

IDENTITY OF NATIONAL HERITAGE IN FUNCTION OF SPECIALISED TOURIST OFFER IN CROATIA

Neven ŠERIC
Faculty of Economics
Split University
Split, Croatia
nevseric@inet.hr

Jasminka TALIJANČIĆ
Faculty of Economics
Split University
Split, Croatia
talijancicj@gmail.com

Abstract

Every tourist oriented country tries to increase its content on global tourist market. Continuity of diverse tourist offer consolidation on the global market presumes specialized tourist's offer of every small country, like Croatia. For those countries it's the best way of market share protection on global market. Tourist market is dynamic and extremely oriented to contemporary trends. Tourist tends to experience authentically offer, typical for the country that he visits. In that sense, tourist offer adjustment to national identity (based on historic ambience for which the offer is created) presents sustainable competition strategy. Therefore, tourist offer on the Croatian market must include eco tourism, excursion, culture tourism and adventure tourism (with special reference to nautical tourism). Demands for ecological areas and personal safety are criteria that contribute to the choice of tourist destinations. Also the trend of health care is quite obvious (wellness, fitness etc.). In accordance to changed needs of modern tourist, tourist offer must be diversified. It could be done by applying the specialized form of tourist offer. Accordingly, we have used the market research "what tourist thinks" in order to define the appropriate marketing frame by which Croatia will be positioned as specialized tourist destination in a long term. The identity will be based on authentic tourist product. Also, it would provide the credibility of the new national tourist offer. Tourist will be offered to be the explorer of the historical and cultural heritage as well as the identity of the destination he is visiting. Croatian national cultural heritage has all necessary predispositions (cities, palaces, old castles, churches, museums... etc). Only specialized tourist's offer can provide growing trend for the independent period. The abstract will not exceed 150 words, in the Times New Roman font, 9 pts., italic, 0.75 cm indent. It will mention the aim of the paper, research goals and expected results. Please use a less technical language, able to provide an overview of the paper contents for people who have no special knowledge in the field.

Key words: identity, specialisation, tourism, strategy, destination.
JEL classification: N63, Q57

1. OBJECTIVES OF THE PAPER

Considering significance and potential of tourism as the generator of national economic progress, its spontaneous development is not and cannot be permissible [Ministry of Tourism, 2003, 3-4]. Existence of national tourist offer at the global tourist market presumes diversity, specific qualities and controlled valorization of strategic tourist resources [Ministry of Tourism, 2003, 8-9]. In a search of efficient tourist strategy, tourist countries often accept guidelines of economic integrations to which they aspire. Integrations primarily base the guidelines on interests of their economically most developed members. Therefore, the suggested solutions are often not optimal for a small country in transition like Croatia. Global solutions (within tourist development guidelines) should be taken into account, but also adapted to the existing tourist resources in terms of defining valuable peculiarities of the offer and the intensity of its valorization. Differentiated marketing approach is the potential for market positioning in the „niche“ which can ensure dynamic and sustainable tourist development of a small country in transition like Croatia. Contemporary tourism presumes special qualities, differences and preserved natural resources to be the platform for development of differentiated marketing approach. Therefore, Croatia has been offered guidelines of European Union from the end of 20th century that partly conflict with the potential of competitor's valorization of the overall national tourist resources. The cause of that is also conditioning the model of admission to the Union. In comparison with the model from mid '90s of the 20th century (*Model of Mediterranean country Vs Model of central European country*) [Šerić, 2002, 10-11] starting points in deliberations of national tourist development strategies for Republic of Croatia need to be sought in tourist tradition, whose basis are set up at the time when organized tourism still didn't exist in many nowadays developed tourist countries. Spontaneous development of tourism in Republic of Croatia caused imbalance of standards and the quality of offer in terms of excellence with reference to the structure of the national tourist offer. It is the consequence of diverse intensity in valorization of the overall cultural – historical heritage and natural resources. Starting from the stated hypothesis, the purpose and the aim of this paper is to indicate the value of the specific national heritage in terms of tourist resource and to offer a general model for managing strategic tourist development of Republic of Croatia based on national heritage – the building block of the specialized forms of tourist offer. The presented model presumes controlled valorization of the overall national tourist resources as well as tactical approach with the aim of ensuring differentiated tourist offer of Republic of Croatia at the global tourist market. The image and the brand of Croatian tourist offer is more adequately managed with the model. The model removes disadvantages caused by the lack of synergy between different forms of tourism; the authors of the paper mainly hold Croatian Tourist Board responsible for this as it didn't accomplish satisfactory results in the context of tourist season length nor creation of the specific national tourist *brand* despite the independence and *the freedom* to create the national tourist strategy.

2. RESEARCH: NATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE CROATIA'S TOURIST OFFER

Republic of Croatia is traditionally tourist oriented country. The increase in tourism throughout recent years indicates that the tourism is becoming an active generator of the national economic development. In order to increase economic benefits of tourism, it is

indispensable to adopt and implement tourism strategy that is based on sustainable development with the orientation on the competitive forms of tourism at the global tourist market [Šamanović, Luković, 2007, 48-50]. Competitive positioning at the global tourist market presumes monitoring and adaptation to contemporary trends through which requests, new market's opportunities, areas of profitable investments and dependent infrastructural needs are identified. Tourist request preferences for specific types of tourism are evident throughout recent years [TOMAS research, 2007, 15]. Historical heritage, peculiar landscapes and pleasant climate with improvement of transportation and accommodation standards, broadening of entertainment facilities and excellent service can appropriately position Republic of Croatia among leading incoming tourist countries.

2.1. Bathing tourism

Throughout former tourist development, bathing tourism represented the prevailing form of tourist offer of the Republic of Croatia. Pleasant microclimate conditions, clean sea and indented ness of the coast (length 5.835 kilometers out of which 1.777 kilometres on-shore and 4.058 kilometres of islands) with numerous sparsely populated areas are comparative advantages of Croatian tourist offer for this type of tourism. TOMAS research - summer 2007 indicated that the basic motive for coming to Croatia were passive holidays and relaxation (about 62% of guests) [TOMAS research, 2007, 15]. It is evident from the research that relatively few tourists were coming for other attractions and facilities (for example, culture or diving) which indicates the need for promotional defining of those facilities. Croatian Tourist Board hasn't yet fulfilled appropriately that task. The average length of bathing season is three months and it can't be extended due to lack of synergy with other forms of Republic of Croatia tourist offer and inappropriate valorization of cultural and historical heritage. Short season also results with unsatisfactory use of all accommodation capacities that often brings losses on the level of yearly operation for big tourist business subjects [Ministry of Tourism, 2003, 8-9].

2.2. Excursion and transit tourism

In the course of time special parts of Croatia (Pannonian and peri-Pannonian tourist region) developed excursion tourism based on natural and cultural resources. Thanks to this form of tourist offer many transit tourists prolong their planned stay in Croatia. A range of national parks and nature parks are presumption of richer valorization through this form of tourism. A visit to National Park Brijuni, National Park Plitvice Lakes, National Park Krka, National Park Kornati, National Park Kopački rit (reed-patch), excursions on the river Cetina, river Neretva, Red lake and Blue lake are only a part of peculiar national tourist offer of the preserved landscape. Excursion tourism accomplishes full economic valorization through synergy with other forms of tourism. This didn't happen because the Croatian Tourist Board used peculiarities that Croatia can offer through this form of tourism primarily as partial elements of national tourist offer. That's why peculiarities Croatia excursion tourism was institutionally used merely for decoration on fairs' performances. Potential for increase of this form of tourism is also present in the existing private fleet of excursion boats and trains that could be used for these purposes. The promotion of this type of tourism presumes synergy with the promotion of places, small towns and cities in the proximity of these special destinations.

2.3. Nautical tourism

Indented ness of Croatian coast (Croatian coast indented ness index is 11) and over 1 000 of islands, islets and cliffs are a presumption for the increase of nautical tourism. Rocky and steep coast with numerous shelters is an attractive nautical destination. In some areas nautical infrastructure is adequate to its needs. From a total of 363 ports, boat docks, anchorages and marinas – maritime zones of Kvarner, Zadar and Dubrovnik comprise 60% of those capacities. Maritime zone of Šibenik has the huge traffic due to National Park Kornati. By number of visits follows Istrian maritime zone (due to proximity of Italian and Slovenian sailors) and Zadar area due to the sheltered and safe *ship canals*. Nautical tourist ports in Croatia are organized according to the Law for trade associations and nowadays organizationally they function well. There are three basic models of nautical tourist port organization [Dulčić, 2002, 272]:

- Model of nautical tourist port as independent trade association with or without business units of the same activity owned privately, by the government or in mixed ownership;
- Model of nautical tourist port that functions as a business unit within trade association whose basic activities are not nautical tourist services; the association can be owned privately, by the government or in mixed ownership;
- Model of nautical tourist port as a trade association that is organized like holding of trade associations whose activity is usually complementary to nautical activities.

Sailors mainly sail along the coastland (71%), only minor number (25%) sojourns on ships in homeports, making daily excursions [TOMAS research, 2007, 15]. Most of the sailors make short stays in one area; therefore synergy with other tourist forms is also important in order to increase the level of spending by sailor. As the factor of season is less stressed in comparison to stationary bathing tourism, it represents a potential for the increase of other forms of tourism through the segment of sailors. That potential hasn't yet been used by the Croatian Tourist Board; therefore, the development of nautical tourism is left to its own resources which finally prove the fact that the Croatian government developed the study for development of nautical tourism in Republic of Croatia. Croatian marinas also lack additional facilities as well as accommodation capacities that could contribute throughout development to the synergy of nautical tourism with other forms of tourist offer.

2.4. Cultural tourism

The offer based on cultural tourism is more and more requested at the global tourist market and investments in this form of tourism are highly profitable. Croatian Tourist Board has used cultural resources only for *branding* national tourist offer. National cultural heritage also presents the potential for synergy action of all tourism aspects with the aim to prolong the tourist season. It is necessary to identify market niches with special cultural interests since guests eagerly visit manifestations or cultural – historical monuments [Ministry of Tourism, 2003, 10]. National tourist cultural offer is insufficiently and inadequately presented on the global level. It also indicates oversights of Croatian Tourist Board. Adequate marking and registration of cultural – historical monuments by placing informative notices, adapting working hours of museums, castles and other sights would significantly increase income, but also the synergy with other forms of tourist offer. On local level, diverse manifestations are frequent, but there is a lack of national interaction and connection. Tourist

resources are particularly under-utilized in the continental Croatia that stands out for its numerous pre-historical findings of global significance, old towns, fortifications and castles from the late middle age, cultural monuments and peculiar architecture from Baroque period. Croatia is an interesting tourist destination for archaeology devotees. However, the adequate support of Croatian Tourist Board lacks once again. Numerous manifestations that are held in spring and fall in the continental Croatia (*Alternative film festival* in the castle Veliki tabor, *Festival of animated film*, *Baroque evenings* etc.) also represent a valuable potential to prolong the tourist season.

2.5. Rural (and ECO) tourism

Nowadays Croatia is mainly focused on *maritime* tourism. Beginnings of tourism on Croatian coast are recorded throughout the last decade of the 19th century. In inland different forms of tourist offers were gradually developing. In the period up to 50s of the 20th century tourist offer was differentiated. By then, rural spaces were a frequent destination for tourists, recreational and target guests. At that time, mountain hiking, cultural and pilgrimage tourism, visits to native village represented a significant part of tourist traffic. New tourist orientation, throughout 50s of the 20th century is focused exclusively on coastland. Up to 70s within all tourist interests were focused on the Adriatic coast. In that period the national tourist offer demonstrates characteristics of maritime exclusivity [Kušen, 1995, 127]. Fragmented peasant properties, orientation towards maritime tourism and massiveness of bathing tourism, insufficiently developed consciousness about the value of the environment are only some factors that influenced falling behind of rural tourism development. However, there are exceptions. Peasant properties in the proximity of attractive tourist sites that have always offered overnight stay are still preserved. That indicates the potential for synergy of this offer with other forms of tourist offer. Ecotourism is tourism of the future. It enables economic growth of less developed and protected areas. There are two important tourist segments that should be aimed: small groups with special interests for ecotourism that spend all holidays in that way; majority that spends holidays at sea, but also wants to visit hinterland. Croatian national parks and nature parks are the potential for ecotourism development, sustainable hunting tourism, relaxation in mountain areas throughout all year and finally excursion tourism. That is the synergy potential of this segment of tourist offer. The presumption is infrastructure, construction and marking of resting points as well as the appropriate means of transport. The preservation of landscape and traffic control through protected areas should be the imperative. Ecologically produced food is an additional component that nowadays makes this form of tourism competitive. Croatia's presumptions for the production of ecological food and their direct *export* via catering establishments should be systematically developed and used in the promotion of national tourist offer.

2.6. Winter tourism

Winter tourism in Croatia is undeveloped in comparison to other forms of tourism. There are presumptions for this form of tourism as well. Three ski resorts with regulated ski infrastructure (*Medvednica* near Zagreb, *Platak* near Rijeke and *Bjelolasica* near Ogulina) are the potential that can also contribute to lengthening of tourist season. Mountain Biokovo also has conditions for the development of winter tourism. Additional presumptions of the winter tourism development are sporting success of Croatian skiers. Thanks to them, more

and more tourists visit mentioned ski resorts. Investments in construction of new hotels and renovation of old hotels as well as construction and organization of ski slopes in Lika and Gorski Kotar, Slavonia and other areas directly influence lengthening of tourist season. Promotion of this form of tourist offer with synergy with other mentioned also minimizes the risk for lack of snow in winter months. In case of such weather conditions, there are many other back-up tourist facilities to be offered.

2.7. Adventure tourism

Stress and fast lane created a more emphasized need for modern and active forms of the tourism offers. Most of these arrangements are often named adventure tourism. This category comprises also "Robinson" tourism as well as any tourist offer that includes possibility for different pleasant and less pleasant surprises. Tourist segment that selects this offer aspire adventure, challenge, climbing, diving, hunting etc. Croatia has diverse natural potentials for development of wide-range offer of the adventure tourism in coastland and hinterland (war games, rafting, canoeing, kayaking, cannoning, paragliding, balloon and kite flying, free climbing, off-road etc.) [Ministry of Tourism, 2003, 9-10].

2.8. Thematic tourism

Nowadays thematic tourism is the catalyst of economic development in tourist developed countries. Very often it's based on 3-E principle: Entertainment, Excitement, Education and it includes tourist offer and facilities that combine those three elements. In this domain Croatia offers exceptional potential that can be presented as tourism at lighthouses that have become global tourist *brand* throughout several years of valorization. On that example it's possible to elaborate a whole range of thematic offers that are presumption of a whole-year national tourist offer. Croatian Tourist Board has failed here as well allowing the world to anticipate them in recognizing the potential of lighthouses as a tourist *brand*. Croatian exceptional potential of cultural heritage and natural beauties can be used in different ways in the context of thematic tourism as a presumption of the unique tourist experience [Ministry of Tourism, 2003, 12].

2.9. Other forms of Republic of Croatia tourist offer

Besides mentioned forms of tourist offer, there are several others that can potentially contribute to the lengthening of tourist season. In Croatia there are eleven specialized hospitals for medical rehabilitation, one sanatorium and one specialized orthopedic hospital that offers services of physiotherapy with rehabilitation. In the context of health tourism there are about ten sanatoriums that operate as independent market subjects (without contract with Croatian Institute for Health Insurance) [Ministry of Tourism, 2003, 9-10]. Consistently to the Law about health protection, specialized hospitals and sanatoriums are allowed to offer health services in tourism, according to special regulations. Thermal sanatoriums should also be mentioned. Geographical placement of these subjects is a quality presumption for synergy connection of different forms of tourism, mentioned in the previous chapters. The possibility of business travel, congress and incentive tourism must be mentioned as well. That segment of tourist demand is exceptionally lucrative and it takes place out of the main

tourist season. That is a sufficient reason for intensive stimulation of its development in Croatia. Closely related to congress tourism, yet specific for its dynamic and image, scientific tourism is developing as well. Supporting different national institutions for organization of international scientific conferences and research projects on the territory of Republic of Croatia would significantly influence tourist development and contribute to creation of regional academic and scientific centre. They attract foreign experts, scientists, professors and researchers especially to the areas of pleasant microclimate conditions. Potentials for religious tourism should be mentioned, as well as tradition that already exists in some areas (Marija Bistrica, Sinj, Vepric etc.). Finally, cruise travels presume synergy of all forms of tourist offers and represent the new quality in national tourist offer directly contributing to the lengthening of tourist season.

3. GLOBAL IDENTITY AND PERCEPTION OF THE NATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THE CROATIA'S TOURIST OFFER

Viewpoints and tourist consumption in Croatia – TOMAS is the only continued research that analyses different characteristics of tourist travel and sojourn in Croatia. It is conducted by the Tourism Institute. Research was conducted 7 times, the last one referred to tourist season 2007. TOMAS research aims to perceive the profile of guests that visit Republic of Croatia, changes in their habits and satisfaction of Croatian tourist service. The main goal of TOMAS –summer 2007 research was to perceive reliable and actual basic quantity and quality information about the actual tourist demand. With the acquisition of specific information regarding tourist problem area, the aim is also the comparability with special research of guests in accommodation units (socio-demographic characteristics, viewpoints of the offer, tourist consumption etc.). Results of the last research indicate that the average age of tourist is 41. About 60% of tourists have two-year degree or university degree. Family holidays are still dominant (47%). Holidays only with the partner are dominant in Dubrovnik, *Neretva* county (43%): French guests (47%) and British guests (44%). *Loyal* guests comprise 60%, whereas every fifth guest is *new*. The major share of new guests is in Dubrovnik, *Neretva* county (40%). By the national structure: British (60%), Russian (53%) and French (46%). The increase of *new* guests in 2007 was 19% (compared to 14% in 2004). No less than 81% of tourist arrive to Croatia by car, whereas 9% by plane. This is due to the fact that nowadays the majority of tourists in Croatia are citizens of nearby countries [Ministry of Tourism, TOMAS research, 2007, 15]. By motives for arrival, passive holidays and leisure take the first place – 62%, entertainment – 43% natural beauties, new experiences – 26% and gastronomy – 20%. The biggest change is noted in motives of visiting cultural sights and events (from position ten - 6% in 2004 to position eight in 2007 – 10%). Visiting cultural sights and events is more important for guests of Dubrovnik, *Neretva* county (26%), whereas, for example, diving is more important for guests of Zadar county (17%). Gastronomy is more important for British, Russian, Dutch, German and Austrian guests and for guests of Dubrovnik, county *Neretva* and Istria [Ministry of Tourism, TOMAS research, 2007, 15]. By information sources, different aspects of media take the first place (34%). That category comprises brochures, ads and posters 25%, articles 11%, radio, TV, film (10%). In comparison of 2004 and 2007 internet as a source of information increased from 23% to 29.9% [Ministry of Tourism, TOMAS research, 2007, 15]. Nowadays internet is the most common source of information about tourist destination, without

use of information technology strategies, there's no perspective for national tourist development. Share of longer stays of guests (in 2004 - 21% for 15 and more days, whereas that percentage decreases in 2007 to 16%) is decreasing, but the share of shorter stays is increasing (in 2004 - 32% from 4 to 7 days, whereas that percentage in 2007 is 36%). Guests are exceptionally more satisfied by majority of elements compared to 2004 the numbers of elements by which guests are satisfied is also increasing in comparison to previous years. The last research indicates that guests were not unsatisfied by any element. The biggest advantage of Croatian tourism is still natural beauties and microclimate favorable conditions as well as safety of spending family holidays. The greatest dissatisfaction remains the offer out of board as well as information in regards to that (entertainment, culture, shopping). Average daily consumption in 2007 increased for 13% compared to 2004 (in current prices). Expenses for catering services increased for 21%. Shopping expenses are reduced for 6%. Expenses for other services increased for 8%. Competitive advantages of Croatian tourist product are climate, landscape beauties and country safety as well as ecological preservation, hospitality, cleanliness and quality of catering service. Disadvantages in regards to competitive destinations are accompanying facilities and their promotion (entertainment, sport and recreation as well as shopping), information and presentation of national tourism. On basis of these notions, it can be concluded that inefficiency of Croatian Tourist Board is not caused only by lack of synergy among different forms of tourist offers, but also by inappropriate management of Croatian image as a tourist country.

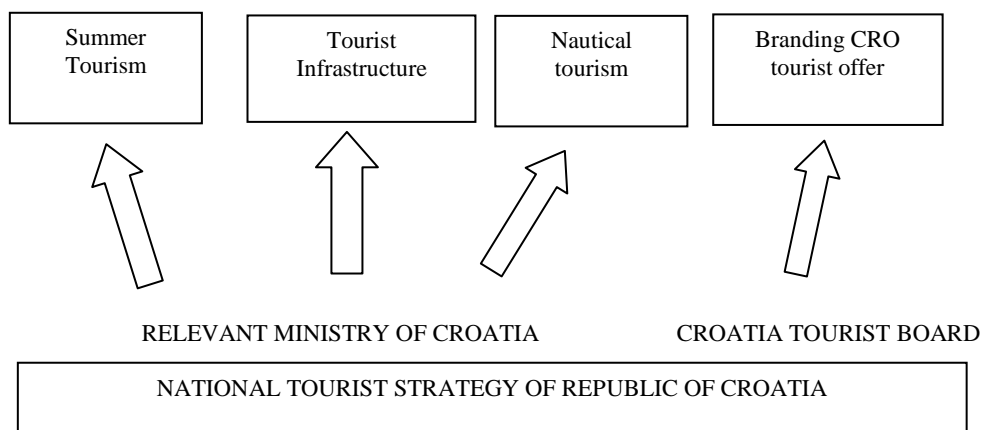
4. CONTRIBUTION TO KNOWLEDGE OF THE PAPER: SUGGESTION OF THE STRATEGIC MODEL FOR TOURIST DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL TOURIST OFFER OF REPUBLIC OF CROATIA BASED ON NATIONAL HERITAGE

In the context of previous opinions and review of conducted researches, the unacceptable evaluation of the present Croatian Tourist Board activities model is imposed, as well as the need to change the interrelation with relevant Ministry. In regards to that follows the presentation of perceived model of strategic action and the suggestion of the new model that would ensure synergy of different forms of tourist offer developed on spatial, national, cultural and historical heritage of Republic of Croatia, more appropriate promotion of national tourist offer, better quality of satisfying guests' needs, lengthening of tourist season and finally, the creation of particular national tourist *brand*.

4.1. The present condition

The existing model of managing tourist development of Republic of Croatia is currently based on 4 key *levers*. First *lever* is *bathing*, summer tourism as the most representative component of the overall offer. Despite evident efforts and endeavoring of partial tourist subjects to develop specialized forms of tourism, there is very little capital, technical and other support from Croatian Tourist Board on national level. Second *lever* is tourist infrastructure. Its development is unsystematically managed on national level. It is contemplated exclusively through its general receptive function, disregarding potential and needs of different forms of specialized tourist offer. Thanks to the confirmed potential for overall economic growth of the area where it's developing, nautical tourism is separately treated and it represents third *level*. This is confirmed by the efforts invested in insttutalization of

developing of its management (special legal regulations, rules, *Study of Croatian nautical tourism* etc.). Finally, fourth *lever* of the existing model is evident through efforts of Croatian Tourist Board to contribute with its activities to the creation of a particular national tourist *brand*. Despite expectations, the synergy between the policy of the relevant Ministry and Croatian Tourist Board never existed. Therefore, the existing model inappropriately manages calculation means intended for promotion of Croatian tourism. Moreover, usually the means at disposal of Croatian Tourist Board are not completely spent and exceptional financial and other efforts of partial tourist subjects are not recognized in timely manner by Croatian Tourist Board. Declarative support of the relevant Ministry is insufficient for those projects. Finally, it is the paradox that Croatian Tourist Board is unsystematically trying to build national Croatian *brand* by the existing model. Results of these endeavours are obvious in collision of the accomplished results and notions from TOMAS research. Besides slowing down the possible development of different forms of specialized tourism, more adequate use of historical, cultural and other national characteristics in *branding* national tourist offer of Republic of Croatia, there are obvious mistakes in managing infrastructural projects in which very often bottlenecks remain unsolved and merely transferred to some other places. Inexistence of hierarchical guidelines among everything that presents the potential for efficient branding of national tourist offer of Republic of Croatia resulted in numerous collisions of valorization models *in practice*. The consequence is unsystematically development of individual components and uncontrolled valorization, speeded up loss of individual areas values and relevant resources on which the existing tourist offer of Republic of Croatia is based.



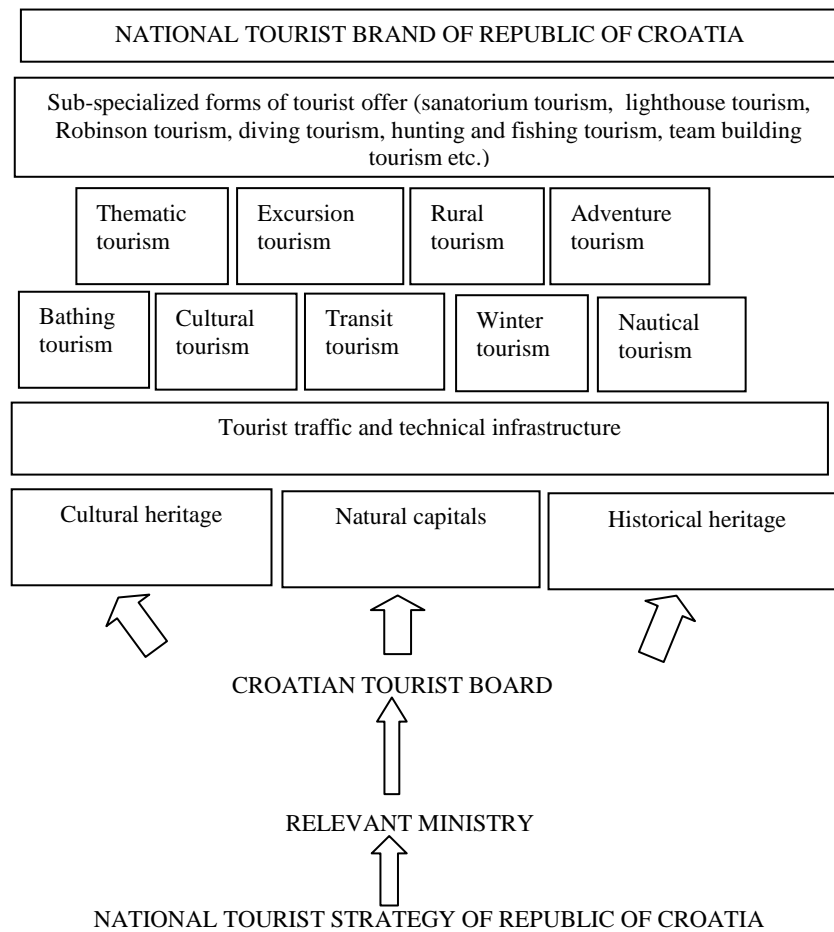
Source: [proper, according to Tomas research, 2009.]

Figure no. 1 Existing condition model of managing tourism development in Croatia

4.2. The suggested model of managing development of national tourist offer of Republic of Croatia

The frame of suggested model is formed on the platform of up to date tourist development, positive experiences in the context of integration of overall national heritage in

individual segments of tourist offer and perception of the relevant sample of the visitor from TOMAS research. We took into account the different development level of segments within national tourist offer of Republic of Croatia through the evaluated synergy possibility to balance them. The imperative of the model is preservation and increase of the existing tourist segments of global tourist market that throughout many years chooses Republic of Croatia for a destination. Analyzing the available data and the conducted TOMAS researches like a special target group, model of the aim and tourist segments whose formerly emphasized interest in regular visit to Republic of Croatia decreased. Precisely the elements of national heritage represented in the previous years the prevailing attraction factor. The loss of more emphasized reconcilability of national tourism heritage resulted in a decrease of tourist interest. Creation of special, new *small tourist brands* (considering accommodation capacities) stimulates additional interest in Croatia as a tourist destination. In the meantime the increased standards of tourist offer in the global market become higher. Therefore, the continuity of adequate valorization of currently satisfactorily positioned *small tourist brands* in the national offer of the Republic of Croatia presumes certain tactical and strategic changes. Should that be neglected, the scenario of the loss of market segments that indirectly stimulate global publicity of Republic of Croatia *small tourist brands* is likely to happen. Precisely these *small tourist brands* are based on the national cultural and historical heritage and maintain continuity of the new demand and the tourist visit to the Republic of Croatia. Model presumes synergy of segments, instead of *push pull* tactics that is practiced by the Croatian Tourist Board in presentation of national tourist offer of Republic of Croatia. Former approach has a consequence of imbalance in valorization of overall tourist resources in geographical terms. Continuation of that trend threatens by partial degradations of valuable national tourist resources. In such undesirable scenario, tourist offer of Republic of Croatia would permanently lose its position at the global tourist market due to lower differentiation level in terms of segments and modest accommodation.



Source: [proper, Šerić, Talijančić, 2009.]

Figure no. 2 the suggested model of managing development of national tourist in Croatia

5. CONCLUSION

National heritage is the efficient platform for competitiveness of tourist offer on the global market. Implementation of national heritage within national tourist offer ensures reconcilability, synergy of actions and differentiation. Theoretical organization of national tourist strategy on national heritage presumes defined guidelines for valorization dynamic of the overall national resources. That's why sometimes in practice of small transit countries certain structures are responsible for preservation of historical artefacts of national heritage and at the same time they represent the barrier of the very same resources. Partly due to that fact nowadays tourism development in the Republic of Croatia insufficiently and partially used those especially valuable development platforms in the creation of particular national

tourist identity. Problem is partially in the hierarchy that is finally changing. The relevant ministry is finally put in the position of tourist development strategist, as it has been only the long hand of the Croatian Tourist Board. Starting from these new relations, the authors presented in this paper the suggestion of the conceptual model for formation of the national tourist strategy. Model has its origin in various forms of tourist offer that is based on national heritage. The formation of the tourist development model on that platform and finally synergy of overall specialized forms of tourist offer in national offer leads to formation of the recognizable and sustainable Republic of Croatia tourist *brand*. Every tourist oriented country aspires reconcilability at global market. Tourist strategy elaborated on basis of national heritage considering the rich historical tradition of Republic of Croatia territory will enable synergy for all forms of the specialized tourist offer in the unique market approach with the aim of a whole-year tourist valorization. Today tourist demand shows particular interest towards authentic tourist offer, based on historical, cultural and natural heritage - on national tradition. Besides uncountable profitability of such tourist approach to the global market, finally the recognizable national identity is also accomplished – *tourist brand*. That's why the strategic model for managing national tourist offer begins and ends with national heritage that is present in tourist framework through different aspects of specialized tourist offer. Nevertheless, global tourist market recognized many small Croatian tourist brands that developed despite the fact that there was little or no support from Croatian Tourist Board. Time has come to unite that potential and use it for a wide-range benefit of the overall tourist economy of Republic of Croatia through the synergy of different tourist offer forms.

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