

# MEET “SCEPTICS”, “NEUTRALS” AND “BELIEVERS”: AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO ANALYSING RESIDENTS’ ATTITUDES TOWARDS TOURISM IN URBAN DESTINATIONS

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## Abstract

Methodological and theoretical advances are necessary to better understand the complex and heterogeneous nature of residents' perceptions and attitudes towards tourism in cities. This study provides a novel approach, challenging some of the postulates of the Social Exchange Theory. The study was conducted in the capital city of Croatia, Zagreb, and residents' attitudes were gathered through self-administered questionnaire. The level of agreement with the statement that 'tourism generates more benefits than costs for residents' was used as a criterion for segmenting respondents into three groups: sceptics, neutrals and believers. Analysis revealed that the three groups did not significantly differ in perception of most of the negative impacts, but do differ when it comes to positive impacts. Results indicate that in cases where a urban destination is not (yet) exposed to overtourism, perceived positive tourism impacts play a more important role than the negative tourism impacts, as potential key opinion-changers in terms of future support for tourism development. Importance of this study lies in transforming the ordinary approach to residents' perceptions and providing alternative framework for research, with more emphasis on relations between perceptions of positive and negative tourism impact, rather than factors affecting those perceptions. Policy implications include the need for city planners to foster residents' participation in tourism planning and development, strengthen information campaigns on tourism impacts, and more regularly monitor resident perceptions of the effects of tourism development on their well-being.

**Keywords:** tourism impacts; urban destinations; overtourism; local residents; social exchange theory.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The progressive growth of tourist arrivals and overnights worldwide, combined with the unsustainability of many human activities is producing many adverse social and environmental effects in destinations

**MEET “SCEPTICS”, “NEUTRALS” AND “BELIEVERS”: AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO ANALYSING RESIDENTS’ ATTITUDES TOWARDS TOURISM IN URBAN DESTINATIONS**

worldwide. The growth of tourism is often concentrated in specific areas, causing crowding and other problems associated with limited carrying capacity (Gonzalez et. al., 2018). Of major concern is irritation experienced by residents living in and around tourist areas (Goodwin, 2019). Although the growth of tourist flows is not a new phenomenon in tourism history, the over-visitation of certain places, generating protests of locals, has been identified and recently intensively discussed under the term “overtourism” (Milano, 2017). Furthermore, criticism and demonstrations led by social movements in renowned European cities such as Barcelona and Venice have led to the use of more “drastic” labels such as “anti-tourism” or “tourismphobia” (Capocchi et. al., 2019). Many of these protests or “tourism-related social mobilisations” have been concentrated in cities (Novy & Colomb, 2019), and linked to overall discontent with local governance in respect of the management of tourism numbers (Martin et. al., 2014) with its negative impacts such as pressure on infrastructure, unaffordable housing, gentrification, night-time economy, etc. (Smith et al., 2019). Since residents of urban destinations might be more exposed to overtourism phenomena, it is important to highlight the key role that resident perceptions must play in formulating tourism development strategies. At present, the COVID-19 pandemic has created a global economic and social crisis with especially strong impact on tourism industry, causing practically overnight shift in concern from “overtourism” to “no-tourism”. In these circumstances, with 74% loss in international tourist arrivals, over US\$ 2 trillion estimated loss in GDP in 2020 and 100-120 million direct tourism jobs at risk (UNWTO, 2021), it is even more important to understand attitudes and opinions of urban residents on benefits and costs of tourism, and consequently to find new and more efficient approaches for examining those attitudes for the purpose of managing residents’ expectations from tourism in the future.

Discussion on tourism impacts and their perception is not a new topic in tourism academia and among practitioners. After four decades of academic discussions and extensive research, the division of tourism impacts on economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts (with positive and negative elements in each category) has been widely accepted (Vargas-Sánchez et. al. 2011). A widely accepted theory explaining residents’ attitudes and support towards tourism is Social Exchange Theory (Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004). Applying Social Exchange Theory (SET) to residents’ attitudes analysis, implies that residents who perceive more positive tourism impacts will support future tourism development, while residents who perceive more negative tourism impacts are less inclined to support future tourism development (Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2010;). SET has been criticised due to its simplicity and incompleteness (Andereck et. al. 2005, Sharpley 2014). Consequently, in response, more complex models have been developed, including effects of socio-demographic variables (age, gender, income, education) and other extrinsic and intrinsic variables such as tourism-dependency, seasonality, stage of tourism development, community attachment, etc. on the perception of tourism impacts and overall

**MEET “SCEPTICS”, “NEUTRALS” AND “BELIEVERS”: AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO ANALYSING RESIDENTS’ ATTITUDES TOWARDS TOURISM IN URBAN DESTINATIONS**

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support for tourism development (e.g. Andriotis & Vaughan, 2003; McGehee & Andereck, 2004; Gursoy and Rutherford, 2004; Ward and Berno 2011; Vargas-Sanchez et al., 2011, Rasoolimanesh et al. 2015,; Peters et al., 2019, Alrwajfah et al. 2019). To date however, no consensus has been reached as to the findings. Reasons for inconsistent results might include the extremely high contextual dependency of each study (the inherent physical, cultural and economic differences between different communities in different destinations. There is possibility that relationships between the antecedents and consequences of residents’ perceptions and attitudes are not linear (Rasoolimanesh & Seyfi, 2020), and un-explored factors may exist that significantly shape residents’ attitudes towards tourism or that preclude confident estimates of the costs and benefits of tourism (Uysal et al, 2016). Moreover, general support for future tourism development does not necessary mean that residents think that tourism brings excess benefits over costs for themselves, but might believe that it benefits community as a whole (Gursoy and Rutherford, 2004).

This paper provides a novel conceptual and practical contribution to the topic of tourism impacts and their perception from the residents' point of view. Rather than engaging in discussion about the factors affecting residents’ attitude about tourism costs and benefits, this research ‘inverts’ the logic of SET by using the overall opinion on cost/benefit ratio of tourism as the basis for residents’ segmentation and analysis how different categories of residents perceive positive and negative economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts of tourism on their city. By ‘starting from the end’ and segmenting residents into three groups based on their opinion whether the tourism brings more benefits than costs for locals (dividing them as positively, neutral and negatively oriented), this study aims to understand their differences in perception of positive and negative tourism impacts, perceived level of information about tourism activities and perceived level of engagement in decision-making. The research was conducted in the city of Zagreb as capital of Croatia and also urban destination with strong tourism development, but yet not significantly dependent upon tourism activities.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1. Types of tourism impacts**

There is common agreement about three key types of tourism impacts on destinations-, economic, environmental, and socio-cultural impacts (Almeida-Garcia et al. 2015), each having positive and negative variations.

Employment opportunities, income generation for local community and businesses and infrastructure development, are among the most recognised positive economic impacts of tourism in all types of

**MEET “SCEPTICS”, “NEUTRALS” AND “BELIEVERS”: AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO ANALYSING RESIDENTS’ ATTITUDES TOWARDS TOURISM IN URBAN DESTINATIONS**

destinations, from developed urban destinations (Gilbert & Clark, 1997; Wang et. al., 2005, Oviedo-Garcia et. al., 2008) to exotic destinations relying on natural attractions (Hanafiah et. al., 2013). Negative economic impacts from tourism include increase in prices and costs of living (Bujosa & Rossello, 2007), economic leakage (Singh & Wright 2011) costs of supporting infrastructure and possible de-industrialisation (Dwyer, et. al., 2000).

Environmental impacts of tourism are mostly negatively perceived in terms of serious problems with traffic congestion, noise, pollution, deterioration of natural environment and waste-related problems, but, there are also situations in which tourism has contributed to the improvement and the protection of the environment through biodiversity preservation, more public gardens and parks, environmental awareness among residents, protection and maintenance of environmental assets (Ko & Stewart, 2002; Bujosa & Rossello, 2007; Bonimy, 2011; Rasoolimanesh et. al., 2015; Almeida-Garcia et al. 2015).

Socio-cultural impacts of tourism might be the most complex type of impacts, with significant contextual differences in perceptions between different types of destinations, tourism tradition and cultural settings. They include encouraging a variety of cultural activities by local residents, preserving residents’ identity and cultural pride, conservation and restoration of historic buildings, preserving local traditions and resident sense of place, improvement of quality of life and public services, cultural exchange, tolerance and understanding (King et. al. 2003, Slabbert et al., 2020). Negative impacts include increased crime rate, drugs and alcohol use, erosion of traditional values, loss or change in local traditions (Andereck & Vogt, 2000; Besculides, Lee & McCormick, 2002). Almeida-Garcia et al. 2015; Rasoolimanesh et. al., 2015).

In analysis of tourism impacts, special attention has been given to examination of tourism impacts among residents of urban destinations (Ramkissoon & Nunkoo, 2011) which are often additionally affected by pressure caused by increased visitation of their neighbourhoods and living areas, especially in destinations with sharp seasonal increase (Krabokoukis et al., 2021).

**2.2. Social exchange theory and factors affecting residents’ perception of tourism impacts**

As previous studies show, residents are aware of the positive and negative impacts of tourism development, but their perceptions are not completely objective with various factors influencing their perspective and attitudes towards tourism development in their place of residence. One of the most prominent and most frequently used theories for explaining residents’ support to tourism development is Social Exchange Theory (Gursoy & Rutherford, 2004; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005; Hadinejad et al, 2019). Originally rooted in sociology, Social exchange Theory (SET), when applied to tourism, proposes that individuals’ attitudes towards tourism and their level of support for its development will be influenced

**MEET “SCEPTICS”, “NEUTRALS” AND “BELIEVERS”: AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO ANALYSING RESIDENTS’ ATTITUDES TOWARDS TOURISM IN URBAN DESTINATIONS**

---

by their evaluations of the outcomes of tourism for themselves and their communities (Andereck et al. 2005). Thus, if residents perceive the benefits of tourism development to outweigh the costs of development they will be more inclined to support tourism development (Andriotis, 2005; Jurowski et al., 1997; Gursoy et al., 2017). A large number of studies have been conducted to examine the inter-relationships among perceptions of costs and benefits related to the positive and negative impacts of tourism, and support for tourism (Choi & Murray, 2010; Jurowski & Gursoy, 2004; Nunkoo & Ramkissoon, 2010), but always based on the initial hypothesis that perceived positive and negative tourism impacts form overall attitudes of the extent of support for tourism development. Various socio-demographic variables have been tested for influencing perceptions, such as age, education, civil status and income (Andriotis & Vaughan, 2003, McGehee & Andereck, 2004, Nunkoo & Gursoy, 2012, Soldic Frleta & Durkin Badurina, 2019), but the results are contradictory, due to the extremely high contextual dependency of each study (the inherent physical, cultural and economic differences between destinations but also on the individual level).

SET has been criticised largely for its lack of theoretical sophistication and incompleteness (Andereck et al. 2005, Sharpley 2014) and important constructs have been added and proved to be significant for the residents' overall perception of tourism. These include community attachment, concern for the community, eco-centric attitude, situation of local economy, economic dependency on tourism, perceived behaviour of tourists, threat perceptions, and place attachment (Gursoy and Rutherford, 2004, McGehee & Andereck, 2004; Andriotis & Vaughan, 2003; Ward and Berno 2011, Vargas-Sanchez et. al., 2011; Chen & Dwyer 2017; Kang and Lee, 2018; Styliadis, 2018). Also, a revised framework has been created (Cropanzano, & Mitchell, 2005) and empirically tested (Rasoolimanesh et al. 2015) as well as different nested models within same framework hypothesis (Nunkoo & So, 2016). Special attention has been given to the level of awareness and involvement in tourism development as important variables shaping residents' perception of tourism impacts and support for development (Latkova & Vogt, 2012; Šegota et al., 2017).

Still, key remaining problems relate to an inability to use SET to generalise the perceptions of residents from different destinations, traditions and cultures, personal background and contextually unique experiences with tourism-related activities. Therefore, it is important to understand that residents are often rather heterogeneous groups of individuals with multiple interests (Garrod et al., 2012) and it is hard to determine the level and the strength of individual variables affecting their overall opinion on tourism. Although useful for understanding residents' perceptions of tourism in relation to their perceptions of economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts, SET, cannot fully explain the attitude of residents towards tourism in a specific place (Sanchez- Vargas et. al. 2011). There is some evidence that not all

**MEET “SCEPTICS”, “NEUTRALS” AND “BELIEVERS”: AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO ANALYSING RESIDENTS’ ATTITUDES TOWARDS TOURISM IN URBAN DESTINATIONS**

perceptions of residents can be easily predicted by gaining personal benefit nor the involvement in tourism activities/economic dependency (Byrd, 2007). Also, in many studies, positive and negative impacts belonging to the same category (e.g. economic impacts) are measured as a single factor, which can blur the understanding of the importance residents might give to the positive vs. negative impacts in each of the categories.

Rather than developing another “perception of impact – overall tourism support model”, this study focuses on “reversing the equation” by using the overall opinion on cost/benefit ratio of tourism as the pre-defined basis for segmentation of residents and the analysis how different segments of residents perceive positive and negative economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts of tourism. This type of segmentation of residents (especially in cities), based on their overall attitude towards tourism, is a potentially more straight-forward and useful way to examine how those segments perceive positive and negative tourism impacts and to understand which area of impacts should be given more attention in urban destination planning and management. Segmentation of residents’ tourism-related attitudes has been undertaken previously (Williams & Lawson, 2001, Sharma & Dyer, 2009, Andriotis & Vaughan, 2003, da Cruz Vareiro et al. 2013, etc.). The key method of each of those studies was cluster analysis of residents’ perception of all types of positive and negative impacts together. However, cluster analysis is primarily descriptive in content and unable to provide clear insights on particular inter-relationships between perceptions of benefits vs. costs and perceptions of tourism impacts. In order to avoid the limitations of clustering techniques in segmentation, it is considered more fruitful to focus on specific criteria to divide residents into groups for analysis. For example, in order to better measure and understand what local residents find important concerning tourism development in their community, Lundberg divided locals into two clear groups: permanent residents and second home owners (Lundberg, 2017). Another successful example of segmentation of residents was performed based on their degree of ‘informedness’ and involvement regarding the direction of tourism development (Šegota et al., 2017). The present study also seeks to provide clear and understandable criteria for the segmentation of residents for the purpose of obtaining relevant and significant insights on their perceptions towards tourism and its impacts on their community.

In recent years, the direction of the literature has shifted beyond focus on resident perceptions of tourism’s economic, environmental and socio-cultural impacts to consider the outcomes for resident well-being, but this does not diminish the importance of perception studies, since resident perception of tourism’s impacts is a crucial component of measures of their subjective well-being (Dwyer, 2020). Studies such as this one can help to provide a more solid base for application of a well-being lens to assessing tourism development, especially in urban areas (Hocevar et al., 2021), but also give concise and understandable information for decision-makers in urban areas on how to approach to further tourism development.

### 3. METHODOLOGY AND APPROACH

The method for this study was designed to avoid the weaknesses of cluster analysis (e.g. unreliability and difficult interpretation) and, in an exploratory manner, invert one of the key postulates of SET in order to provide fresh insights and better understanding of the relation between cost/benefit perception and tourism impacts perceptions. The focus is on clear segmentation of residents based on their “final” opinion on whether does tourism bring more, equal or less benefits than costs for the local population. Three groups/segments, identified according to that attitude, will become units for further analysis of perceived positive and negative economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts of tourism. Mediating variables include informedness on tourism development, involvement in tourism development, and increase in the number of visitors (overtourism perspective).

#### 3.1. Study setting

The City of Zagreb is the Croatian capital, most populated and economically developed city in the country and an important city break destination in Central & Eastern Europe (Ahn et al, 2020). It has held the prestigious title of the best European Christmas holiday destination in the period 2015-2018 and has also been awarded the title of the best tourist destination and the most successful city break destination in Croatia. It has experienced a constant rise in the number of arrivals and overnights, as well as in number of accommodation units, restaurants and other tourism-related enterprises. In 2018, Zagreb realised the most tourists’ nights in Continental Croatia, around 2.5 million (Croatian Bureau of Statistics, 2018), but the average length of stay, 1,8 nights, was significantly below the national level. In 2019, there was an increase in tourist arrivals by 3.8% and overnights by 5%, but the average length of stay remained the same (Zagreb Tourism Board, 2020). This could be attributed to the fact that Zagreb is an attractive destination for short city breaks, mostly visited by tourists on their round trips across Europe or by tourists in transit to their final destinations on the Adriatic coast (Mikulić et al., 2016). The city of Zagreb was chosen for study given that it is a year-round urban destination with ongoing tourism development and the fact that it still is less dependent on tourism incomes as are most of the coastal destinations in Croatia.

#### 3.2. Instrument and data collection

The authors prepared a self-administered questionnaire for residents of Zagreb comprising following parts:

- Perception of overall tourism merit measured by the item: “The benefits that tourism generates for the local population are higher than the costs.” (5 point Likert scale)

**MEET “SCEPTICS”, “NEUTRALS” AND “BELIEVERS”: AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO ANALYSING RESIDENTS’ ATTITUDES TOWARDS TOURISM IN URBAN DESTINATIONS**

- 16 items measuring perception of tourism impacts: three positive economic impacts, three negative economic impacts, three positive socio-cultural impacts, three negative socio-cultural impacts and two positive and two negative environmental impacts on a 5 point Likert scale (based on Andereck and Vogt, 2000; McGehee and Andereck ,2004, Long and Kayat, 2011; Hanafiah et al. 2013; Meimand et al. 2017; Sánchez-Cañizares et al. 2014)
- Items related to perceived extent of being informed on tourism development and level of involvement in decision making on tourism - 5 point Likert scale (based on Lee, 2013 and Zhang et. al. 2013)
- Item: “I think it would be good for the destination if the number of tourists increased.”- 5 point Likert scale (important for exploring the attitude towards quantitative tourism growth)
- Questions concerned with demographic background and length of residence in Zagreb

The survey was conducted among the residents of the city of Zagreb during 2018. A convenience sampling was employed: trained research assistants approached respondents' in various public spaces around the city of Zagreb. Also, questionnaire was available online and links were also distributed by the research assistants. Participation was optional, anonymous and respondents were free to withdraw their participation in the study. In total, 1952 properly completed questionnaires were collected and used in the analysis.

**3.3. Methods**

As first step, the item “The benefits that tourism generates for the local population are higher than the costs.” was used as basis for the development of three groups of respondents, depending on their level of agreement:

- “Sceptics” (responses: 1 and 2)
- “Neutrals” (answered 3)
- “Believers” (those who answered 4 or 5)

Following the creation of those segments, analysis of the socio-demographic profile for each segment was conducted.

In the next step, perceptions of positive and negative impacts of tourism were grouped in positive/negative and analysed to identify statistically significant differences between sceptics, neutrals and believers. As an initial method for testing the existence of statistically significant differences, MANOVA was used, with

**MEET “SCEPTICS”, “NEUTRALS” AND “BELIEVERS”: AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO ANALYSING RESIDENTS’ ATTITUDES TOWARDS TOURISM IN URBAN DESTINATIONS**

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groups of respondents (sceptics, neutrals and believers) as independent variables and perceptions of particular tourism impacts as dependent variable. Three separate MANOVAs were conducted: for positive and negative economic impacts, positive and negative socio-cultural impacts and positive and negative environmental impacts. The next step was to explore statistically significant differences between groups in individual tourism impacts-related items, by using a post hoc test. ANOVA was conducted, with Games-Howell post hoc test to determine if there were differences between the three segmented groups in the level of agreement with statements regarding perceived information level about tourism development, involvement in tourism-related decision making and opinion on potential growth of number of tourists in Zagreb.

#### **4. RESULTS**

In the research sample, there were slightly more female respondents and around half of the respondents had high school education and were employed (but not in tourism industry). Around 40% of the respondents were under 25 years of age. Almost 70% of the respondents had lived their whole life in Zagreb. More details on socio-demographic characteristic of the sample will be provided through analysis of segments. Table 1 displays socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents belonging to those 3 segments.

Table 1 reveals a fairly even distribution of various age groups and income categories. The distribution in each group follows the overall distribution of groups in the total research sample, meaning that it is not possible to distinguish groups based on socio-demographic characteristics.

Once three groups of respondents, based on their attitude towards benefits/costs from tourism are established, they became categories of independent variables in the MANOVA analysis. The dependent variables are the different tourism impacts

The first step was to check if the dataset meets the assumptions. Observations were randomly and independently sampled from the population to ensure that each dependent variable has an interval measurement, and the assumption of minimum number of samples in each group in terms of the number of the dependent variables has been met. No multicollinearity was detected. Still, the assumptions related to the normal distribution and multivariate normality (checked with Box test of equality of covariance matrices) were violated to the certain point, as well as the assumption related to the homogeneity of variance (tested using Levene’s test). The authors therefore used Pillai’s trace criterion test, considered to be the most powerful and robust statistic for general use, especially given departures from standard assumptions (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2012).

## MEET "SCEPTICS", "NEUTRALS" AND "BELIEVERS": AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO ANALYSING RESIDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARDS TOURISM IN URBAN DESTINATIONS

TABLE 1. SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF SEGMENTS

| Characteristics                  |                                  | Sceptics<br>N=218 |      | Neutrals<br>N=574 |      | Believers<br>N=1159 |      |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|------|-------------------|------|---------------------|------|
|                                  |                                  | N                 | %    | N                 | %    | N                   | %    |
| Gender                           | Female                           | 105               | 48,2 | 331               | 57,7 | 638                 | 55   |
|                                  | Male                             | 113               | 51,8 | 243               | 42,3 | 519                 | 44,8 |
| Education                        | Elementary school                | 11                | 5    | 15                | 2,6  | 40                  | 3,5  |
|                                  | High school                      | 127               | 58,3 | 335               | 58,4 | 603                 | 52,0 |
|                                  | Faculty                          | 71                | 32,6 | 199               | 34,7 | 439                 | 37,9 |
|                                  | Master/PhD                       | 9                 | 4,1  | 25                | 4,4  | 77                  | 6,6  |
| Average monthly household income | Less than 675 €                  | 56                | 25,7 | 139               | 24,5 | 243                 | 20,9 |
|                                  | 676 € – 1350 €                   | 82                | 37,6 | 204               | 35,5 | 420                 | 36,2 |
|                                  | 1350 € – 2700 €                  | 63                | 28,9 | 198               | 34,5 | 415                 | 35,9 |
|                                  | 2701 € – 4000 €                  | 13                | 5,9  | 21                | 3,7  | 57                  | 4,9  |
|                                  | 4001 € and more                  | 3                 | 1,4  | 4                 | 0,6  | 13                  | 1,1  |
|                                  | Missing value                    | 1                 | 0,5  | 7                 | 1,2  | 11                  | 0,9  |
| Employment status                | Employed in tourism              | 18                | 8,3  | 33                | 5,7  | 76                  | 6,6  |
|                                  | Employed in other industries     | 106               | 48,6 | 294               | 51,2 | 588                 | 50,7 |
|                                  | unemployed                       | 7                 | 3,2  | 26                | 4,5  | 56                  | 4,8  |
|                                  | retired                          | 18                | 8,3  | 32                | 5,6  | 51                  | 4,4  |
|                                  | student                          | 53                | 24,3 | 166               | 28,9 | 322                 | 27,8 |
|                                  | other                            | 16                | 7,3  | 23                | 4,0  | 66                  | 5,7  |
| Age                              | <= 25                            | 90                | 41,3 | 239               | 41,6 | 445                 | 38,4 |
|                                  | 26 - 39                          | 58                | 26,6 | 159               | 27,7 | 367                 | 31,7 |
|                                  | 40 -55                           | 38                | 17,4 | 114               | 19,9 | 252                 | 21,7 |
|                                  | 56 -65                           | 18                | 8,3  | 41                | 7,1  | 59                  | 5,1  |
|                                  | 66 and more                      | 14                | 6,4  | 21                | 3,7  | 36                  | 3,1  |
| Length of residence              | Lived their whole life in Zagreb | 143               | 65,6 | 388               | 67,6 | 807                 | 69,6 |
|                                  | Moved to Zagreb                  | 75                | 34,4 | 184               | 32,1 | 348                 | 30,0 |

TABLE 2 - RESULTS OF MULTIVARIATE TESTS (MANOVA)

|  | Pillai's trace | F      | df     | Error df | Sig. | Partial Eta Squared $\eta^2$ |
|--|----------------|--------|--------|----------|------|------------------------------|
| Groups of residents (sceptics, neutrals and believers) →Economic impacts       | ,089           | 15,011 | 12,000 | 3886,000 | ,000 | ,044                         |
| Groups of residents (sceptics, neutrals and believers) →Socio-cultural impacts | ,078           | 13,143 | 12,000 | 3886,000 | ,000 | ,039                         |
| Groups of residents (sceptics, neutrals and believers) →Environmental impacts  | ,059           | 14,774 | 8,000  | 3890,000 | ,000 | ,029                         |

**MEET “SCEPTICS”, “NEUTRALS” AND “BELIEVERS”: AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO ANALYSING RESIDENTS’ ATTITUDES TOWARDS TOURISM IN URBAN DESTINATIONS**

TABLE 3 - MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS AND BETWEEN-SUBJECTS EFFECTS OF PERCEPTIONS OF TOURISM IMPACTS BETWEEN SCEPTICS, NEUTRALS AND BELIEVERS

|   | Sceptics<br>N=218 |          | Neutrals<br>N=574 |          | Believers<br>N=1159 |          | F      | p    |
|---|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------|---------------------|----------|--------|------|
|   | Mean              | St. Dev. | Mean              | St. Dev. | Mean                | St. Dev. |        |      |
| <b>Economic impacts-positive</b>  |                   |          |                   |          |                     |          |        |      |
| Tourism has improved employment opportunities in my community.                                    | 3,59              | 1,193    | 3,78              | ,952     | 4,16                | ,925     | 48,697 | ,000 |
| Tourism has attracted more investment to my community   | 3,65              | 1,151    | 3,79              | ,920     | 4,21                | ,866     | 59,906 | ,000 |
| Our standard of living has increased considerably because of tourism.                             | 2,48              | 1,125    | 2,93              | 1,088    | 3,20                | 1,196    | 39,476 | ,000 |
| <b>Economic impacts-negative</b>  |                   |          |                   |          |                     |          |        |      |
| The prices of goods and services in the community have increased because of tourism               | 3,44              | 1,319    | 3,58              | 1,089    | 3,82                | 1,085    | 15,723 | ,000 |
| The costs of developing public tourist facilities are too high.                                   | 3,36              | 1,152    | 3,48              | ,945     | 3,57                | 1,026    | 4,666  | ,010 |
| Majority of tourism income generated doesn't stay in the destination.                             | 3,40              | 1,204    | 3,38              | 1,028    | 3,37                | 1,160    | ,109   | ,896 |
| <b>Socio-cultural impacts-positive</b>  |                   |          |                   |          |                     |          |        |      |
| Owing to tourism development, local people now have more diverse facilities and opportunities.    | 3,50              | 1,173    | 3,77              | ,965     | 4,07                | ,911     | 41,861 | ,000 |
| Tourism is encouraging locals to various cultural activities.                                     | 3,11              | 1,131    | 3,46              | ,984     | 3,77                | 1,028    | 47,125 | ,000 |
| Tourism enhances the preservation of cultural heritage.   | 3,36              | 1,219    | 3,64              | 1,046    | 3,96                | 1,058    | 37,032 | ,000 |
| <b>Socio-cultural impacts-negative</b>  |                   |          |                   |          |                     |          |        |      |
| Local residents have suffered by living in a tourism destination area.                            | 2,83              | 1,237    | 2,99              | 1,088    | 2,89                | 1,242    | 1,802  | ,165 |
| Tourism endangers the quality of life of the local population.                                    | 2,56              | 1,305    | 2,67              | 1,147    | 2,62                | 1,260    | 0,761  | ,467 |
| Tourism has led to more vandalism in our community.   | 2,46              | 1,388    | 2,44              | 1,205    | 2,46                | 1,264    | ,029   | ,971 |
| <b>Environmental impacts-positive</b>   |                   |          |                   |          |                     |          |        |      |
| Tourism enhances environment protection and preservation  | 2,76              | 1,124    | 3,16              | 1,097    | 3,39                | 1,152    | 30,732 | ,000 |
| Due to tourism development, the destination infrastructure (traffic, communal) is being improved. | 3,47              | 1,180    | 3,65              | ,959     | 4,02                | ,940     | 45,876 | ,000 |
| <b>Environmental impacts-negative</b>   |                   |          |                   |          |                     |          |        |      |
| Tourism causes crowds and noise.  | 3,56              | 1,262    | 3,67              | 1,079    | 3,72                | 1,067    | 2,075  | ,126 |
| Tourism is the cause of environmental pollution.  | 3,53              | 1,219    | 3,52              | 1,077    | 3,58                | 1,119    | ,534   | ,586 |

**MEET “SCEPTICS”, “NEUTRALS” AND “BELIEVERS”: AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO ANALYSING RESIDENTS’ ATTITUDES TOWARDS TOURISM IN URBAN DESTINATIONS**

Results presented in Table 2 confirm the existence of statistically significant differences among segmented groups in terms of perception of economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts.

Table 3 compares mean values of the three groups of respondents (sceptics, neutrals and believers) in items in respect of perceived positive and negative economic, socio-cultural and environmental impacts of tourism, along with key results of tests of between-subjects effects.

TABLE 4 - RESULTS OF GAMES-HOWELL POST HOC TEST FOR SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES AMONG MEAN VALUES OF GROUPS

| Dependent Variable  | (I)       | (J)       | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sig. |
|---|-----------|-----------|-----------------------|------------|------|
| Tourism has improved employment opportunities in my community.                                    | Sceptics  | Neutrals  | -,190*                | ,077       | ,035 |
|   |           | Believers | -,564*                | ,071       | ,000 |
|   | Believers | Sceptics  | ,564*                 | ,071       | ,000 |
|   |           | Neutrals  | ,373*                 | ,049       | ,000 |
| Tourism has attracted more investment to my community   | Sceptics  | Neutrals  | -,134                 | ,073       | ,157 |
|   |           | Believers | -,554*                | ,068       | ,000 |
|   | Believers | Sceptics  | ,554*                 | ,068       | ,000 |
|   |           | Neutrals  | ,420*                 | ,047       | ,000 |
| Our standard of living has increased considerably because of tourism.                             | Sceptics  | Neutrals  | -,450*                | ,092       | ,000 |
|   |           | Believers | -,722*                | ,085       | ,000 |
|   | Believers | Sceptics  | ,722*                 | ,085       | ,000 |
|   |           | Neutrals  | ,272*                 | ,059       | ,000 |
| The prices of goods and services in the community have increased because of tourism               | Sceptics  | Neutrals  | -,144                 | ,089       | ,234 |
|   |           | Believers | -,380*                | ,082       | ,000 |
|   | Believers | Sceptics  | ,380*                 | ,082       | ,000 |
|   |           | Neutrals  | ,236*                 | ,057       | ,000 |
| The costs of developing public tourist facilities are too high.                                   | Sceptics  | Neutrals  | -,125                 | ,081       | ,272 |
|   |           | Believers | -,214*                | ,075       | ,012 |
|   | Believers | Sceptics  | ,214*                 | ,075       | ,012 |
|   |           | Neutrals  | ,089                  | ,052       | ,197 |
| Owing to tourism development, local people now have more diverse facilities and opportunities.    | Sceptics  | Neutrals  | -,276*                | ,076       | ,001 |
|   |           | Believers | -,572*                | ,071       | ,000 |
|   | Believers | Sceptics  | ,572*                 | ,071       | ,000 |
|   |           | Neutrals  | ,296*                 | ,049       | ,000 |
| Tourism is encouraging locals to various cultural activities.                                     | Sceptics  | Neutrals  | -,346*                | ,082       | ,000 |
|   |           | Believers | -,665*                | ,076       | ,000 |
|   | Believers | Sceptics  | ,665*                 | ,076       | ,000 |
|   |           | Neutrals  | ,318*                 | ,052       | ,000 |
| Tourism enhances the preservation of cultural heritage.   | Sceptics  | Neutrals  | -,282*                | ,085       | ,003 |
|   |           | Believers | -,598*                | ,079       | ,000 |
|   | Believers | Sceptics  | ,598*                 | ,079       | ,000 |
|   |           | Neutrals  | ,316*                 | ,055       | ,000 |
| Tourism enhances environment protection and preservation  | Sceptics  | Neutrals  | -,405*                | ,090       | ,000 |
|   |           | Believers | -,629*                | ,084       | ,000 |
|   | Believers | Sceptics  | ,629*                 | ,084       | ,000 |
|   |           | Neutrals  | ,224*                 | ,058       | ,000 |
| Due to tourism development, the destination infrastructure (traffic, communal) is being improved. | Sceptics  | Neutrals  | -,176                 | ,078       | ,061 |
|   |           | Believers | -,546*                | ,072       | ,000 |
|   | Believers | Sceptics  | ,546*                 | ,072       | ,000 |
|   |           | Neutrals  | ,370*                 | ,050       | ,000 |

**MEET “SCEPTICS”, “NEUTRALS” AND “BELIEVERS”: AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO ANALYSING RESIDENTS’ ATTITUDES TOWARDS TOURISM IN URBAN DESTINATIONS**

The results reveal statistically significant differences in most of the responses of different segments regarding positive and negative tourism impacts. It is important to note that there are no statistically significant differences in mean values between sceptics, neutrals and believers regarding economic leakage (as one of the negative economic impacts) and the same situation applies to all the listed negative socio-cultural impacts and negative environmental impacts. Table 4, presents in more detail statistically significant differences identified among created segments.

Table 4 reveals that believers exhibit a statistically significantly higher level of agreement than neutrals and sceptics, with the statements that tourism improves employment, attracts more investments, increases the standard of living, encourages locals to various cultural activities, provides more diverse facilities and opportunities, enhances the preservation of cultural heritage and environment and improves the destination infrastructure (traffic, communal). Thus, the perceived positive tourism impacts of all kinds (economic, socio-cultural, environmental) are statistically significantly more positive perceived by believers, and statistically significantly more negatively perceived by sceptics. When it comes to negative economic impacts of tourism such as increased prices of goods and services and high costs of developing public tourist facilities, believers are again statistically significantly more in agreement with those perceived impacts than sceptics, although the overall mean differences between them are quite small.

Table 5 illustrates results of ANOVA on mean differences between segments in items dealing with level of information, decision making about tourism and potential for the further increase of the number of tourists to Zagreb.

TABLE 5 ANOVA OF MEAN DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS OF TOURISM-RELATED ITEMS BETWEEN SCEPTICS, NEUTRALS AND BELIEVERS

|  | Sceptics<br>N=218 |          | Neutrals<br>N=574 |          | Believers<br>N=1159 |          | F      | p    |
|--|-------------------|----------|-------------------|----------|---------------------|----------|--------|------|
|  | Mean              | St. Dev. | Mean              | St. Dev. | Mean                | St. Dev. |        |      |
| I am informed about activities related to the tourism development in my destination. | 2.88              | 1.214    | 3.02              | 1.119    | 3.19                | 1.193    | 9,078  | ,000 |
| I'm involved in decisions related to the tourism development in my destination.      | 1.72              | 1.070    | 1.84              | 1.046    | 1.99                | 1.252    | 6,233  | ,002 |
| I think it would be good for destination if the number of tourists increased.        | 3.59              | 1.219    | 3.59              | 1.058    | 3.96                | 1.015    | 28,789 | ,000 |

As can be seen in table 5, there are statistically significant differences between segments, in all three selected items. Table 6 shows Games-Howell *post hoc* test results for resident differences in respect of selected variables.

**MEET “SCEPTICS”, “NEUTRALS” AND “BELIEVERS”: AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO ANALYSING RESIDENTS’ ATTITUDES TOWARDS TOURISM IN URBAN DESTINATIONS**

TABLE 6 - TURKEY POST HOC TEST OF DIFFERENCES BETWEEN RESIDENTS IN TERMS OF SELECTED TOURISM-RELATED ITEMS

| Dependent Variable   | (I)       | (J)       | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sig. |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------------------|------------|------|
| I am informed about activities related to the tourism development in my destination. | Sceptics  | Neutrals  | -,140                 | ,093       | ,294 |
|  |           | Believers | -,317*                | ,087       | ,001 |
|  | Believers | Sceptics  | ,317*                 | ,087       | ,001 |
| I'm involved in decisions related to the tourism development in my destination.      |           | Neutrals  | ,178*                 | ,060       | ,009 |
|  | Sceptics  | Neutrals  | -,129                 | ,093       | ,350 |
|  |           | Believers | -,270*                | ,087       | ,005 |
| I think it would be good for destination if the number of tourists increased.        | Believers | Sceptics  | ,270*                 | ,087       | ,005 |
|  |           | Neutrals  | ,140                  | ,060       | ,051 |
|  | Sceptics  | Neutrals  | ,003                  | ,084       | ,999 |
|  |           | Believers | -,366*                | ,078       | ,000 |
|  | Believers | Sceptics  | ,003                  | ,084       | ,999 |
|  |           | Neutrals  | -,366*                | ,078       | ,000 |

As shown in Table 6, the results of ANOVA imply that sceptics are statistically significantly less likely to agree with the statement regarding their level of being informed about tourism-related activities in the destination, than believers. At the same time, believers feel more informed about activities related to the tourism development in the destination, than neutrals and sceptics. When it comes to decision-making, believers again feel more involved in decisions related to the tourism development in the destination than the sceptics, but not (statistically significantly) more than neutrals. Increase in the number of tourists is statistically significantly more perceived as a good thing by the believers, than the sceptics.

## 5. DISCUSSIONS

The segmentation of residents into sceptics, neutrals and believers in this study, has generated interesting insights as to how those segments perceive tourism impacts in city area. From the relatively low mean scores on all perceived positive tourism impacts (4 out of 8 positive tourism impacts had mean value higher than 4 – and all of those values were attributed to believers), it can be seen that residents of Zagreb still do not find tourism as a key positive force for the city and its residents. It is partly consistent with the findings of studies linking community dependency on tourism/personal benefit with higher perception of positive tourism impacts and lower perceptions of negative tourism impacts (Nunkoo et al. 2017).

Believers, as a segment positively-oriented towards tourism, recorded statistically significantly higher scores on perceived positive impacts, but also perceived higher negative impacts from tourism. This suggests that their belief that tourism brings more benefits than costs for the residents is consistent with greater awareness of the negative aspects of tourism development. This overall awareness, along with the fact that believers also felt (statistically significantly) more informed about tourism and involved in

**MEET “SCEPTICS”, “NEUTRALS” AND “BELIEVERS”: AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO ANALYSING RESIDENTS’ ATTITUDES TOWARDS TOURISM IN URBAN DESTINATIONS**

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decision making about tourism activities is in line with findings of Šegota et al. (2017) and their segment of “Responsible citizens” as a group that is highly informed and involved in tourism. It is also an argument for urban decision-makers to foster residents’ participation in tourism planning and development, strengthen the information campaigns on tourism impacts, but also to regularly conduct surveys among residents, to monitor perceptions and prepare for possible contingencies (Goodwin, 2019).

Sceptics- who do not agree that tourism generates more benefits than costs- do not exhibit high mean scores on negative tourism impacts, but rather are characterised by low scores on positive ones. That is not just the case with positive economic impacts such as employment and investments, which could be explained by previously mentioned low dependency on tourism, but also with positive socio-cultural and environmental impacts. This might suggest that sceptics are actually passive/uninterested when it comes to engaging in tourism and benefiting from tourism activities, as suggested by Garrod et al. (2012), but also might imply that they perceive other type of obstacles that prevent achievement of greater benefits from tourism (e.g. local politics, distrust in authorities in charge of tourism development, etc.). This is also supported by the ANOVA results of items related to perceived information level and involvement in tourism decision-making, where sceptics’ scores are statistically significantly lower than believers’ scores (Table 5). This is not surprising, since the importance of being informed on tourism development as well as engaged in tourism decision making has already been positively linked to support for tourism development (Lankford & Howard, 1994, Lee, 2013).

It is important to note that all the segments have rather low scores on negative environmental impacts (modal value was 3), without statistically significant differences, which can be attributed to the current state of the tourism development in this city destination and (as yet) relatively low pressure on the infrastructure. Additionally, believers, being the largest segment of the research sample, and sceptics comprising (only) 11% of the total research sample, imply that tourism in Zagreb is well perceived in terms of benefits and costs it brings to the community (at this point).

While differences between sceptics and believers were expected for most of the items, neutrals represent a “silent” but large segment (almost 30% of the research sample), whose opinions might easily change, in case of transformation of local tourism situation and/or change in personal life. Their position “in the middle” between believers and sceptics makes them (from the aspect of city authorities) also potential target groups for informing on tourism benefits/costs and overall impacts and changes that exponential tourism development can produce in the urban destination like Zagreb.

**MEET “SCEPTICS”, “NEUTRALS” AND “BELIEVERS”: AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO ANALYSING RESIDENTS’ ATTITUDES TOWARDS TOURISM IN URBAN DESTINATIONS****6. CONCLUSIONS**

Rapid growth of tourism in the cities has created complex impacts for urban communities and induced various positive and negative changes, as well as conflicts and residents' protests in some over-visited destinations. Applying existing research methodologies in analysing impacts of urban tourism and the way those impacts are perceived by the residents, can be challenging, especially in terms of generalisation of research findings, due to the specific socio-cultural context and unique fabric of each urban community. Therefore, innovative methodological and theoretical advances are necessary in the interest of better understanding complex and heterogeneous nature of residents' perceptions and attitudes towards tourism in cities.

This study transforms the traditional postulate of Social exchange theory in order to gain insights as to how residents perceive tourism impacts. Moving away from examining common predictors of residents' attitudes, this study enables determination of the overall “pulse” of local residents towards benefits vs. costs of tourism and their focal points of agreement/disagreement when it comes to positive and negative tourism impacts. In the case of Zagreb, the findings imply that the city is not in danger of overtourism (at least at this time). Still, it is important for Zagreb tourism authorities and city planners to take into account the fact that many respondents (sceptics and neutrals) have rather low scores on perceived positive tourism impacts, and react accordingly in order ensure resident support for future tourism development.

Classifying resident into sceptics, neutrals and believers provides a basis for simple and understandable analysis and better understanding of residents' perceptions- providing answers to simple but important questions such as “What are the sceptics sceptical about?” (what might be potential issues and sources of discontent now or in the future) and “What do believers believe in?” (what are current perceived positive impacts of local tourism development). If conducted in other urban destinations in different stages of tourism development, this type of research could identify residents' overall attitudes towards tourism benefits and costs, and give simple and direct information about types and the nature of tourism impacts they perceive in similar manner and for which type of impacts their opinions significantly differ. This is of a great importance for practice, because it is impossible to sustainably plan tourism development without resident support, and resident perceptions of the resulting costs and benefits often differs from the perception of tourism planners, local decision-makers and private investors. A serious effort to bring about change in any destination will require the active involvement of all tourism stakeholders. The approach developed here can be employed in other destinations worldwide.

Future research will also need to identify the role of barriers such as the dominance of the 'pro growth' paradigm, lack of industry and government leadership, and the power of vested interests to maintain a

**MEET “SCEPTICS”, “NEUTRALS” AND “BELIEVERS”: AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO ANALYSING RESIDENTS’ ATTITUDES TOWARDS TOURISM IN URBAN DESTINATIONS**

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'business as usual' stance to tourism growth together with its various costs. The established paradigm on which tourism development is based comprises assumptions that are inconsistent with the best business practice and its consequences are inconsistent with the needs of people globally (Dwyer, 2018). Nevertheless, whatever direction tourism research takes and whichever solutions will be generated in the process of recovery from the COVID-19 crisis, and in implementing the “new normality” for residents and tourists, the issue of overtourism will again need to be confronted. The approach proposed here can contribute to future research in this area by enhancing knowledge of residents’ perceptions as well as helping destination planners in urban areas to better understand and manage residents’ attitudes toward tourism impacts, having in mind the important role residents play in influencing the direction of tourism development, Knowledge about different local resident groups’ attitudes concerning what is important in terms of sustainable tourism development can help manage planning processes at destinations (Lundberg, 2017). Issues that are relevant to urban destination planners and decision makers are not always perceived in the same manner by local residents and addressing potential gap in information flow that causes residents to be unaware of the precise tourism impacts is important challenge for sustainable destinations in the future.

**7. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH LINES**

Regardless of the large sample size, it has to be emphasised that almost 27% of the total number of respondents were students, only 6.5% were employed in tourism, and around 70% of the respondents were under 40 years of age. Having this in mind, it is possible that research results might be slightly different if the research sample had included older, or tourism-related respondents. Therefore, it might be useful to use a method of stratified research sample in future studies applying this methodological procedure. Also, as in most of the other studies on attitudes of local residents, one should be careful with generalisation of research results due to the focus on single destination (Zagreb) with specific contextual characteristics in terms of tourism development. Therefore, similar research, in terms of research instrument and division of respondents on sceptics, neutrals and believers, should be conducted in different cities in different stages of tourism development, in order to compare the results, but also to determine what type of tourism impacts do sceptics, neutrals and believers agree upon and differ on in those particular destinations.

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**MEET “SCEPTICS”, “NEUTRALS” AND “BELIEVERS”: AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO ANALYSING RESIDENTS’ ATTITUDES TOWARDS TOURISM IN URBAN DESTINATIONS****REFERENCES**

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**MEET “SCEPTICS”, “NEUTRALS” AND “BELIEVERS”: AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO ANALYSING RESIDENTS’ ATTITUDES TOWARDS TOURISM IN URBAN DESTINATIONS**

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**MEET “SCEPTICS”, “NEUTRALS” AND “BELIEVERS”: AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO ANALYSING RESIDENTS’ ATTITUDES TOWARDS TOURISM IN URBAN DESTINATIONS**

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MEET “SCEPTICS”, “NEUTRALS” AND “BELIEVERS”: AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO ANALYSING RESIDENTS’ ATTITUDES TOWARDS TOURISM IN URBAN DESTINATIONS

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