The Culture of National Minorities as Part of Vojvodina Tourist Offer

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Abstract. According to the 2011 census, there are over 26 nationalities and national and ethnic groups in the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, which makes it a highly multi-ethnic environment. Each ethnic group nurtures a distinctive culture and tradition, which are recognized as having a highly significant potential for tourism development in Vojvodina. This paper presents the results of a survey conducted with the aim of determining the activities of tourist organizations that are focused on implementing achievements of these cultures into a tourism product. The survey included 27 tourist organizations from the territory of Vojvodina. The results indicate a high level of interest of tourist organizations in promoting national minorities living in their municipalities.

Keywords: national minorities; culture; tourism; tourist organizations; Vojvodina.

Introduction

The AP of Vojvodina covers 24.4 % of the territory of the Republic of Serbia, i.e. 21,588 km² in the north of the Republic. According to the last census from 2011, the AP Vojvodina has a population of 1,931,809, or 21.56 % of the total population of the Republic of Serbia. Serbs are the majority population (66.76 %), followed by: Hungarians (13 %), Slovaks (2.60 %), Croats (2.43 %), Roma (2.19 %), Romanians (1.32 %), Montenegrins (1.15 %), Bunjevci (0.85 %), Ruthenians

(0.72 %), Yugoslavs (0.63 %), Macedonians (0.54 %), and other smaller ethnic groups, including Ukrainians, Muslims, Germans, Albanians, Slovenians, Bulgarians and others (http://popis2011.stat.rs/; http://www.srbija.gov.rs/pages/article.php?id=45629).

Serbs are the majority population in most of the municipalities and cities of Vojvodina. Hungarians are the majority population in five municipalities in the north of the province (Kanjiža, Senta, Ada, Bačka Topola and Mali Iđoš); Slovaks are the majority in the municipality of Bački Petrovac, while the city of Subotica and the municipalities of Bečej, Čoka, Bač and Kovačica are ethnically mixed. Hungarians make the single largest ethnic group in the city of Subotica and the municipalities of Bečej and Čoka; Serbs in the municipality of Bač; and Slovaks in the municipality of Kovačica. Other nationalities that are present in larger numbers in Vojvodina (Ruthenians, Romanians, Montenegrins, Bunjevci, Croats and Czechs) comprise the majority of the population in some areas, while Roma are the majority population in certain city districts and suburbs, etc.

The above shows that one of Vojvodina's main features is multiculturalism, i.e. high level of cohabitation of various ethnic communities on the same territory. In addition to majority population, Vojvodina also has numerous national minorities that highly differ in terms of demographic development; socio-economic, historic, and cultural characteristics; national emancipation; and political organization. Vojvodina is a typical multicultural territory, and also the most developed and ethnically most heterogeneous part of Serbia. The ethnic composition of the population is extremely varied. Good ethnic relations and respect for human rights and rights of minorities comprise one of key requirements for stable development and increased participation in European processes and prosperity of this region. Continued migrations, both immigration and emigration, have been and remain a major factor in demographic development and ethnic complexity of Vojvodina. Other nationalities participate with less than 1% of the total population, but contribute to the ethnic mosaic of Vojvodina nonetheless (Raduški, 2010).

Literature review

The first one to use the term "ethnic tourism" in literature was Smith (1977, 2), who defined it as tourism "marketed to the public in terms of the 'quaint' customs of indigenous and often exotic peoples". Since then a significant number of papers has been published about tourism and its influence on culture of ethnic minorities (e.g. Butler & Hinch, 2007; Robinson & Boniface, 1999; Ryan & Aicken, 2005; Zeppel, 2006). Also number of sociologists and anthropologists have studied ethnicity in the context of tourism from different angles (van den Berghe,1980,1992,1994; van den Berghe & Keyes,1984; Hitchcock, 1999; Jamison, 1999; MacCannell, 1984; Picard & Wood, 1997; Smith, 1977 [1989]; Wood, 1984, 1998).

One can find in the literature terms such as "aboriginal tourism" (Getz & Jamieson, 1997; Mercer, 1995) and "indigenous tourism" (Butler & Hinch, 1996; Ryan & Aicken, 2005) which are sometimes used for ethnic tourism. However, aboriginal tourism or indigenous tourism explicitly involves indigenous people, whereas in ethnic tourism the people on which the tourism activities are based are not necessarily indigenous (Yang & Wall, 2009).

Ethnic tourism, which is sometimes discussed as a part of cultural tourism, is an important part of the global tourism industry (Ishii, 2012). As modern tourists become more interested in close contact with locals and experiencing authentic culture, images of ethnic peoples are increasingly used to attract tourists to cultural attraction settings such as heritage sites, museums, galleries, folk villages, cultural theme parks, performing arts venues, and festivals (Yang, 2011). Ethnic tourism generally refers to tourism motivated by a tourist's search for exotic cultural experiences, including visiting ethnic villages, minority homes and ethnic theme parks, being involved in ethnic events and festivals, watching traditional dances or ceremonies, or merely shopping for ethnic handicrafts and souvenirs (Yang, Wall, & Smith, 2008; Yang, 2011). Traditional life-styles and tourists are brought face-to-face by ethnological exhibits; however, when culture and traditions are transformed into tourism products by using labels, guides, mannequins, and living re-enactments of traditional activities, a composite representation of minority people is formed (Ryan & Aicken, 2005).

Many governments see ethnic tourism as useful tool for economic and cultural development (Henderson, 2003; Walsh & Swain, 2004; Yea, 2002). It can also be basis for minorities to show their culture and revive their traditions (Santos & Yan, 2008; Swain, 1989, 1990). However, while

ethnic tourism has the potential to bring economic and social benefits, it can also adversely impact the culture and sense of identity of ethnic groups (Oakes, 1997; Picard & Wood, 1997; Smith, 1989). Van den Berghe (1992) noted that tourism is a godsend for ethnic minorities of the peripheral class in avoiding starvation because some economic benefits of the tourist trade trickle down to the minorities.

Ethnicity is commonly utilized by those involved in tourism as a resource to generate income and foreign exchange (Leong, 1997). Today, celebrations of ethnic diversity or "local colour" constitute an important aspect of global culture and of tourism as well (Kahn, 1997). With the broad integration of ethnicity into tourism worldwide, the representation, consumption, and experience of ethnicity have become fashionable. "Ethnic" has become a popular tourist icon consumed and promoted locally and afar, from ethnic restaurants, neighbourhoods, and markets to ethnic museums, theme parks, and tourist villages (Gladney, 1999).

Destination management organization

In order to achieve objective of preserving and presenting ethnicity and minorities, many destinations have created a destination management organization (DMO) to provide leadership for the management of tourism in the destination (Bornhorst et al, 2010). A main function of destination-management organisations (DMOs) is that of being responsible for marketing their destinations (Elbe at al., 2009). The roles of the DMO, in the broadest of terms, are: to work towards enhancing the well-being of destination residents; to do everything necessary to help ensure that visitors are offered visitation experiences that are at a minimum, highly satisfactory, and where possible, highly memorable; and while doing so, to ensure the provision of effective destination management and stewardship (Bornhorst et al, 2010).

In fact, DMOs play a role merely as initiators and mediators: they can bring about a flexible interface management system and promote self-responsibility, self-organization, and self-regulation of the destination network (Volgger and Pechlaner, 2014). With that in mind, large number of nations, states and cities are now funding a Destination Marketing Organisation (DMO) as the main vehicle to compete and attract visitors to their distinctive place or visitor space (Pike, Page, 2014). DMOs are often created by public agencies and financed by public means, sometimes in combination with private funding (Pike, 2004).

Destination marketing is a concept used to denote deliberate, often strategically developed activities performed in order to attract visitors, i.e. tourists, to a specific location. Destination-management organisations (DMOs) are often given a central role in the marketing of a destination because they are created to take the overall responsibility for promoting tourism and for attracting visitors to the place or region defined as their domain (Pearce, 1992).

The marketing of the whole destination is often seen as the task of the DMOs, which is understandable, considering the nature of many destinations: 'Interdependence, small size, market fragmentation, and spatial separation are all factors which may lead to a desire for combined action, a willingness to unite to achieve common goals, a need to form tourist organizations'(Pearce, 1992).

Destination management is a continuous process in which the tourist industry, government/administration and other interested parties guide the development of a destination, with the aim of realizing the common vision of that destination's future. Destination management is the result of collaboration of various sectors, stakeholder groups and partners – such as state agencies, local communities, business clubs and associations – which, by working together, each from their own perspective, realize common goals of the specific destination. Comprehensive destination management implies professional planning, implementation, regular review and assessment of the conducted activities. While managing a destination, one needs to take into account and manage the unique natural resources, cultural attributes and interests of the community of each respective destination. Tourism needs to ensure that positive effects happen today, but to also create a prosperous legacy for future generations (the principle of sustainable development). Effectiveness (doing the right things) and efficiency (doing it the right way) of planning, developing and advertising a certain destination is based on research and perception of tourists' needs. Destination management observes both offer (companies and other entities included in the delivery of a tourist product) and demand (visitor/tourist). Today any serious tourist destination, be it a country, region, city or a small town, needs to:

- consider how to ensure long-term sustainable development;
- know its own tourism potential and inventory;
- have vision and goals which to pursue;
- be able to control and review the satisfaction of the visitors and local residents;
- use the concept of clustering, which is associated with empirical structuring of destinations and creation of its competitive advantage.

Developing destination marketing and positioning strategies, building strong online presence on the market, as well as developing the information system and managing the experience of visitors are all conditions without which no destination can survive on the market.

The history of development of tourism management model showed that market trends in the past 30 years have imposed the need for organizing the management at several levels, where for practical reasons it is preferred (but not necessary) that it correspond to the administrative organizational units of a country. Today, the generally accepted levels of tourism management are as follows:

1. National tourist organizations (hereinafter: NTO), which are responsible for tourism marketing at the national level and determining main strategic directions and goals of national tourism. NTOs are separated from the rest of the system; they are not responsible for operational aspects, development or competitiveness, and are, therefore, only partly included in this manual;

2. Regional management organizations (hereinafter: RMO), which are responsible for tourism management and marketing in a certain geographic region specified for that purpose. Often, but not always, these regions correspond to administrative regions, such as provinces, counties, European NUTS regions or other units depending on the nomenclature, and developmental and administrative specificities. When compared with an NTO, an RMO is oriented towards operational activities with certain strategic elements (compliance with higher level strategies; coordinating lower level strategies between local DMOs, etc.)

3. Local Destination Management Organizations (DMO) are in charge of management and/or tourism marketing in a small geographic area. Activities of a local DMO are mostly operative in nature, except when the destination's brand has a global appeal, due to which the DMO needs to assume greater authority within the region;

4. Tourist Information Centres operate as DMO subsidiaries, and are oriented solely on providing services to visitors (operational manual).

Destination Management Organizations are responsible for the complete management of the area (planning, organization, control, and management/leadership) and for taking actions in order to achieve the predefined goals (Popesku 2009).

The Law on Tourism of the Republic of Serbia (adopted in 2005) provides for the establishment of tourist organizations – at the national level (TOS-Tourist organization of Serbia), territorial level (e.g.Tourist organization of Vojvodina) and the level of local self-governments – for the purpose of promoting tourism and coordinating activities with business and other entities. These organizations do not manage tourism development of the destination in a manner as presented for DMOs, and do not include compliance of often conflicted interests between the public and private sectors.

There is undoubtedly a need to establish DMOs at the level of developed tourist destinations in Serbia (Belgrade, Novi Sad, Zlatibor, Kopaonik, Vrnjačka Banja, etc.) which is also emphasized in appropriate strategies and master plans drawn up for priority tourist destinations in Serbia. The current law does not provide appropriate grounds for establishing this type of organization. Unfortunately, the new draft of the Law on Tourism also does not provide for the establishment of DMOs, only for the possibility of a tourist organization cooperating with another tourist organization, (business entity, other legal entity and entrepreneur doing business in the domain of traffic, tourism, catering, trade in goods and services, culture, sport, information, congress and fair activities) in establishing an organization for operational, marketing and promotional activities, with the consent of the founder, in order to plan, coordinate and manage tourist activities. The lack of legal options for establishing DMOs shall certainly not contribute to the appropriate

management of tourism development at the level of priority tourist destinations in Serbia (Popesku, 2009).

The Tourist Organization of Serbia (TOS) was founded in 1994 as the official institution for promoting tourism of the Republic of Serbia on domestic and international markets.

The TOS cooperates with city and municipal tourist organizations, and other tourism professionals in improving Serbia's tourist offer, and creating a positive attitude in people towards tourism in Serbia.

Provincial, city and municipal tourist organizations of Serbia bring their annual programmes and promotional activities plans into compliance with the Strategic Marketing Plan and plans and programmes of the TOS (http://www.srbija.travel/o-tosu/).

A tourist organization (cities or municipalities) also:

1. promotes tourism;
2. coordinates activities and cooperation between business and other entities working in the domain of tourism, which directly and indirectly work on promoting tourism;
3. adopts annual programme and promotional activities plan in line with the Strategic Marketing Plan, plans and programmes of the Tourist Organization of Serbia;
4. provides informational and advertising materials that promote tourism values (publications, promotional videos and audio recordings, web presentations, souvenirs, etc.) in cooperation with relevant authorities that provide tourist signs;
5. collects and publishes information on the entire tourist offer, as well as other activities of importance for tourism promotion;
6. organizes, or participate in the organization of tourism, scientific, professional, sporting, cultural and other gatherings and events;
7. organizes tourist-information centres (for receiving tourists, providing free information to tourists, collecting data for the needs of informing tourists, introducing tourists to the quality of the tourist offer, conveying complaints of tourists to relevant authorities, etc.);
8. provides mediation services for handicraft industry;
9. promotes construction of tourism infrastructure and physical planning;
10. carries out other activities aimed at tourism promotion in line with the Statute of the Tourist Organization.

Methodology
Research instrument

The questionnaire used in the survey was the result of research into relevant literature and attitudes of the focus group, which consisted of employees in Tourist organizations from Novi Sad, Sombor and Apatin, and Tourist Organization of Vojvodina, which coordinates the work of all tourist organizations on the territory of Vojvodina. The questionnaire contains four parts. The first part consists of five questions pertaining to socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents. The second part consists of six questions regarding tourist organizations' activities aimed at promoting the culture of national minorities. The third part consists of seven questions which reflect the attitudes of the respondents regarding the importance of promoting the culture of national minorities for tourism development in Vojvodina. The fourth part consists of nine questions that explore the motivations of the respondents' visits to rural areas.

The attitudes and motivations of the respondents were measured by means of a five-point Likert type scale (1 = *strongly disagree*, 2 = *disagree*, 3 = *neutral*, 4 = *agree*, 5 = *strongly agree*).

Survey

The survey was carried out in 27 tourist organizations in Vojvodina, which makes 71% of the total number of tourist organizations. All 38 tourist organizations in Vojvodina had been contacted over the phone, and after they had consented to participate in the survey, they were forwarded an email with a link to the questionnaire. The survey was carried out in the period 18.12.3013 – 18.02.2014. The questionnaire was filled out by one employee from each of the following tourist organizations: Novi Sad, Ruma, Kanjiža, Bač, Golubinci, Apatin, Šid, Subotica, Beočin, Sombor, Pančevo, Vršac, Ada, Sremska Mitrovica, Zrenjanin, Bela Crkva, Srbobran, Bački Petrovac, Kovačica, Odžaci, Senta, Titel, Vrbas, Žabalj, Žitište, and Sremski Karlovci.

Results
Respondents' profiles

The sample included 14.8% males and 85.2% females among the respondents. The main age group was 31 - 40 and represented 51.9% of the respondents. The second largest age group was 21-30 making the 33.3% of the respondents. The age groups over 41 had the share of only 14.8%. Most of the respondents (63%) had completed higher education. The majority of respondents was of Serbian nationality (81.5%). Most of the respondents from the observed sample have been employed in tourism between five and ten years (37%).

Results of descriptive statistical analysis

When asked if their tourist organization promotes culture of one or several national minorities, 22 respondents answered affirmatively. Most tourist organizations promote the culture of two or several national minorities. Promotion of Hungarian and Slovak culture is most common (in 9 tourist organizations), followed by promotion of the Croatian culture (in 6 TOs), Roma (in 4 TOs), Ruthenian, German and Romanian (in 3 TOs), and Bunjevac (2 TOs) cultures, and one TO each for promoting Jewish, Bulgarian, Macedonian, Ukrainian and Russian cultures. When asked in what way they promote the culture of national minorities for the purpose of tourism development, TO representatives most often singled out the following forms of promotion:

- participation at tourism fairs;
- promotional material;
- organization and support of events that present customs, folklore, culture and cuisine of certain national minorities;
- cross-border cooperation;
- project support.

The authors wanted to know if it is the opinion of TOs that they properly evaluated the culture of national minorities for the purpose of tourism development. The majority of TOs (59.10%) was partially satisfied with the activities carried out on the territory of their municipalities, while 31.82% were completely satisfied, and only 9.1% (i.e. two respondents) were dissatisfied.

Proposals of the respondents on possible activities that would contribute to the inclusion of the culture of national minorities into Vojvodina tourist offer are quite interesting:

- sale of handcrafted products,
- organized weekends in the country,
- exchange of folklore ensembles,
- activities in workshops,
- organization of exhibits and activities.

Of the five respondents who stated they did not implement any activities aimed at promotion of national minorities, two stated that their municipalities are not markedly multicultural; one respondent stated that his municipality is not interested for that type of cooperation, while two did not provide explanation.

The biggest mean values for the first and second question (Table 2) indicate that the representatives of tourist organizations recognize the significance of the culture of national minorities for tourism development, and are interested to learn more about them. On the other hand, relatively low values for questions I4, I6, I5 and I7 indicate that the respondents are of the opinion that the culture of national minorities is not sufficiently represented in the educational system of primary and secondary schools, media and, therefore, Vojvodina tourist offer. The reliability of this scale is high (Cronbach's Alpha 0.709).

The relatively high scores for the offered motivators of visiting the areas in which national minorities are present (only one of nine questions has the mean below 4), and low values of differences between arithmetic means of the scores (Table 3) lead to the conclusion that the respondents equally value all the stated motives. The reliability of the measuring scale is in the domain of high reliability (Cronbach's Alpha 0.826). Learning about a nationality's culture and ethnic legacy stand out as the most important motives.

Results of the correlation

The connection between the questions in tables 2 and 3 is presented through Pearson correlation coefficient. A highly positive correlation was calculated (Cohen, 1988) at the 0.01 level of significance between M1 and I1 and I2; and M3 and I2, which is logical, given that the respondents interested in learning about the culture of national minorities are motivated to visit the towns and villages they live in, primarily for the purpose of obtaining additional information. Highly positive correlations between M4 and I2; M7 and I1 and I2; and M9 and I2 also have a similar direction. A moderate positive correlation at the 0.01 level of significance was calculated between M5 and I2; M8 and I2; and at the 0.05 level of significance between M1 and I3; M2 and I1 and I2; M3 and I1. These correlations confirm that the set scales are reliable and that the respondents who recognize the significance of the culture of national minorities and the need for its implementation into education programmes emphasize the exploration of new cultures and ethnicities, enjoyment in local music, exploration of ethnic heritage, purchase of home-made foods and stays in rural areas as leading motivators.

Table 1. Socio-demographic structure of the respondents (N=27)

Variables	Sample size	Percent
Age		
21 - 30	9	33,3
31 - 40	14	51,9
41 - 50	2	7,4
≥51	2	7,4
Gender		
Male	4	14,8
Female	23	85,2
Education		
secondary education	3	11,1
Higher school	2	7,4
Graduate degree	17	63,0
Master's degree	5	18,5
Nationality		
Serbian	22	81,5
Yugoslavian	1	3,7
Bunjevac	1	3,7
Slovakian	1	3,7
Hungarian	2	7,4
Work experience in tourism		
up to one year	5	18,5
from 1 to 3 years	6	22,2
from 3 to 5 years	4	14,8
from 5 to 10 years	10	37,0
over 10 years	2	7,4

Table 2. Descriptive statistical analysis of the respondents' attitudes regarding the significance of promoting the culture of national minorities

Questions	Mean	Std. Deviation
I1- I am interested in learning more about the culture of national minorities.	4.4815	0.75296
I2- I am of the opinion that the culture of national minorities of	4.7407	0.52569

Vojvodina has considerable potential for tourism development.		
I3- Educational programmes of primary and secondary schools should include the culture of national minorities in Vojvodina.	4.2963	1.06752
I4- The multiculturalism of Vojvodina is sufficiently used for the purpose of tourism development.	3.1111	1.31071
I5- The culture of national minorities is sufficiently presented in the media.	3.1852	1.24150
I6- The culture of national minorities is presented in the educational programme.	3.1111	1.08604
I7- The culture of national minorities is sufficiently presented in Vojvodina tourist offer.	3.5556	1.12090

Table 3. Descriptive statistical analysis of the motives for visiting rural tourist destinations

Questions	Mean	Std. Deviation
M1 – learning about a new culture and ethnicity	4.3333	0.87706
M2 – enjoying local music	3.8148	1.27210
M3 – learning about ethnic heritage	4.3333	0.87706
M4 – enjoying local cuisine and beverages	4.1481	1.13353
M5 – staying in rural areas	4.1481	1.19948
M6 – enjoying local events	4.0000	1.27098
M7 – introduction to ethnic exhibits in museums and ethnic houses	4.2963	0.99285
M8 – purchase of local food products	4.2222	1.12090
M9 – purchase of souvenirs and handcrafted items	4.1852	1.14479

Table 4. Results of the correlation between views and motives

	I1	I2	I3	I4	I5	I6	I7
M1	.679**	.612**	.383*	.033	-.165	-.081	.078
M2	.458*	.443*	.184	.105	-.148	-.179	-.006
M3	.447*	.695**	.301	.000	-.094	.081	.156
M4	.319	.519**	.185	.196	.116	.236	.266
M5	.259	.490**	.325	.209	.110	.341	.366
M6	.161	.288	-.028	.254	.268	.139	.297
M7	.522**	.595**	.241	.062	-.140	.004	.123
M8	.370	.493**	.136	.140	-.003	.232	.235
M9	.294	.530**	.237	.140	.110	.354	.366

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Conclusion:

The interest of tourists in getting to know new cultures is dominant in modern-day tourism. Cultural tourism includes: "tourist experience and contact with the locals and their cultural expressions, experiencing the uniqueness of a culture, its heritage, and peculiarities of people and places" (Wall and Mathieson, 2006, p 261). Taking into account global tourism trends, the tourist organizations in Vojvodina are becoming increasingly aware of the significance of the development of this type of tourism, which would be in line with a very rich cultural offer of the national minorities living on the territory of Vojvodina.

The results of the survey indicate a high level of awareness in people working in TOs in Vojvodina as to the importance that the promotion of the culture of national minorities has on the

development of tourism. However, national minorities are not equally represented when promoting their values. Although there are 26 nationalities living in Vojvodina, the tourist product mostly covers the Hungarian and Slovak nationalities.

The cultural heritage of the peoples of Vojvodina has a unique and irreplaceable cultural value, since it directly indicates the level of social, educational, cultural and civilizational development. Therefore, the care in preserving and promoting cultural heritage is not only obligation of relevant institutions and business entities from the domain of tourism, but also moral role of the entire society which, by recognizing the importance of cultural heritage, creates the conditions for its preservation. However, the paramount role in preserving the cultural heritage of minority groups lies in the people from those groups, who have the right and obligation to create appropriate mechanisms for preserving and improving their heritage, and make it a part of national strategies.

Acknowledgements:

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