accommodation, apartments prevail and their number has steadily increased over the years.<sup>17</sup> Between 2017 and 2019 the number of youth hostels and holiday homes also rose. The number of rented rooms went down. These facts point to a moderate increase in accommodation facilities. Therefore, communal infrastructure and traffic on the island need to be renovated and upgraded in order to receive the growing number of tourists.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, in July 2020 only 14% of the previous year's results were achieved. The Hvar Tourist Board clearly stated that Hvar was a safe destination during the pandemic<sup>18</sup>. In the words of the Board director:

*"We are immensely pleased to say that Hvar is an attractive holiday destination even at the time of the pandemic and our guests can feel absolutely safe on the island and fully enjoy their holiday"*.<sup>19</sup>

## Research hypothesis, methods and objectives

*The research hypothesis* was that during the last two decades the town of Hvar had witnessed random tourism development mainly moving towards mass tourism with some elements of other types of tourism (elite, cultural, sport). The future also seems to be directed towards haphazard, unplanned development.

*The research goals* were to determine the current state of tourism in the town of Hvar and look at the possible guidelines for its further development, taking into consideration the challenges of ecological, economic and socio-cultural sustainability and the Covid-19 pandemic.

*The case study research* was carried out on the Croatian island of Hvar (Yin, 2003; Hamel, Dufour and Fortin, 1993; Feagin, Orum and Sjoberg, 1991; Tellis, 1997) using the following methods:

1. Analysis of the documentation and statistical data about the demographic, social and tourism structure of the destination
2. Semi-structured interviews (30) with inhabitants (17 permanent and 13 temporary/seasonal residents, 14 female and 16 male) who take part in various tourism-related activities (Tourist Board official, apartment owners, hotel, bar and restaurant workers, artisans, journalists, cultural workers)<sup>20</sup>. The following table (Table 3) shows the distribution of stakeholders, their gender and type of residency (temporary/seasonal).

Table 3. Distribution of stakeholders, their gender and type of residency (temporary/seasonal).

Male		Female	
Permanent	Seasonal	Permanent	Seasonal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Former member of the city council</li> <li>• Booker</li> <li>• Apartment renter</li> <li>• Hvar tourist board director</li> <li>• Engineer</li> <li>• Municipal policeman</li> <li>• Cook</li> <li>• Postal operator</li> <li>• Telecommunications technician</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drivers (2)</li> <li>• Lawyer</li> <li>• Restorer</li> <li>• Computer designer</li> <li>• Salesperson</li> <li>• Tourist agency owner</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worker in tourism</li> <li>• Librarians (2)</li> <li>• Waitress</li> <li>• Postal operator</li> <li>• Cultural worker</li> <li>• Hotel worker</li> <li>• Retired tourism worker</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Designer</li> <li>• Economist</li> <li>• Teacher</li> <li>• Journalists (2)</li> <li>• Travel agent</li> </ul>

The interviews were conducted in the town of Hvar, in July and August 2020, individually with each respondent. All respondents were asked the same questions. Some of the respondents could not respond live (6 of them) due to distance or fear of contact due to the pandemic, and responded by email. There were no special limitations/challenges for the author to interview the locals, partly because the author is also a seasonal resident familiar with some problems and the situation in the place. On the other hand, it was partly because of the COVID-19 pandemic, which greatly reduced the number of tourists and made residents more open and accessible to talk, both on the pandemic itself and on other issues. The Croatian language was used in the interviews, as all respondents were familiar with the Croatian language, except in the case of two people (tourist agency owner and occasional resident from Slovenia, in these cases English was used). The sampling techniques employed were snowball sampling and purposeful sampling. By definition, a chain referral sample is created through a series of referents in a circle of people who know each other (Weiss 1994: 25–26) and purposeful sampling involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are especially knowledgeable about or experienced with a phenomenon of interest (Cresswell and Plano Clark, 2011). Interviews were recorded by a dictaphone and data was analysed manually. Interviews were halted when exhaustion of data was achieved, as is the usual procedure with the snowball method. Ethical consideration included informing the respondents about the purpose of the research and they were guaranteed confidentiality of data. In addition, they were informed that the data will be used exclusively for scientific purposes and as a basis for possible further strategies and policies related to the tourism development of the town of Hvar and the publication of a scientific paper. The planned dissemination of the results revealed only the gender and occupation of the respondents and was performed in the town of Hvar after the completion of the research. Additionally, the Ethics Committee of the author's institution approved the research.

The interview respondents were asked seventeen questions about their views on the current state of tourism in their town. These included what type of tourism prevailed; its advantages and drawbacks; what they saw as the main potential for the future development of tourism in Hvar taking into account the economic, ecological and socio-cultural sustainability and their interaction (Throsby, 2008; O'Toole, Wallis and Mitchell, 2006; Spangenberg, 2004). They were also asked how and to what extent agritourism fits into further tourism aspirations; which tourism scenario is in their



opinion most likely in the future; who are the main actors and what are the main potential investments in the tourist development of Hvar. Finally, their opinion on how the COVID-19 pandemic affected the 2020 tourist season and whether and how, in their view, it will have further, long-term consequences for tourism was also examined.

## Research results and discussion

Tourism in the town of Hvar has to develop according to the principles of ecological, economic and socio-cultural sustainability<sup>21</sup>. It has to meet the needs of tourists as well as improve the quality of life of the local people managing and preserving the natural resources for current and future generations. At the same time sustainable development has to ensure long-term economic growth and environmental protection.

Semi-structured interviews are presented and analysed in the following 5 sections depending on the questions asked. Each section deals with the questions concerning one dimension of the sustainable tourism concept in the town of Hvar. First we look at the economic dimension (economic growth stimulated by tourism, the primary and most important economic activity). Then comes the social dimension (the principal actors in tourism, their roles and activities). The ecological dimension reflects on the visual identity and environmental protection, agritourism and ecotourism, while the cultural dimension considers the offer for those interested in cultural tourism. And finally, the last set of questions concerns the Covid-19 pandemic and its effects on the last season but also on the future of tourism on Hvar and other Dalmatian islands.

### 1. Types of tourism in the town of Hvar (economic dimension of sustainability)

As tourism is the most important economic activity in the town of Hvar, in this section we look at different types of tourism present on the island, point out their advantages and drawbacks, discuss the most likely future scenarios (elite, mass, rural or cultural tourism), analyse the biggest investments so far and the most desirable future projects.

The population structure of Hvar Town (employment by economic sector, Table 4) shows the town's strong reliance on tourism. Almost 36% of people work in tourism, which is a very high percentage compared to Split-Dalmatia County ( 8%) or the whole of Croatia (6%). The same is true for Hvar Island where 24.7% of people are employed in tourism but the employment in agriculture and industry is considerably higher than in Hvar Town.

Table 4. Population structure in the town of Hvar (employment by economic sector)

Area	Total number of inhabitants	Employed persons (%)	Agriculture, fishing and forestry (%)	Industry, construction, mining, energy and water management (%)	Trade, traffic and other services (except tourism) (%)	Tourism (%)	Healthcare, education culture and public administration (%)
Hvar Town	4,138	40.5	8.4	8.0	31.0	35.6	17.0
Hvar Island	11,103	36.9	15.8	13.1	29.7	24.7	16.7
Split-Dalmatia County	463,676	32.2	2.2	24.1	41.1	8.1	24.4
Croatia	4,437,460	33.9	5.3	27.7	37.2	6.1	23.8

Source: Hvar Tourism development strategy for the town of Hvar 2030:20

Regarding types of tourism, our respondents agree that indeed we can talk about different types of tourism in the town of Hvar ( elite, mass, cultural, backpacker tourism ) but they also believe that the tourists' perception of various forms of tourism might not always be quite realistic. Before 2000 Hvar was the destination of the rich, much more so than most other tourist destinations in Croatia. One of the reasons were excellent tourist accommodation establishments: out of 14 hotels, there were 6 four-star hotels, which had 57% of all hotel overnight stays and even 64% of all hotel arrivals.<sup>22</sup> In spite of that fact, in recent years Hvar has become a globally recognized party destination, because of masses of young visitors who come and stay for only a short time (a few nights). The Hvar Tourist Board director points out that one of the main strategic goals has always been to present Hvar as an elite destination and all promotional efforts have aimed at achieving that goal. The renovation of cultural facilities is a part of the cultural tourism development plan. Gastro tourism also has immense potential on the island as does sport tourism.

*Over the last few years, Hvar has been globally perceived as the party tourism destination although it has never been advertised as one. We aspire to develop luxury tourism. Cultural tourism is another objective we try to accomplish: we have renovated the 16th century Arsenal building and the theatre, the fortress above the town. Culinary tourism and sport tourism are very popular, too. (Hvar Tourist Board director)*

Many respondents believe that the town's reputation has been tarnished by unplanned tourism development. Elite tourism has been replaced by mass tourism and excessive construction of holiday apartments. So although Hvar has a number of luxury hotels (such as Palace Elisabeth, Amfora, Adriana, Pharos, Arsenal, Loggia, see Figures 4 and 5), the pursuit of profit ( typical for lots of coastal and island towns and places) has taken precedence over careful and systematic planning.

*"Hasty, get-rich-quick investments in new tourist accommodation facilities cause this wild, out of control construction of apartments for rent- as a result of such thoughtless interference in the existing architecture, the landscape changes, the environment comes under threat and too much stress is placed on inadequate local infrastructure in summer months." (Kovačević, 2018:2)*

*Hvar used to have the status of a luxury destination. Nowadays some parts of the town are totally devastated by the uncontrolled and uncontrollable apartmanization. (teacher)*

As to projects worth investing in, our interviewees mention, interestingly enough, small villages very close to the town but at the same time so far from its buzz. They also regret the fact that, despite having such huge cultural potential, Hvar seems to have been reduced to a mass tourism destination similar to the famous party beach Zrće on the island of Pag. With its rich cultural and historical heritage and many luxury accommodation facilities Hvar is certainly not best suited for party, backpacker and mass tourism.



Fig 4. Hotel Palace Elisabeth (2019). Picture taken by the author.



Fig 5. Hotel Amfora (2020). Picture taken by the author.

*Grablje and Brusje are two beautiful ethno-eco inland villages of the future. The village youth (living in Hvar, Split...) organize the Lavender Festival there every year in June. Hvar can become Monaco, but it has become Zrće. (former member of the City Council)*

There are some other issues in Hvar that raise concern among its residents. One problem is the town's general appearance, which they consider rather neglected. Not enough is invested in its infrastructure either. The waste disposal is another important issue as well as the insufficient use of the renewable energy sources.

*Further investment? In the infrastructure. In the town appearance. The petrol station is a shack.*  
(Telecommunications technician)

The main threat to the carrying capacity of the island are not hotel buildings and their facilities.

*“Much worse is the construction of too many new apartments or holiday homes, which are then rented to tourists or alterations and extensions to existing properties (usually owner-occupied) for the purpose of renting them out.”*  
(Miljan, 2019: 52)

Such projects have a negative impact on the carrying capacity of the town, its architecture and the accommodation offer quality in general. Consequently, it can lead to serious revenue losses.

It follows that, unless the tourism planning strategy is seriously improved, mass tourism is the most likely future scenario. Another important strategic goal is to extend the tourist season and make Hvar an all year round destination.

*In my opinion, uncontrolled apartmanization needs to be stopped. Who is going to put an end to it? I wish Hvar was a popular destination in all seasons, not only in summer. But how can it be when hotels are closed in winter?* (a retired tourism worker)

A quick look at the Hvar Tourism development strategy for the town of Hvar 2030 (Table 5) shows that the sun and the beach are still the primary tourism products just like before 2020 (along with health tourism). Eco-tourism is only mentioned as the tertiary product.

Table 5. Tourism products in the town of Hvar

Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sun and beach tourism</li> <li>• Health tourism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nautical tourism</li> <li>• Cultural tourism</li> <li>• Gastro and wine tourism</li> <li>• Rural tourism</li> <li>• Adrenaline tourism – (diving)</li> <li>• Youth tourism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eco-tourism</li> </ul>

Source: Hvar Tourism development strategy for the town of Hvar 2030: 40.

Islands, particularly those with a strong economic dependence on tourism, are often complicit in perpetuating the narrowly defined constructs of their essence by playing up those aspects that align with the prevailing generic island brand (Baldacchino, 2012; Baldacchino and Khamis, 2018). We can see that this situation can be applied also to Hvar. Some authors (Graham and Campbell, 2021) point to problems that arise due to this kind of branding of the place: 1. The focus or emphasis on generic islandness may impede meaningful distinctions among and between destinations. 2. Islands that are looking to expand their economic base beyond traditional tourism may struggle to create a place identity.

Therefore, it is important to approach branding carefully and with an emphasis on the identity of the place, as well as its authentic ecological, social and cultural offer.

## 2. Connecting social actors in the tourism planning and development of the town of Hvar (social dimension of sustainability)

This section examines what roles various actors play in the tourism development of Hvar and whether this development is influenced by foreign investment. In the Tourism development strategy of the town of Hvar the following actors play the most important roles (Table 6).

Table 6. Key actors in the tourism development of the town of Hvar

Sector	Actors
Public sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hvar Tourist Board</li> <li>• Hvar Town</li> <li>• Nautical centre</li> <li>• Hvar Heritage Museum</li> <li>• Hvar Public Library</li> <li>• Secondary school Hvar</li> </ul>
Private sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hoteliers</li> <li>• Restaurant, club and bar owners</li> <li>• Private renters</li> </ul>
Civil society sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Associations</li> </ul>

Source: Hvar tourism development strategy 2030 for the town of Hvar, 61.

Our respondents agree that the Hvar Tourist Board and the private sector players are the key actors in the tourism development of the town. The civil society sector has grown in importance in the last few years through various project initiatives. There are lots of ideas, coming from different sources, how to enrich the tourist offer but there is not enough interaction and coordination to work towards achieving the common goal.

*The local government usually give their blessing to private investors who build up more and more apartments and increase the total accommodation capacity. There are some good initiatives coming from small businesses, cultural institutions... but there is no communication, no dialogue, no synergy. (librarian)*

Members of the local community (unless they work in the town government) do not play an important part in the decision-making processes, which concern the town development. Nor do they react to the existing development strategies. A low level of citizen participation (Arnstein, 1969) is characteristic for all Croatia (Svirčić Gotovac and Zlatar Gamberožić, 2020). On islands<sup>23</sup> there is a certain “shift of responsibility” from higher instances on to the local community when it comes to economic issues, tourism activities etc. A combined bottom-up and top-down participatory approach to planning and development in tourism would be much more appropriate. Even though local actors can be very productive, either individually or in different types of organizations, in order to meet their diverse needs and realize their ideas, higher instances have to step in and help financially.<sup>24</sup>

*On their own, ordinary citizens, little people, cannot do much. Decisions are made among the few ones. I believe young people should have fun on holiday, but they often cross the line of decent behaviour. Hvar should be famous for its old culture and tradition, everybody has heard of its theatre and medieval fort. (salesperson)*



Foreign investment is mentioned only in connection with the purchase of the Sunčani Hvar hotel company and the renovation of hotels in its ownership. It seems that is the limit of direct foreign investment in tourism so far.

*In 2019 we celebrated the opening of the newly renovated Palace Elisabeth hotel. The owner announced further investment in Sunčani Hvar hotel capacities in the future. (restorer)*

There is a big issue of the proper withdrawal of EU funds. Various associations have already applied and withdrawn the money but the projects have not been fully implemented. Beside all the steps that need to be taken, it is vital to improve the efficiency of the local government and initiate the coordination of all interest groups at local and regional level to obtain maximum results (Miljan, 2019: 52).

*A group of young people found the place for socializing, organized some workshops, withdrew money from EU funds. They were planning to take over the management of Veneranda, a large open-air disco but it didn't happen. Politics, different interests interfered. No money has been withdrawn. (designer)*

The socially sustainable scenario for the future of tourism in Hvar Town depends on the ability of the entire community to maintain/improve the quality of life in the town and on the whole island. The hard task includes politicians, public administration, small entrepreneurs, everybody employed in tourism, prominent public figures, civil society activists.<sup>25</sup> Tourism development, environment and people are strongly inter-connected.

### 3. Agriculture and tourism on the island, rural tourism and the environment protection (ecological dimension of sustainability)

In this section we examine the connection between agricultural production and tourism, look at the potential of agritourism and the negative impact of tourism on the environment, infrastructure and place identity.

According to our respondents, there is no strong connection between agriculture and tourism on the island of Hvar in spite of the fact that the local population is actively engaged in agriculture. But how many of these products appear on the market and become a part of the tourist offer?

*Island agriculture and tourism will be sufficiently connected when we can buy local products on the green market or at the butcher's and eat locally grown food in restaurants. I don't know how to accomplish that when peaches from Hvar cost a few times more than the imported ones. Honestly, it doesn't make sense. I believe that food producers should be given incentives to encourage the production, supplement their income and ensure the stable supply of their commodities. Or... is it just wishful thinking when it is so much simpler and easier to rent apartments to tourists? (journalist)*

The types of tourism such as eco-tourism and agritourism are desirable because they take into account the tourist capacities of islands, and the importance of natural capacity and carrying capacity of each island (Zlatař, 2010; Zlatař Gamberožić and Tonković, 2015). It is therefore vital to strengthen the connection between tourism and agriculture on



the island. Wine tours and visits to ethno-eco villages are already part of the tourist offer. The idea of family farms, which cater to tourists, has excellent prospects but this type of tourism needs further support and encouragement.<sup>26</sup>

*Family farms are becoming a new element of tourist offer. The eco-village Velo Grablje with its lovely lavender fields is a project well worth considering. (lawyer)*

Some places in inland Hvar are better suited to agritourism than the town of Hvar itself and they should be in the focus of sustainable tourism strategy and those who create it. The lack of favourable policies that link agriculture and tourism are also visible in other island and coastal destinations (Jadrešić, 2010; Kovačević, 2018; Theng, Qiong and Tatar, 2015). Such attitude leads to the exclusion of those economic activities that are considered less profitable (fishing, gardening, agriculture), and mass tourism precipitates the breakdown of fragile local economies (Theng, Qiong and Tatar, 2015: 2). However, in recent years, the reputation of agritourism is better, it is considered an increasingly important element of the tourist offer and in some cases, the entire tourist offer is based on it. Agritourism is increasingly being viewed as a 'desirable diversifying' context for local and regional economies, not least because one of the positive externalities of tourism growth is its role in increasing the supply of local services, as well as the less obvious social contribution of tourism to expanding local leisure spaces, especially in marginalized, peripheral regions (Butler and Rogerson, 2016).

*In Jelsa or Stari Grad when you rent an apartment the owner serves you his wine and olive oil. In Hvar, people have given up on farming and fishing. Agriculture used to be very important in the past but it is not any more. (salesperson)*

Another reason why the reputation of agritourism has improved is that islands are characterized by a "cultural capital" that is typically linked with the development of alternative tourism products, as compared to mass tourism (see Karampela et al, 2016). This may be applicable to the Adriatic islands, including Hvar. Cultural capital includes land and sea management systems that have preserved local products and recipes, but have also co-shaped their cultural landscape including different cultures, materials and people (Karampela et al, 2016; Baldacchino, 2015).

Therefore, we can notice many ways in which agritourism can be incorporated into the tourist offer, taking into account both the cultural and social capital, as well as ecological, historical, architectural elements. Islands are in that sense privileged symbolic entities (Karampela et al, 2016).

Agritourism associated with cultural capital can help reduce seasonal tourism, which is especially important for Adriatic islands that depend on seasonality and thus lose much of the tourist year. By organizing excursion tours, picking olives, lavender and similar activities, the season could be extended and designed beyond the summer months.

The rise of mass and backpacker tourism has changed the once elite Adriatic destination, its cultural identity, its distinctive character. Intense apartmanization has caused the environment degradation. The problem of waste management has appeared. The perception of Hvar has changed due to high numbers of young tourists looking for entertainment and moving fast from one place to another.

*The way I see it... Hvar has lost its identity. The new apartment buildings bear no connection to the traditional Mediterranean-style houses from before. (restorer)*

The town has lost the recognizable elements of its Mediterranean cultural identity. Glass and concrete have replaced the traditional local architecture and made Hvar (and many other Mediterranean towns) similar to one another. The increasing uniformity and similarity of modern towns is made possible by building anything anywhere. "Globalization leads to the homogenization of space, the 'Disneyfication' of towns - specific objects are placed into the environment they don't organically and logically belong to." (Čaldarović, 2011: 13)

*In clubs foreign music is played, international cocktails are served... I don't know how much Hvar is still alive during the off season. (restorer)*

A decrease in the island's identity has also been noticed by various authors (see: Bates et al; 2019; Róin, 2015; Burholt et al; 2013). They argue that these aspects of island life and identity were perceived to be threatened, and many local residents feel that the nature of the island was changing, or "disappearing" with the increased numbers of tourists, more frequent ferry sailings and diminished community spirit.

The problem of the disappearance of the island's authenticity thus presents a specific problem of the island due to excessive tourism and the changes it has brought. Therefore, attention should be paid to the expansion and direction of tourism in order to preserve it.

#### 4. Cultural tourism (cultural dimension of sustainability)

Cultural tourism is important for the town of Hvar.<sup>27</sup> Cultural tourism is the movement of persons outside their place of residence for essentially cultural motivations, for the purpose of collecting new information and experience. It includes travels to festivals and similar cultural events, visits to museums, sites and monuments (Tomljenović and Boranić Živoder, 2015). The "Hvar-fortress of culture" project (2016–2018) promoted Hvar as a cultural destination based on its vast heritage and cultural activities. Some respondents think that the whole project was too general and did not take into account the specific context and resources of the place. The project was designed by a foreign company and the citizens were not consulted.

*The project was designed without a dialogue with the citizens. Each chosen location was called a multimedia or exhibition place and was clearly intended for short-term use only. A more permanent function eluded. Also, the project was designed by a foreign company and the majority of people were ignorant about its contents. (cultural worker)*

*A wise offer of luxury experiences and cultural insights might make Hvar again the destination it once was. (designer)*

The existing cultural resources have to be well protected and carefully managed in years to come. This is true for heritage buildings such as the Španjola fortress (Figure 6), the theatre or the Franciscan monastery where concerts and plays are organized. The same goes for cultural activities (cycling, for example, in the clean environment past drywalls, olive groves and vineyards, meeting new people and learning about their traditions and national cuisine (Rabotić, 2013). People from the Hvar Tourist Board aim to combine different types of tourism activities under the umbrella of sustainability.<sup>28</sup>

*The famous agave plant lace made by the Benedictin nuns is a tradition worth protecting. Though the nuns, because of their age, cannot work so much any more, we have to ensure their skills are passed on. Hvar Town has to be able to cater for different types of tourists because we have been doing it for the last 30 years. The tourism development strategy has never been clearly defined. (director of the Hvar Tourist Board)*



Fig 6. Hvar fortress called Španjola (2020). Picture taken by the author.

Since different cultural practices that depend on the history of a particular archipelago of any island are emerging, it is very important to see how they can be included in any branding strategy, depending on the differences between the places on the island. This is also important for the further branding development of the town of Hvar in relation to the other places on the island of Hvar.

How the plurality of narratives intersects, aligns or jars with any official rhetorics of representation (Baldacchino, 2015:11) is the starting point for spreading and designing the cultural dimension.

## 5. The Covid-19 pandemic influence on the tourist season

The Covid-19 pandemic has a negative impact on tourism all over the world. The “new normal”, anti-epidemic measures, reduced number of tourists – everything has affected tourism industry and its workers (Figure 7).

The 2020 Hvar season started badly. May, June and July saw low tourist numbers compensated a little by increased arrivals in August. Since the outbreak of the pandemic in spring 2020 Hvar Town was a relatively safe, virus-free zone. The virus spread with the arrival of tourists in August.

*A 70% drop in arrivals and nights was recorded. Until mid- July lots of hotels and restaurants were closed. Now they are beginning to open slowly. The Covid-19 pandemic has made people aware that we have to slow down a bit, that things are going in the wrong direction in this town. Intense apartmanization has gotten out of control. (director of the Hvar Tourist Board)*

According to our respondents, the pandemic has raised people's awareness of the pitfalls of excessive building and masses of visitors in the previous years. They realize that in order to function properly Hvar actually needs a smaller number of tourists.

The Palace Elisabeth hotel<sup>29</sup> was almost fully booked soon after it opened, which was the evidence of tourists' readiness for excellent accommodation and service. It seems certain that elite tourism will be back as soon as the pandemic is over.

*There was some anxiety before the opening of the hotel but the very next day it was almost fully booked. The hotel opened on 14th July and in the first week we had 80% bookings. When guests arrive in Hvar they look for expensive hotels. (hotel worker)*



Fig 7. Empty beach in Hvar Town, beginning of August 2020. Picture taken by the author.

Even a brief look at tourist arrivals and overnight stays in Hvar in 2020 (Table 7) and in 2019 and before (Table 2) reveals a dramatic drop in numbers, especially with regard to foreign visitors. In 2019 there were 210, 942 foreign visitors and in 2020 only 40, 852. In 2019 there were 713, 900 foreign nights and in 2020 merely 235, 080. The 2020 promotional

activities mainly targeted the domestic market and then the European countries (primarily Germany, Slovenia, France, Poland and the Czech Republic). Once the air corridors opened in July 2020, the marketing campaign was directed towards Great Britain, which proved traditionally responsive. Table 7 shows the figures until 15th November 2020. They show that only 24.26% (51,231) of previous year's arrivals were recorded and only 38.62% (295,165) of overnight stays.<sup>30</sup>

Table 7. Arrivals and nights in 2020 (domestic and foreign tourists)

	Arrivals	Nights
Tourists	2020	2020
Domestic	10,379	60,085
Foreign	40,852	235,080
Total	51,231	295,165

Source: Hvar Tourist Board<sup>31</sup>

## Conclusion

Not looking too far back into the turbulent history of Hvar tourism, it can be safely said that with the growth of mass tourism in the 1970s Hvar became a widely recognized and very popular destination and tourism became the backbone of the local economy. The war in the early 1990s decimated the tourism industry. The recovery was slow but an effective marketing campaign and its slogan "The Mediterranean as it Once Was" brought back the tourists in the first years of the new millenium. On the one hand, Hvar Town was being promoted as an elite destination with a marina full of luxury yachts, revamped hotels and exclusive restaurants. Simultaneously, excessive, profit-driven apartment and hostel building attracted lots of young, fun-seeking tourists. This type of tourism was encouraged by beach clubs in sharp contrast to expensive clubs and it contributed to a steady rise in tourist numbers until the 2020 COVID-19 related steep decline. Today there are a number of important issues that have to be addressed regarding tourism development in Hvar Town: still a very strong party destination image, distinct seasonality of the place, urgent infrastructure renovation, place branding, traffic, waste management.

Regarding *research goals* the following conclusions have been reached. Our respondents' views on the economic dimension of sustainable tourism suggest that the Covid-19 pandemic has brought into focus one important fact: over the past twenty years the number of tourists has exceeded the carrying capacity of Hvar Town. It has become a party destination similar to Zrće on the island of Pag rather than a prestigious destination of elite tourism. Such state of affairs is not purely coincidental but the result of activities of various interest groups motivated only by financial gain. In 2019 it was abundantly clear that Hvar was bursting at the seams so the local community and the authorities started addressing the issue. The new tourism development strategy tackles specific goals (elite and cultural tourism namely, bearing in mind the concept of sustainability). When we consider the social dimension of sustainable tourism, the key actor involved in tourism development in Hvar Town seems to have been the local community. Without a clearly defined development strategy and with the silent blessing of the authorities, the local people have taken the delicate matter in their hands and apartment and hostel numbers grew uncontrollably. Foreign investment is only focused on the Sunčani Hvar hotel chain. The withdrawal of EU funds is still a problem except for a few projects initiated by civil society organizations and obstructed by the local government. Looking at the ecological dimension of sustainable tourism, excessive building characteristic for Hvar Town in the last couple of decades has not only harmed the environment. It

has also destroyed the historical and cultural authenticity of the town, its uniqueness has been obliterated by the sameness that reigns in restaurants, clubs and bars. Health-oriented tourism, agritourism, sport tourism or cultural tourism strategies are not well defined yet and appear sporadically without systematic planning or investment. Efforts have been made to boost the reputation of Hvar as a cultural tourism destination (the old theatre, concerts, exhibitions, other cultural events) but mass tourism has thwarted these aspirations to some extent.

*The research hypothesis* has been confirmed. In Hvar Town tourism development is still disorganized and inconsistent which, among other things, results in an increasing pressure on the island's natural resources. The town combines different types of tourism, suggesting there is no clear vision of the desired future development or place branding. All residents (permanent and seasonal) point out that, regardless of the ongoing pandemic, Hvar Town needs to move towards sustainable tourism (preferably luxury, agri and cultural tourism) by creating a clearly defined development strategy. In the past years the whole island has become a synonym for party tourism, which is unfortunate because its natural, economic and social potential is huge and far from being fully exploited (Miljan, 2019: 52). The new tourism development strategy focuses precisely on these key issues and it remains to be seen whether it will be successfully implemented.

Further research should focus on the types of tourism that would be more favorable for the island of Hvar, as well as for areas of the island in general, such as agritourism and the ways islands could benefit from it. References to the importance of agritourism have increased lately, but its implications to local economic development have so far been little explored (Rogerson and Rogerson, 2014).

Since the identity of the islands is one of their greatest values, these aspects are also important in the further development of tourism. If we are guided by other forms of tourism (agritourism, sports tourism, medical tourism, etc.), we can reduce this loss of islands' authenticity.

Further research should therefore focus on the positive aspects that different types of tourism, apart from mass tourism, have on different dimensions of sustainability, and the ways in which they could be implemented in the town of Hvar and beyond.

## Endnotes

1. Sustainable tourism destinations require proper management and planning regarding the quantity and type of tourist facilities and the volume of tourist traffic. The "status quo" model retains the existing practices in destinations with mostly seasonal concentration of tourists. The restructuring and repositioning development scenario seeks to balance the local, regional and national interests and puts the emphasis on all aspects of sustainability in tourism (ecological, socio-cultural, political and economic). (Miljan, 2019:20)
2. Islands and settlements are divided into groups according to expected differences in demographic figures: a) large islands [more than 110 km<sup>2</sup>]: Krk, Cres, Brač, Hvar, Pag, Korčula and Dugi otok; medium-sized islands [51 to 110 km<sup>2</sup>]: Mljet, Vis, Rab, Lošinj, Pašman, Šolta and Ugljan; small islands [20 to 50 km<sup>2</sup>]: Lastovo, Kornat, Čiovo, Olib, Vir and Molat; very small islands [area smaller than 20 km<sup>2</sup>, 27 of which are inhabited] b) islands close to the coast: Krk, Rab, Pag, Vir, Ugljan, Pašman, Vrgada, Murter, Prvić (near Šibenik), Zlarin, Krapanj, Drvenik mali, Drvenik veli, Čiovo, Šolta, Brač, Šipan, Koločep and Lopud; islands further from the coast: all other inhabited islands (Nejašmić, 2013:44).
3. [www.dzs.hr](http://www.dzs.hr) (Croatian Bureau of Statistics)



4. Abdulmar, 2019.
5. See: <https://azkurs.org/voditeljica-projekta-doc-dr-sc-ivana-mari-suradnici.html?page=13>
6. See: <https://azkurs.org/voditeljica-projekta-doc-dr-sc-ivana-mari-suradnici.html?page=13>
7. Types of accommodation in Hvar Town fall into four categories: private rented accommodation (62.45%), hotels and aparthotels (26.71%)- the total of which is 89.16%. 2.72% of bed places are in hostels that target the youth/backpacker market. (See: <https://azkurs.org/voditeljica-projekta-doc-dr-sc-ivana-mari-suradnici.html?page=13>)
8. The increased length of stay is connected with the fact that in summer there are only 6 car ferry lines per day to the island, the ride lasts about two hours and the tickets are quite costly.
9. Some of the world famous celebrities who visited Hvar are, for example, Beyoncé, George Clooney, David Beckham, Brad Pitt etc.
10. In the research, interviewees often noted that these businesses were illegal in terms of staying open outside working hours, and various other types of illegal activities, but also noted that the earnings of these clubs and the profits for the owners were extremely high, so that it was impossible or undesirable to intervene legally in their functioning.
11. Hvar tourism development strategy 2030 for the town of Hvar (2019) (Eds: Tomljenović, R., Boranić Živoder, S., Klarić. Z.). Institute of Tourism.
12. See: Statistical analysis of tourist traffic, 2010, <https://www.dalmatia.hr/hr/statistike/statisticka-analiza-turistickog-prometa-2010-godine>
13. See: <http://www.hvar.hr/portal/tvrdava-kulture/>
14. See: Hvar Tourism development strategy for the town of Hvar 2030, 2019:13.
15. Source: Hvar Tourist Board: <https://visithvar.hr/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Izvje%C5%A1%C4%87e-rada-Turisti%C4%8Dke-zajednice-grad-a-Hvara-2019.pdf>
16. Source: Hvar Tourist Board: <https://visithvar.hr/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Izvje%C5%A1%C4%87e-rada-Turisti%C4%8Dke-zajednice-grad-a-Hvara-2019.pdf>
17. Source: Hvar Tourist Board
18. Promoting the island as a safe destination did not actually lead to the tourism recovery. Nevertheless, by August (2020) it helped establish Hvar as a somewhat more desirable destination compared to the mainland, where the pandemic was more widespread. However, in August 2020, the pandemic also affected Hvar and other islands, so that the entire Adriatic coast was in a similar situation as far as visitors were concerned, ie the loss of visitors was the same.
19. Source: <https://mint.gov.hr/vijesti/grad-hvar-ostvaruje-1000-nocenja-dnevno/21438>
20. The Mayor of Hvar and his deputy were contacted as well as the local government representatives. Although in the official email they all agreed to answer the questions in written form, their answers were never received.
21. Source: <https://azkurs.org/voditeljica-projekta-doc-dr-sc-ivana-mari-suradnici.html?page=13>.
22. See: <https://visithvar.hr/>
23. See: Tonković, Zlata, 2014; Zlata Gamberožić; Tonković, 2015.

24. "The shift of responsibility" on to the local community is particularly obvious in small island places (see: Zlatar, 2010), where research participants feel responsible for both progress and (more often) stagnation, feeling defeated in their struggle to improve things or resigned because there is no help from higher places (the municipality, state, EU funds).
25. Hvar Tourism development strategy for the town of Hvar 2030: 50.
26. There are certain forms of rural tourism on the island: the Lavender Festival in Grablje, wine tasting tours etc.
27. Hvar Town has a rich cultural heritage : Saint Stephen's Square and Cathedral, Hvar's fort Fortica or Španjola as the locals call it (Figure 6), the Loggia and Clock Tower, the Arsenal, the Theatre, the Benedictin and the Franciscan monastery, the villa of Hanibal Lucić.
28. Tourism development strategy for the town of Hvar 2030 places an emphasis on the conservation and restoration of cultural heritage. It is also important to invest in cultural, social and sport activities in the off-season months to improve the residents' quality of life and create a vibrant urban and cosmopolitan atmosphere, which the citizens long for (2019: 50).
29. A hundred million kuna were invested in this hotel and it became a five-star hotel in 2019. It was the first heritage hotel on the sunniest Mediterranean island. The history of the hotel dates back to 13th century . When the palace was rebuilt in 1899 it was named the Spa Hotel Empress Elisabeth after the famous Austrian Empress Sisi, a generous patron of the hotel. Thence the full name of the new hotel – *Palace Elisabeth, Hvar heritage hotel*. Even before the opening it became a member of the elite hotel association of luxury hotels *The Leading Hotels of the World*.
30. Source: Hvar Tourist Board
31. See: <https://visithvar.hr/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Izvjescje-rada-TZ-grada-Hvara-2020.pdf>

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