# Crafting a National Value-Driven Tourism Vision

*Renata Tomljenović and Irena Ateljević*

## INTRODUCTION

To speak about crafting a national tourism vision for any country today inevitably demands to ask first what the vision for the planet as a whole is, in the current context of the overwhelming crises at every level, from the environmental and economic to the social and cultural. When one looks at the scientific warnings, the vision for the future looks rather bleak as the facts speak for themselves. The structure of the world's ecosystems changed more rapidly in the second half of the twentieth century than at any time in recorded human history (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005). The world population is growing rapidly which is putting more pressure on the earth's recourses; there are many oil spill disasters; we produce huge amounts of waste and also plastic, causing, for example, 'plastic soup' in the oceans; there is loss of habitat; and thanks to our economic 'development' (a word suggesting it is developing in the right direction), $CO_2$ levels are increasing (Millennium Ecosystem Assessment, 2005), causing global warming. When all other life-threatening practices

R. Tomljenović (✉) • I. Ateljević
Institute for Tourism, Zagreb, Croatia

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are added in terms of pesticides, pops and other poisons in our waters and food chains, acidification and so on., it is not surprising that some prestigious scientists are warning us that the face of humanity and Gaia (Greek name for the Earth) is disappearing (Lovelock, 2010).

Economically, the world is not doing any better either. The Wall Street led 2008 economic crisis that exposed the corruptive nature of the global political economy, has seriously put into the question our worship of the unconscious neo-liberal market economy model. In the words of Robert Skidelsky, a renowned British economist:

> …[this] crisis also represents a moral failure: that of a system built on debt. At the heart of the moral failure is the worship of growth for its own sake, rather than as a way to achieve the 'good life'. As a result, economic efficiency – the means to growth – has been given absolute priority in our thinking and policy. The only moral compass we now have is the thin and degraded notion of economic welfare. This moral lacuna explains uncritical acceptance of globalization and financial innovation…taking us back to the primary question: what is wealth for? The good life was one to be lived in harmony with nature and our fellows. Yet we destroy the beauty of the countryside because the unappropriated splendors of nature have no economic value. We are capable of shutting off the sun and the stars because they do not pay a dividend. (Skidelsky, 2009, p. 1)

The moral failure has also led us to the continuously widening socioeconomic gap in which the poorest 40 % of the world's population account for 5 % of global income only while the richest 20 % account for its three-quarters (Ateljevic, 2011). Yet, longitudinal studies in rich countries of the West show that increasing income (beyond basic needs) does not increase happiness either (Layard, 2005). This growing dissatisfaction with our dominant lifestyle model is clearly illustrated in increasing suicidal rates, cancer disease and the consumption of antidepressants worldwide (World Health Organization, 2002, 2012) but also in the growing need for transformative holidays and travel. Namely, there have been emerging strong arguments (by scholars and practitioners) on value-driven (tourism) consumption and travel, which some frame as 'transmodern' tourism of the future (Ateljevic, 2009), while others speak of transformative tourism (Lean, 2009; Reisinger, 2013) or conscious travel (Pollock, 2015). According to these claims, it appears that the current unsustainable, suicidal, material paradigm increasingly pressures people (worldwide, albeit predominantly in the West) to search for some 'higher values' in which

travel often appears to provide means to change both—one's own life and the impact one makes on places one visits. In other words, transmodern/transformative/conscious travellers are recognized to be re-inventing themselves and their world; they value the slow, small and simple and aim for self-reliance; they are connected and communicative; they care about the places they visit; they seek meaningful experiences that help them develop; they require their host/producers of tourism experience to think globally but to act locally. More broadly, marketers have already captured them as the market of LOHAS—conscious consumers with lifestyle of health and sustainability (Lohas, 2015; Worldwatch Institute, 2004; Cohen, 2007).

In this context, the value-driven approach to the formulation of the tourism vision that is proposed here is based on the obvious need to depart from the market-driven competitive positioning that has been underpinning the global tourism industry for too long, as it is proving to be seriously disturbing the fabric of social, cultural and environmental life. The value-driven approach calls upon awakening more human values of reciprocity and stewardship that go beyond currently dominant economic and competitive concerns, the values that will ensure the quality of local and global life and greater responsibility for planetary assets. The chapter starts with a theoretical discussion of market versus value-driven visions framed within the current discourse of conscious travel and responsible business practices. The fairly limited literature on the concept of vision informed the methodology and was applied to a recent tourism envisioning conducted in a series of workshops and consultations with the Croatian tourism stakeholders for the purpose of defining Croatian tourism vision to 2020. In order to further justify this fairly radical and new approach to tourism envisioned for the national level, a brief historical background into the visions that have, supposedly, guided Croatian tourism development since the 1990s is provided. Then the methodology is presented with which the first key scientific contribution of this chapter is laid out as this methodological approach may prove to be useful in other envisioning attempts around the world that aspire to motivate more responsible and conscious tourism practices.

Methodology section is followed by discussion of findings that highlight two further widely applied aspects that may be of interest to the international audience of both academics and practitioners. Firstly, Croatia has been very much an illustrative example of the unconscious socio-economic global practices outlined above along with a pervading sense of failure of

the Croatian economy and governance. Secondly and consequently, the fairly successful tourism industry is proving to be almost the only hope for the livelihoods of many as it involves not only significant direct employment but a whole range of associated industries around it (from building industries to agriculture, transport, retailing, etc.). Thus, with tourism at the forefront of the economy but also affecting the environment and social values, it was a unique setting for exploring, with tourism stakeholders, as to how value-driven tourism vision could spearhead wider societal transformation. It is also assumed that this proposition would be alluring to the tourism industry itself, which has always fought for national respect and affirmation in the context of being dominantly perceived as a 'carefree/sun/sea-consumption based' industry. Yet the experience will display the complexity of the political process involved in the course of envisioning tourism strategy and how, despite the local aspirations for a 'different tourism', the new vision could not and has not been pursued and adopted in the final strategic planning process.

## Literature Review on (Tourism) Envisioning

The visioning has become a well-established practice in tourism planning. In the broadest sense, the visioning has emerged from corporate policy planning, as a part of strategic planning. This corporate style planning is a rational and cost-benefit-driven process based on assessing a company's strengths and weaknesses and recognizing opportunities and threats from the external environment, leading to a set of strategies to achieve goals (Ruhanen, 2007). Within the corporate domain, it is seen as a tool to increase productivity and competitiveness (Shipley & Newkirk, 1998) and act as an effective mechanism that can mobilize people into action (Nanus, 1992). The concept of visioning in strategic tourism planning is not new. It is almost a mandatory that every tourism strategy features a vision. Yet, surprisingly, the topic of visioning is more frequently discussed by professionals. Thus, while various manuals and practical advice on vision abound, this subject has received scant attention by tourism scholars.

The scholarly articles on tourism/destination vision are rare and far apart. Ritchie (1999) has reported a vision building exercise for the Canadian national park based on values and a consensus building approach. Smith (2003) has outlined the approach of visioning Canadian tourism to be focused more on 'strategic visioning' as an extension of strategic planning based on the classical approach to situational analysis, with vision having

strong marketing orientation. Ruhanen (2007), discussing the urgency and challenges of integrating sustainability objectives into destination planning for competiveness, advocates the strategic visioning process. She argues convincingly of the need to build the vision on stakeholder consultation and outlines the role and properties of vision without dealing with theoretical or methodological issues. Yeoman and Ledderman (2005) presented vision of Scottish tourism, but the thrust of their work is scenario development. From what little is available on tourism-related scholarly articles, two propositions are common. Firstly, the vision should be based on stakeholder values (Ritchie, 1999) and an outcome of a broad participation of stakeholders (Ruhanen, 2007). Therefore, the statement made by Ritchie (1999; p 274) fifteen years ago that 'the concept of visioning has not as yet received extensive attention in the tourism, or tourism-related, literature' holds true even today.

The subject of vision is also bypassed by scholars in general. In the broader context, visioning has received some attention in transformational studies where the notion of 'guiding vision' appears and it is considered the central element of governance strategies for transition management in the multi-level multi-actor network. Späth and Rohracher (2010) assessed the transformational potential of the guiding vision in the context of technology development, concluding that visioning has the potential to initiate and guide transformation needs and become a strong social norm. To do so the vision has to (A) resonate with sentiments shared by the wider public, (B) be concretized to a degree that make it deployable as a moral standard, (C) be sufficiently convincing and backed by credible knowledge and authority, (D) be launched into various societal spheres in order to align various actors in command of useful resources and (E) be inscribed into plans and policy guidance at various levels.

Visioning has also received some attention in visionary/spiritual/transformation leadership literature bound mostly to the corporate world. While it is outside the scope of the theme of this chapter, that literature is relevant in as much as it puts the concept of values and, more specifically, spirituality, in the focus. Cacioppe (2000a, 2000b) amply illustrates how companies are now commonly writing visions and value statements that not only provide directions for business operations but also aim to motivate and inspire their employees to be committed to a worthwhile purpose. However, as he points out, often the two dominant paradigms—materialistic versus spiritual—collide. While at the individual level people are revaluating their most important values and

life purposes, the organizations often remain locked in a materialistic, profit-driven corporate philosophy. Thus, he questions if the transformation can be done entirely through intellectual process, such as rational and analytical strategic planning.

However, vision is a theoretically marginalized construct in general. Van der Helm (2009) argues that it is precisely the lack of theory explaining appropriateness of vision and absence of clear methodology for vision formulation, which has resulted in vision seen as trivial, albeit necessary exercise, not worthy of scholarly attention. In an attempt to develop the theoretical underpinning of vision, van der Helm (2009) has outlined a typology of visions based on the context in which it appears (religious, political and social) and the field of use (business, community or policy vision). If applying this typology, a national tourism vision is a combination of community and policy vision. Community vision is developed within a network or group of actors through interactive process for the purpose of building a common ground or shared platform on which to build the strategy and hold actors together. It is also a policy vision where a network of policy-relevant actors develops foresight to influence network decision-making process and assumes the existence of policy network in which the vision has to become active.

Apart from the vision context, the equally relevant and theoretically still unresolved issue relates to the qualities of vision, where the central question is how visionary a vision has to be or, in other words, whether a vision can be too visionary. Van der Helm (2009) claims that the good vision is always future oriented and needs to provide sufficient contrast between past and present. Its purpose is to foster change by influencing human thinking that will then lead to change in behavior. This is contrary to Ritchie's (1999) earlier proposition made within the context of tourism that the vision should reflect the values of stakeholders for whom it is developed and, in the context of tourism planning, the values of stakeholders should be a fundamental component of a vision that seeks to capture the public will regarding the national treasure (Ritchie, 1999). If the vision has to reflect the current values of stakeholders as Ritchie claims, this would perpetuate the current practice, rather than induce change. However, if the vision is too future oriented than it would appear too ambitious and unattainable and thus failing to motivate stakeholders. Yet, there is a consensus that a good vision needs to be inspirational/motivational and perceived as relevant and authoritative (van der Helm 2009; Späth & Rohracherm, 2010) to be implemented and it is likely that an

implementable vision needs to strike a balance and opt for incremental change.

To be effective, the issue of vision ownership, ambassadors and leaders is as important as the vision itself. Joy (2011, p. 40) is convinced that, to induce change, the vision needs a leader who has to be 'one step ahead of the values expressed in the norms of an institution and, finally, those of followers'. To the contrary, Späth and Rohracherm's (2010) case study of the transformational role of vision illustrates that vision, even when embraced by powerful actors, can be opposed by others with different views and, furthermore, points out that this aspect of vision is often underplayed in the literature on vision. Similarly, van der Helm asks the question of how vision is to be evaluated if an effective one should induce change. Yet, the actual change induced by vision is often incremental 'moving reality slowly into direction indicated by vision' (van der Helm, 2009).

Once these views of 'desired visions' for change are applied to the case of Croatian tourism future, it inevitably invites us to go back to our opening claims of the need to move from the market and competition model of unsustainable industrial practices to a value-driven approach of conscious tourism. From the position of academics interested in transmodern/transformational/conscious potentialities of tourism who also had the recent opportunity to inform the political process of envisioning the future of Croatian tourism at all levels (local, regional and national), the section on methodology will provide further details on how this process was approached. Yet, before that, the next section will set further context by laying out the historical evolution of tourism visions in Croatia.

## History of National Tourism Planning in Croatia

In Croatia, national integrated strategic plans rarely address tourism specifically, but, rather, tourism is treated horizontally, as part of other policies. Thus, for example, the first document developed in preparation for the EU accession—the *National Strategic Reference Framework 2012–2013* (Republic of Croatia, 2010)—suggests that 'green' becomes national brand due to the low level of environmental pollution, and, along this line, it is suggested that the investment made in 'green' brand will bring a high return rate, especially through tourism. Yet, while side-tracked in national strategic documents, the practice of national tourism planning is longstanding in Croatia.

The first strategy was developed in 1993 by the Institute for Tourism (Ministry of Tourism & Institute for Tourism, 1993), when the country was still involved in war and goals proposed dealt with the tourism recovery, market (re)positioning and brand identity. Even under these circumstances, the full evaluation and protection of the tourism resources was one of the strategic objectives. The same year a detailed *Tourism Master Plan* was developed by Austrian consultants and sponsored by the Austrian government (Horwath Consulting and Institute for Tourism, 1993). The master plan singled out the nature, people and tourism development as the three most important factors of Croatian economic growth/success in which the interest of the local population was strongly promoted. Then in 1998, the *Long-Term Development Concept of Croatian Tourism* was articulated for the next ten years by the Institute for Tourism (1998). The two pillars of the concept were the (A) growth in tourist numbers and income and (B) transition from the mass to sustainable tourism by improving product quality and market positioning based on product differentiation. Five years later the comprehensive *Strategy of Croatian Tourism Development to 2010* was launched, based for the first time on visioning tourism future (Ministry for Tourism, 2003). The vision addressed tourism's contribution to overall development, commitment to sustainability and investment-based growth as expressed in the document: 'tourism contributes significantly to the economic development of the Republic of Croatia and wellbeing of its citizens, based on the sustainable use of natural, cultural and heritage potentials, actively participating it their preservation and improvement, creating environment attractive to investors' (Ministry for Tourism, 2003, p. 18).

While these documents were developed, the level of commitment to their implementation remained questionable due to the lack of strategic leadership to drive the strategies forward. In that vacuum, the Croatian National Tourist Board has developed the marketing plans of Croatian tourism often including a formulation of the broader strategic framework. The first of such plans was developed in 2001 and another one ten years later. The one for the 2010–2014 defines vision for the Croatian tourism combining international market position while addressing tourism's role in the national economic and social context: 'Croatia will be globally recognized as a highly valued life-style destination, while, at the same time, succeeding in preservation of national natural and cultural values and tourism will become a highly competitive and sustainable sector that significantly contributes to the national economy' (THR and Horwath Consulting 2007, p. 7).

An in-depth analysis of the Croatian tourism development conducted for the purpose of national tourism planning has demonstrated that the aims of these policy documents were only partially met. Tourism has recovered to its pre-1990s level in 2010, ten years sooner than anticipated by early tourism plans, to reach about 14.3 million arrivals and close to 72 million overnights in 2015 (Croatian Bureau of Statistics, 2016). The national tourism competitiveness improved over time, as has product quality, especially in the accommodation sector. Today, Croatia has about 40 % of its accommodation in four to five star hotels compared to 22 % in 1989. The quality of private accommodation, camps and marinas has also improved. Tourism has become an important contributor to the national GDP, which stands at around 10.4 % (see Chap. 8), with ninety thousand jobs being created directly (Croatian Bureau of Statistics, 2014) and many more indirectly. Croatia's traffic access has been greatly improved with the expansion of the network of highways connecting the inland to the coastline (Šolman 2010; Institute for Tourism, 2005).

However, Croatia's tourism product is still lagging in scope, quality and creative imagination. In spite of the ambitious aims, it has not managed to extend the season beyond a few summer months and to diversify the product portfolio. The country fails to devise effective and coordinated destination management structures, which would truly work on an integrated framework to protect socio-cultural and environmental heritage while providing local economic livelihoods. Slow administration processes by local and regional authorities, lack of any joint visions by key stakeholders, low levels of creative entrepreneurship and poor control of destination tourism development (in particular uncontrolled building expansion) are just a few of many inherited problems associated not only with tourism industry but society in general.

Furthermore, the paradigm of economic growth with an accompanied mechanistic approach to problem-solving and the more recently unleashed forces of neo-liberalism continue to shape the public and private sector policy approach. As a result, tensions are mounting. Higging-Desboiles (2006) critiques the neo-liberal paradigm that has swept across the contemporary tourism sector, where tourism is an industry focused on profit, while people and places are turned into profit-generating products. She reminds us that in the most important international documents, charters and memorandums up to the 1980s, tourism was considered a force that had the potential to transform and enrich people and communities and encourage openness to new ideas, creativity and integration.

This rhetoric is currently mirrored in Croatia too. The obsession with economic growth and an investor-led push for resort development has now overshadowed a human face with which the Croatian tourism begun in the early stages of its development. Namely, in the early days, tourism was not considered to be one of the Yugoslavian/Croatian strategic priorities. It was somehow left to an organic growth of erratic, 'mushroom' developments driven by small-scale entrepreneurship of family-based businesses (Ateljevic & Doorne, 2003). These businesses were often unregistered and grew up out of a simple demand by independent tourists who were often driving around and virtually knocking on people's doors asking for some accommodation. Once the contact between the locals and tourists was established, they would often become repeated visitors and almost a part of the family (Corak, Mikacic, & Ateljevic, 2013). In developing this way, it was the source of national pride as guests from developed Western countries were respected and valued, from whom locals were learning and to which they passed on their love of life and local hospitality (Ateljevic & Corak, 2006). Paradoxically enough, it was an approach to tourism practice that in many ways now corresponds to the new demands of conscious tourism described earlier.

Furthermore, the political and legal pressures for greater sustainability of all our practices keep on rising, due to Croatia's recent membership to the European Union in July 2013, whereby the 'Innovation European Union 2020' strategy pushes its vision for smart, green and inclusive growth. In the words of José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission (2015):

> Europe 2020 is the EU's growth strategy for the coming decade. In a changing world, we want the EU to become a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy. These three mutually reinforcing priorities should help the EU and the Member States deliver high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion. Concretely, the Union has set five ambitious objectives - on employment, innovation, education, social inclusion and climate/energy - to be reached by 2020. Each Member State has adopted its own national targets in each of these areas. Concrete actions at EU and national levels underpin the strategy.

This sustainability vision has been put to Croatia during the EU pre-accession times when its Strategic Reference Framework 2006–2013 for the national economic development vision was established. It was not only the fundamental programming document for coordinating Croatian

policy with the EU policy but also the only document envisioning a vision for Croatia's future. The vision has been that of sustainable and balanced regional development, people with knowledge and skills, social inclusion, macro-economic stability and efficient financial market, with state administration transformed into an efficient service for citizens and entrepreneurs. The relevance of this document for the purpose of this chapter is that it explicitly calls/pledges for radical personal and societal transformation by adopting a new value system and behavior patterns based on the openness to the world, foreign investment, new knowledge, technologies and innovation, readiness to learn and accept challenges, dedication to persistent and hard work and willingness to succeed and to take responsibility for both successes and failures. In the later planning period, the Croatian government has, for the most part, followed strategic directions closely aligned with the Europa 2020.

It is in this conflicting space of inherited problems from Croatia's (tourism) economic and social past, the political pressures from the European Union, the global neo-liberal pressures of uncontrolled economic growth, the increasing demand for responsible values based on products by conscious consumers and the huge gap between strategic documents and the material reality, that the vision for Croatian tourism was created and proposed.

## Methodology

Conceptually, the approach to the visioning exercise consisted of creating the vision internally and externally. The internal or 'sectorial' vision answered the question of what the tourism industry is and what role it aims to play. The need for creating an internal vision, similar to the company vision, has grown out of two key aspects: (a) many of the factors influencing tourism are not under influence of the tourism industry, and (b) the industry in itself is highly fragmented and in need of the culture of cooperation, partnership and inter-based self-organization that is yet to be mastered. The external tourism vision is configured in relation to society/communities and visitors/tourists. This is a clear statement that the social and environmental benefits are not an accidental yet are welcomed by-products of tourism (as it was the case in previous strategic documents) and an aspect at the *core* of the future tourism development. The second conceptual underpinning was the value system adopted as the basic foundation of vision building. The starting premise was that for the implementation

of the strategy, *behavioral change* is needed and that behavior patterns rest on *values.*

In the creation of the national tourism vision, the participatory approach was adopted through two steps. In the first step, consultations with a broad range of tourism stakeholders were carried out via three regional workshops with an aim to identify the main issues and their solutions that generally encapsulate their aspirations and view of the future. Then a survey of public sector leaders and DMO general managers was conducted to ascertain their attitudes to tourism and views on a range of tourism development issues. Finally, a population survey on attitudes and response to tourism development was carried out. The results of this research are reported in Chaps. 3 and 6, but in the context of the visioning exercise, the most relevant conclusions that came out were the following:

- Stakeholders acknowledged the importance of income creation but are acutely aware that economic growth needs to be balanced with the social and environmental values.
- They want future development to be based on our cultural and natural heritage and our way of life, believing that Croatia's economic stagnation has preserved the environment and the wide pristine nature is a rarity in Europe as is the social, hospitable nature of Croatians.
- The unique market positioning is built on the fact that Croatia is a clean, healthy, beautiful and scarcely populated country, which are attributes that will be increasingly hard to find in a future overpopulated and industrialized Europe.
- To always keep in mind that tourism development should be for the betterment of residents and its growth within the limit of environmental capacity and socially just practices.
- There was an awareness that tourism has a great potential for nationwide economic and social revitalization, through the integration with other economic sectors, cultural production and social life.

While the first step entailed the research agenda in order to gain insights into the opinion and attitudes of a wide range of stakeholders with research methods allowing generalization, the second step entailed an articulation of vision. It was conducted through the visioning workshop with the tourism leaders from public and private sectors under an assumption that they will, based on their role in tourism development,

become ambassadors of the vision and, with their political, economic and social influences, work toward its implementation. The workshop was conducted in March 2012. A list of potential participants was developed in consultation with the tourism experts and the Ministry of Tourism. In total, 28 leaders were identified representing the public sector (Ministry of Tourism, Parliamentary Committee for Tourism, National Tourism Board), trade associations (Chamber of Commerce, hotels, travel agencies), DMO managing directors of leading tourism regions, managing directors of leading hotels and academics and journalists specialized for tourism. It was originally intended to be a two-day event under the auspices of the Minister of Tourism to give legitimacy to the process and attract all participants. However, the visioning exercise unfortunately took place in the immediate post-election period, and the Minister of Tourism, who was just taking over the office, declined his support. Thus, a half-day workshop was conducted instead, attracting 18 participants with the lowest participation from the hotel sector.

To prepare participants for the visioning session, a discussion paper was prepared and delivered to each participant beforehand. The discussion paper was deliberately polemical, designed to challenge existing patterns of thought. It briefly outlined past attempts to plan tourism development, highlighted the achievements and discussed the weaknesses. In particular, it was highlighted that these weaknesses were dealt with in every strategic document, yet little was done to remedy them. Consequently, the question was raised if it was for the lack of a clear, motivating vision able to unite stakeholders and steer actions and/or leaders driving strategy implementation. The future challenges were briefly addressed, positioned between the neo-liberal paradigm of tourism as an industry and a re-emerging paradigm of tourism as a social and transformational force, drawing on the conclusion from the stakeholder-wide consultations conducted earlier as well as our scientific insight into global trends. Finally, the concept of vision built on values was then introduced and three basic questions were set out: What do we want to be as an industry? How do we want to contribute to society? What kind of tourism do we want?

The visioning workshop was divided into several parts. Firstly, a short presentation was made to set the scene and introduce the concept of value-based vision. After the presentation, participants were invited to evaluate or discuss this approach, and, in general, they found it to be meaningful and timely. The consensus, though, might be due to the participant pre-selection as the discussion paper had announced the line of

reasoning and the methodological approach, and those not receptive to such an approach could have simply decided not to attend the workshop.

The vision building exercise was structured in two phases. Firstly, participants were asked to identify key propositions of the vision grouped around the three main questions. Every participant shared his/her view of the tourism future by explaining his/her reasoning. During the short break, the researchers have summarized the responses, and, based on that, the four key ingredients for each of the three pillars of vision were derived.

## Outcomes (Results and Discussion)

The approach adopted for crafting the national tourism vision based on values and structured around the clearly identified three questions, however logical and theoretically justified, was a novel approach. At the outset, the first question was whether participants would be willing to cooperate or whether they would revert quickly to problems and have a 'blame-oriented' discussion. Yet, on the contrary they seemed to get fully engaged and enthusiastic to talk about new visions and values that should be(come) key drivers of 'their industry'. Hence, at the end of the workshop, a set of core values was identified. The following is not simply a compilation of what was said but the values that were reached through group consensus.

Figure 2.1 provides the visual overview of key words and basic value propositions.

In other words (Fig. 2.2), the participants had visioned that, by the end of 2020, the tourism industry will be:

- *Responsible* to tourists, people working in the industry and communities hosting them;
- Truly *valued* and affirmed as a nationally important economic sector;
- *Liberated* from the red tape—huge numbers of uncoordinated laws and regulations;
- *Successful* in business operations, overall management and balanced/*sustainable* growth;
- Competitive and *progressive* through innovative product development, excellent service quality and optimized seasonality.
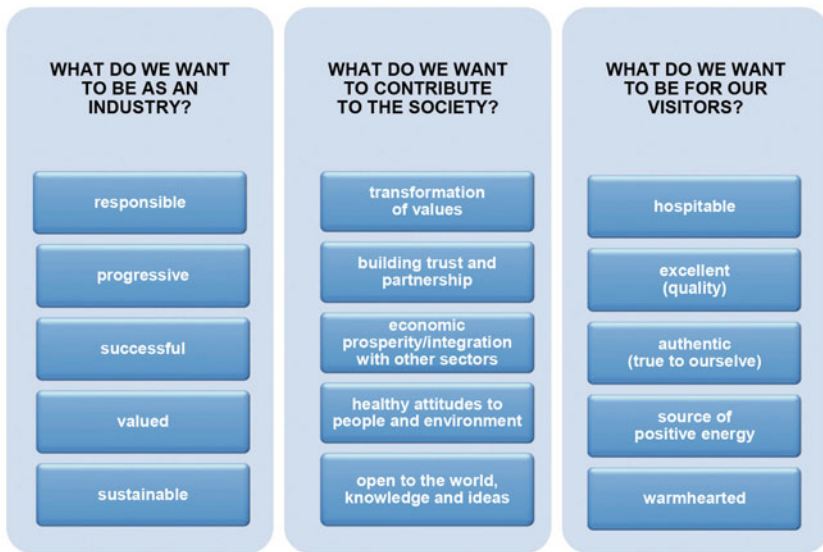
They had boldly envisioned that tourism should be a priority in the overall national development. They see tourism as increasing the general standard of living (material aspect) and, in particular, an activity that can

**Fig. 2.1** Key words of basic value propositions generated by workshop participants

transform domestic production and foster spiritual growth. They firmly believed that tourism can become a platform or an initiator of broader social transformation of the value system built on trust and partnership, healthy attitudes to people and the environment and an openness to new worlds, new knowledge and new ideas to overcome the ego and an ethno-centric value system dominant today. Dwelling upon these ideas, the participants wanted to believe that, if tourism is affirmed and its development well managed and coordinated, it will induce (catalyze) the transformation of personal and social values at the core of the national development goals and the key force introducing a new paradigm based on lifestyle of health and sustainability.

Finally, they envisioned the picture that they would like Croatia to portray to its visitors (external vision). The main starting point is authenticity based on the premise that we already possess and value the key tenants of the new paradigm—preserved nature (green and blue) and pride in our culture—while as a people, we are pleasant, open, spontaneous, hospitable and warmhearted. Most of all we, as hosts, are the source of positive energy with which we inspire our visitors as well as ourselves.

| WHAT DO WE WANT TO BE AS AN INDUSTRY? | WHAT DO WE WANT TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE SOCIETY? | WHAT DO WE WANT TO BE FOR OUR VISITORS? |
|---|---|---|
| responsible | transformation of values | hospitable |
| progressive | building trust and partnership | excellent (quality) |
| successful | economic prosperity/integration with other sectors | authentic (true to ourselve) |
| valued | healthy attitudes to people and environment | source of positive energy |
| sustainable | open to the world, knowledge and ideas | warmhearted |

**Fig. 2.2** The basic value propositions for the three pillars of national tourism vision

In the consensus building second phase, it became clear that the participants have, in projecting a tourism future, had envisioned overall national prosperity and wellbeing. Their starting point is that tourism is a Croatian success story (regardless whether by accident or design), but that it is only a fragment of what tourism can become and contribute to society if it manages to mobilize political and economic leaders, free up entrepreneurial spirit and unleash creative potentials of individuals and communities. In the end all those key consensual findings were translated into the vision statement for 2020.

Turning it into the vision statement, by 2020, tourism is recognized and valued as the economic priority of Croatian national and local sustainable development (Fig. 2.3). The culture of cooperation and partnership, mutual trust and respect are the values at the core of tourism success. Tourism is taken seriously by the central government, and this model of value-driven tourism vision is applied at the regional and local level. The public sector fully supports entrepreneurship, employment and

| Tourism connects | • Tourism is responsible and valued. It is a force that integrates, ignites enterpeneurial spirit and sparks creativity. |
| Tourism transforms | • Open to the world, knowledge and inovations, tourism initiates national economic and social revitalisation. |
| Tourism promotes | • Faitful to self, Croatia inspires visitors with beauty and joy, positive energy and optimism. |

**Fig. 2.3**   The vision statement

investment in tourism while clearly articulating its interests and aims. It is an active and constructive partner to the public sector. Liberated from governmental red tape, the private sector encourages creativity. Tourism not only proclaims sustainability principles but applies it in all its facets, in particular though:

- Responsibility to people that work in tourism or whose livelihoods are dependent on tourism, so that work in tourism becomes a source of pride and self-worth.
- Responsibility to communities by always bearing in mind that successful tourism is consistent with the aspirations of those that live off and with tourism, and tourism products are those equally valuable/usable to locals as they are to visitors.
- Responsibility for environmental management so that sound environmental practices are applied daily in production and use. Through genuine care about the visual appearances of our towns and villages as well as their infrastructural and energetic needs, tourism shows that it cares for the wellbeing of communities and the environment.

By adopting a value system based on responsibility, unity, cooperation and partnership, economic prosperity and social and ecological sustainability, tourism can be a force that initiates national transformation.

What we do in tourism impacts on everything else, as tourism is integrated with economic, cultural and social politics. Through income and jobs, tourism leads the economy. This is carried out through optimism, positive energy, enthusiasm and self-respect and social transformation of the Croatian people. A space is created where entrepreneurial spirit, creativity, innovation and education merge into one.

We have created innovative and unique tourism products based on our way of life and natural and cultural heritage, and, by nurturing the authentic, we have remained true to ourselves. Therefore, we are an ideal destination for all those that find joy and fulfilment in developing new skills. All those who search for a healthy environment and an oasis of peace are able to recuperate intellectually, emotionally and physically in Croatia.

## The Epilogue or 'When Two Worlds Collide'

While the process of envisioning and the resulting vision statement was clearly inspiring, ambitious and pleasantly surprising (especially for researchers), in reality, the vision is (as yet) ignored. Once the key vision statements were attempted to be integrated into the final document on tourism strategy of Croatia 2020, many have been lost or diluted in the process of filtering by primarily the Ministry of Tourism to which the document was presented. Thus, the originally proposed vision has been modified and turned into the more official, bureaucratic language. When presenting the strategy at various public and media events, the aim of Croatia coming into the top-20 most competitive tourism countries (on the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index) has, in effect, turned out to be the key vision of Croatian tourism.

It is possible to identify two key reasons that lie behind such an outcome. Firstly, due to the political inconsistency of central government change over, when elections have brought up a new party in power, resulting in the lack of strong governmental leadership. So, while the former Ministry of Tourism signed the contract with the Institute for Tourism to develop the strategy, the newly elected government needed to approve the finalized document. In the current political culture of Croatia where one government likes to oppose everything that the previous government does, this change has seriously halted the whole process. The second reason struck even deeper. Individual leaders obviously remain torn between the human values that they intimately harbor (outcome of the workshop)

and the broader context so much infused with the neo-liberal 'mantra' of economic growth, jobs, bottom line and competitiveness. Also it might be attributed to certain level of embarrassment attached when people start to express and share their feelings in the public arena, despite the fact they form the social and individual fabric of our lives. In a fairly safe space of enclosed workshops, it was easier to express it, than when it was needed to be taken out in the open.

Obviously, the shift in values leading to behavioral change needs to be accompanied by a shift in processes and organization structures that supports it—not only in the context of tourism but in the current government prevalent world view of valorizing economic rationalism ahead of social, cultural or any other alternative perspectives. Yet to dare and be a pioneer of social change is not always easy as Alain de Botton (2000, p. 13) in his study of human history and philosophy neatly captures this critical tension between the personal and the collective/political:

> ... [It] is not only the hostility of others that may prevent us from questioning the status quo. Our will to doubt can be just as powerfully sapped by an internal sense that societal conventions must have a sound basis, even if we are not sure exactly what this may be, because they have been adhered to by a great many people for a long time ... . We stifle our doubts and follow the flock because we cannot conceive of ourselves as pioneers of hitherto unknown, difficult truths.

Yet, even one of the most prolific tourism writers and researchers Michael Hall invites us all to work on change in these critical times of ours:

> … I also realize that for me it is time for a change. I feel that growing sense of disenchantment and unease in my research and in the structures I am embedded in that, if it cannot be given an outlet, it will lead to further disenchantment. Perhaps others feel this as well in terms of their own situation. Perhaps others, like me, read Sartre at 17 and never came back. I then return to Harvey's (2000:255) 'spaces of hope': The lesson is clear: until we insurgent architects know the courage of our minds and are prepared to take an equally speculative plunge into some unknown, we too will continue to be the object of historical geography (like worker bees) rather than active subjects, consciously pushing human possibilities to the limits. What Marx called 'the real movement; that will abolish the existing state of things' is always there for the making and for the taking. This is what gaining the courage of our minds is all about. (Hall, 2004, p. 152)

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