
Joel I. Deichmann
Bentley University

Brittani Murphy
Bentley University

A Survey Investigation of International Tourist Motivations and Impediments in the Republic of Croatia

International tourism is an essential component of Croatia's economy, representing more than one-tenth of total GDP. This survey research identifies factors that motivate and those that inhibit foreign tourists in their decision to visit Croatia, then examines traveller satisfaction in an effort to inform policy. Our findings reveal that the most important motivations for travel include Croatia's architecture, "sun & sand", food & wine, and natural landscapes. Factors that impede inbound tourists include the cost and duration of flights, as well as language barriers. With regard to satisfaction among tourists, Croatia's attractions, friendliness, tidiness, and security environment tend to score highest, with public transportation, value for money, and souvenir offerings leaving more room for improvement.

Keywords: International Tourism, Tourist Motivations, Croatia

Joel I. Deichmann (corresponding author)
Associate Professor of Geography
Global Studies Department
Bentley University
175 Forest Street
Waltham, MA 02452
USA
Phone: [001] 603 321 8700
Email: jdeichmann@bentley.edu

Brittani Murphy
Valente Research Assistant
Bentley University
175 Forest Street
Waltham, MA 02452
USA
Phone: [001] 860 845 3682
Email: brittani.murphy@gmail.com

Joel I. Deichmann is an Associate Professor of Geography in the Global Studies Department at Bentley University in Greater Boston, USA. His research focuses upon international tourism, foreign direct investment, and economic convergence, with special interest in Central and Eastern Europe. He teaches courses on World Regions, Tourism and Transportation, and Contemporary Europe, and has led more twenty university short-term programs abroad.

Brittani Murphy is a Pricing Analyst at Travelers Insurance in Hartford, Connecticut, USA. She is a 2018 graduate of Bentley University with a BS in Economics-Finance. Her work on this research was funded through the generosity of the Valente Center for Arts & Sciences.

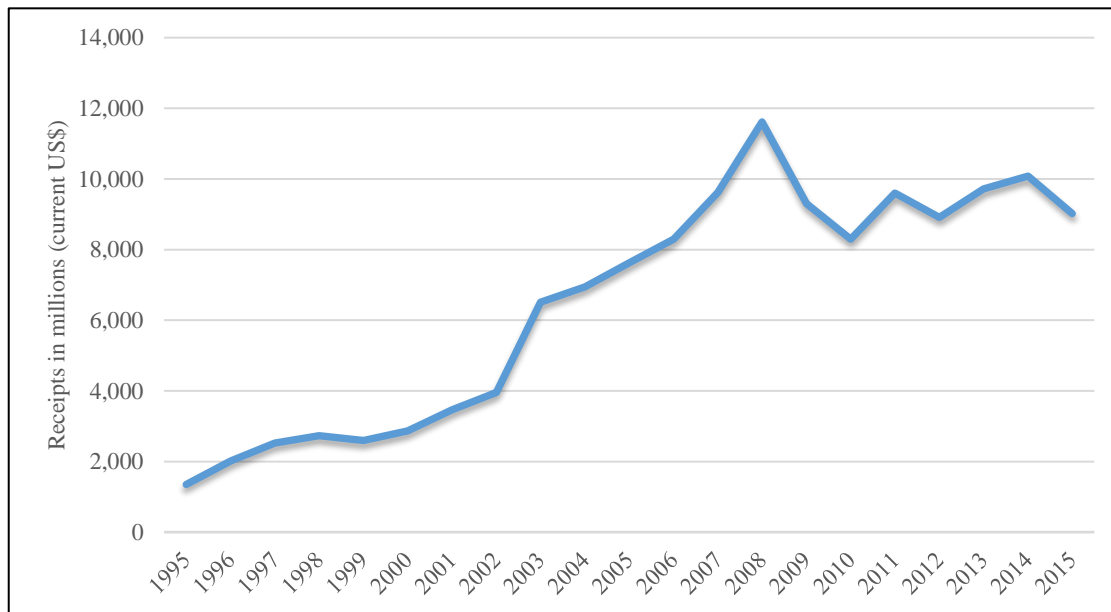
Introduction

Using primary data from travellers, this research seeks to identify aspects of Croatia's tourism industry that stand to benefit from policy attention. The objective of this pilot study is to provide a basis for more extensive research in the unique and important context of Croatia to yield specific suggestions for decision-makers, both in government and in the hospitality industry. A pillar of Croatia's economy, tourism contributes 10.1% of the country's GDP and accounts for 132,000 jobs, or 9.9% of national employment (WTTC, 2016). Tourists from abroad contribute 82.5% of total revenue, highlighting the importance of the industry for Croatia's balance of payments.

Moreover, the World Economic Forum ranks Croatia 33rd out of 141 countries in travel and tourism competitiveness (WEF, 2016; 128). Nevertheless, many improvements remain to be achieved in satisfaction-related areas that are important to tourists. We, therefore, set out to identify some of these issues in the interest of improving the competitiveness of Croatia's international tourism industry.

Croatia's steady growth in international tourism receipts is illustrated in Figure 1. Between 1995 and 2015, Croatia's international tourism receipts increased more than sixfold. Historically, as part of the country of Yugoslavia, Croatia's Adriatic coast, in particular, commanded a large portion of the total domestic and international tourism. The Republic of Croatia declared independence on 25 June 1991, and Yugoslavia's successor states remained mired in conflict and instability for several subsequent years, which had a dire effect on tourism (Radnić & Ivandić, 1999). Following the Dayton Accords of 1995 and the return of general peace to the region, tourism revenue has rebounded. The impact of the Great Recession that began in 2007 and the subsequent slow recovery of inbound tourism expenditures can also be observed in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Croatia International Tourism Receipts, 1995 - 2015.



This inquiry uses a survey questionnaire to pinpoint considerations by foreign visitors in Croatia, then offers suggestions to address them. The research design and survey instrument are grounded in the scholarly literature on tourist motivations (Lew, 1987; Marris, 1986) and inhibitors (Alejziak, 2013). Following Sayer (2010), the questionnaire's format represents a combination of quantitative (Likert scale) and qualitative (open-ended) questions to "triangulate" insights from respondents. The three broad categories of questions include motivations underlying foreign visits (Goeldner & Ritchie, 2011), impediments complicating or inhibiting international tourism (Alejziak, 2013), and satisfaction levels relative to broad categories of respondent demographics. Specifically, the analysis is conducted concerning national origin and age categories. Findings lead to suggestions for government policy, including marketing and the provision of tourist services. Other stakeholders that stand to benefit from the results include hospitality service providers who interact with and depend upon international visitors for their livelihoods. In addition to contributing to the scholarly literature, insights from this study can help improve tourism in Croatia, the single industry that is most crucial for the country's economic competitiveness.

Literature

The starting point for this research is the existing literature on motivations for and inhibitors to travel. A large body of research examines traveller motivations (Plog, 1973; Lew, 1987; Papatheodorou, 2000; Goeldner & Ritchie, 2011; Bernini & Cracolici, 2015), with considerably less work having been published on barriers to travel (Dolnicar, 2005; Alejziak, 2013; Obaid, 2015). According to Goeldner & Ritchie (2011), motivations typically vary for business travellers, eco-tourists, and recreational travellers, as well as according to life cycle stage, age, gender, occupational categories, and national origin (Kozak, 2002; Pearce & Lee, 2005; Bernini & Cracolici, 2015). Primary research tends to be the preferred approach for addressing the mainly-qualitative issues of tourist motivators and inhibitors. To establish a conceptual framework to use in the context of Croatia, empirical findings from other countries are instructive (Pizam, Neumann, & Reichel, 1973; Deichmann & Frempong, 2016).

Gray (1971) is among the first scholars to examine international travel as a form of trade between countries, making the most basic distinction between motivations: business versus pleasure. Focusing upon corporate executives and business travel, he recognizes a dramatic increase in mobility over time. Concerning pleasure tourists, he distinguishes between those motivated by "wanderlust" and others driven by "sunlust." The former prioritize interaction with different cultures (usually in foreign lands), while the latter tend to pursue rest and relaxation domestically or abroad. This typology of pleasure tourists is roughly echoed in Plog's (1973) continuum of "allocentric" (risk takers), who might be attracted to adventurous activities such as shark diving. At the opposite side of the continuum are "psychocentric" or "dependables" who typically prefer to spend their vacation relaxing, perhaps while birdwatching or at a beach. Plog presents an illustrative bell curve featuring examples of vacations ranging from one extreme to the other. Most travellers are concentrated in the middle

or “bell” of the curve, as people tend to seek a moderate combination of adventure and relaxation.

What explains the differences in motivations? Kozak (2002) attributes them to socio-psychological characteristics specific to origin countries, using the examples of British and German travellers in Turkey and Mallorca. The author examines origin-specific variations in attention to flight duration, coastal access, scenery, weather, family friendliness, and quality of accommodations and facilities. Based upon his empirical observations, he concludes that “pull factors” for tourists vary systematically by national origin.

Pearce & Lee (2005) extend the explanation of contrasting motivations to what they designate as a travel career ladder (“TCL”), or a traveller’s life cycle stage. Their research is based upon a two-step methodology of interviews and surveys. The authors argue that a traveller’s extent of experience can determine what motivates them. Specifically, less experienced travellers seek stimulation, personal development, and self-actualization, while more experienced travellers look for host-site-involvement such as exposure to different cultures and proximity to nature. The authors contend that one set of motivations is shared across all life cycle stages, and it includes escapism, relaxation, relationship enhancement, and self-development.

An excellent recent example corroborating Pearce & Lee’s (2005) work is by Hermann, Van der Merwe, Coetzee, & Saayman (2016). These researchers create a visitor typology to examine motivations for visiting Mapungubwe National Park in South Africa. They find that visitors to this attraction tend to be older and more highly educated and that they are motivated by nature experiences, heritage, and education. The authors use this information to emphasize the importance of a destination-specific tourism management strategy, then conclude with marketing suggestions for park management.

Similarly, Fayed, Wafik, & Gerges (2016) set forth recommendations to Egypt's Tourism Authority. The authors survey tourists in Egypt to gain insights into the relationships between tourism motivations, perceptions, satisfaction, and loyalty. They conclude that motivations and perceptions affect satisfaction, and that all three impact destination loyalty. Using this information, the researchers offer several suggestions, including informing tourists of the different kinds of tourism in Egypt and continuously monitoring tourist satisfaction.

Deichmann & Frempong (2016) develop a conceptual framework for research on motivations for travellers to Ghana concerning age, national origin, and other tourist characteristics. This framework is used in their empirical survey investigation and forms the basis for the survey instrument employed in the present study. Although feedback from tourists in Ghana is overwhelmingly positive, the authors find that younger and less experienced travellers have a more difficult time enduring the rigors of travel in this Sub-Saharan African country. Other findings include the suggestion that marketing efforts should do a better job of instilling tourists with realistic expectations prior to travelling, and that planners and policymakers should address substandard conditions of infrastructure and accommodation facilities to improve word-of-mouth by tourists and increase return visits to Ghana.

Inhibitors to travel have received less scholarly attention thus far. One example is by Dolnicar (2005), who researches tourist fears as a travel barrier concerning specific segments of tourists in domestic and international contexts. With the help of Australian tour operators, the author collects survey and interview data regarding perceived risks. Open-ended responses yield five categories of risk: political risk (terrorism or war), environmental risk (natural disasters), health risk (diseases or injuries), planning risk (unreliable airlines), and property risk (loss or theft of baggage). Comparing these perceived risks across contexts, each becomes greater at the international scale, and they vary depending upon the main purpose of travel, which Dolnicar categorizes as adventure or culture. For example, the perceived risk of

contagious disease is greatest for international travel and higher for travellers engaged in cultural programs vis-à-vis adventure programs. Similarly, the perceived risk of personal injury is much greater for adventure programs than for cultural programs. The author concludes by highlighting the value of her research for tourism marketing efforts.

Alejziak (2013) conducts a cluster analysis of causes for non-participation in tourism based upon a sample of 1026 Polish respondents. He finds that lack of money represents the single greatest inhibitor to travelling for more than one week, and this constraint alone captures 60 percent of non-participation. The second most important explanation is a combination of several inhibitors, including lack of time, household obligations, and preference to spend holidays at home. The author acknowledges that his sample is comprised only of Poles on leisure trips, and points to an enduring absence of consensus about inhibitors in the literature.

Obaid (2015) looks at motivations and constraints for travel behavior in Oman. His results suggest that although both sets of considerations affect tourist satisfaction, neither casts a significant impact on behavioral intentions. This study also reveals that tourist satisfaction significantly impacts both tourists' purchase intentions and word-of-mouth intentions. Given that the expected impact of motivations and constraints on travel behavior does not appear to be conclusive, the author calls for the examination of additional variables through more extensive research.

Croatia's Ministry of Tourism (2016) maintains up-to-date and highly-detailed statistics. However, such quantitative data do not address psychological dimensions such as motivations and inhibitors, which are exactly the sort of answers sought in the present research (Cho, 2008). To build upon such secondary data, Chen and Petrick (2016) examine ways in which travel behavior can be predicted by travellers' perceived travel benefits, importance, and constraints. The authors find that three types of travel benefits - experiential, health, and relaxation - influence the frequency of travel positively. However, constraints such as an

inability to relax on vacation and the financial cost of travelling can limit the frequency of travel. The authors' approach is commendable because such psychological considerations are impossible to capture using quantitative data.

It is also instructive to briefly overview the literature on the related topic of traveller intention to return to a destination. Marin & Taberner (2008) argue that destination satisfaction and dissatisfaction are not exactly opposite notions. For example, some negative perceptions do not have positive equivalents. These might include over-commercialization, over-crowding, and environmental stress, all of which lower travellers' likelihood of returning. The authors base their findings on 2434 "sun & sand" tourists in the Balearic Islands, visiting from Germany, Britain, and Spain. Their findings underscore the importance of carefully constructed survey instruments. Specifically, they argue that surveys tend to favour positive characteristics, leaving researchers insufficiently aware of the negative.

Moreover, they rightly observe that measuring negative and positive attributes on ordinal scales can be problematic because they usually do not reflect parallel dimensions. For example, is *expensive* the opposite of *inexpensive*, and is either necessarily positive or negative? The authors conclude by reiterating the value of both types of scales (satisfaction and dissatisfaction) for understanding tourists' intention to return.

Other studies attempt to explain drivers of tourism flows at the national scale using secondary quantitative data. Deichmann & Liu (2017) measure tourist flows to Croatia from abroad during the time period 1993-2015, employing an array of gravity variables. They employ a seemingly-unrelated regression (SUR) approach to generate models using World Development Indicators and other archival data. Their empirical models indicate that national tourist flows are governed by the population of the origin country (positive) and distance from Croatia (negative), as well as Croatia's generally liberal visa regime toward most countries and origin-country income (both positive). The authors find the role of exchange rate fluctuations

to be inconclusive, as this variable's validity and significance vary with each model specification.

Finally, other research focuses on categories within the tourism industry that have special relevance to Croatia. Marris (1986) examines culinary tourism, a segment of the industry that is particularly crucial to Croatia (Dwyer, Čorak, & Tomljenović, 2017). Kivela (2017) suggests that gastronomy, the art of eating good food, is one of the main reasons tourists choose to visit Croatia and return in the future. Radnić & Ivandić (1999) assess war tourism in Croatia, highlighting the slow process of recovery in the midst of continuing tourist concerns for safety. To a small degree, such concerns have given way to the rise of “dark tourism” through curiosity about tragic events (Šuligoj, 2017). Mandić, Petrić, & Smiljana (2017) examine the increasingly symbiotic relationship between tourism and Croatia's entertainment industry, sometimes called film tourism. The authors study the role of locally-produced films and television shows such as *Game of Thrones* in attracting tourists to the country, then discuss their potential economic impact.

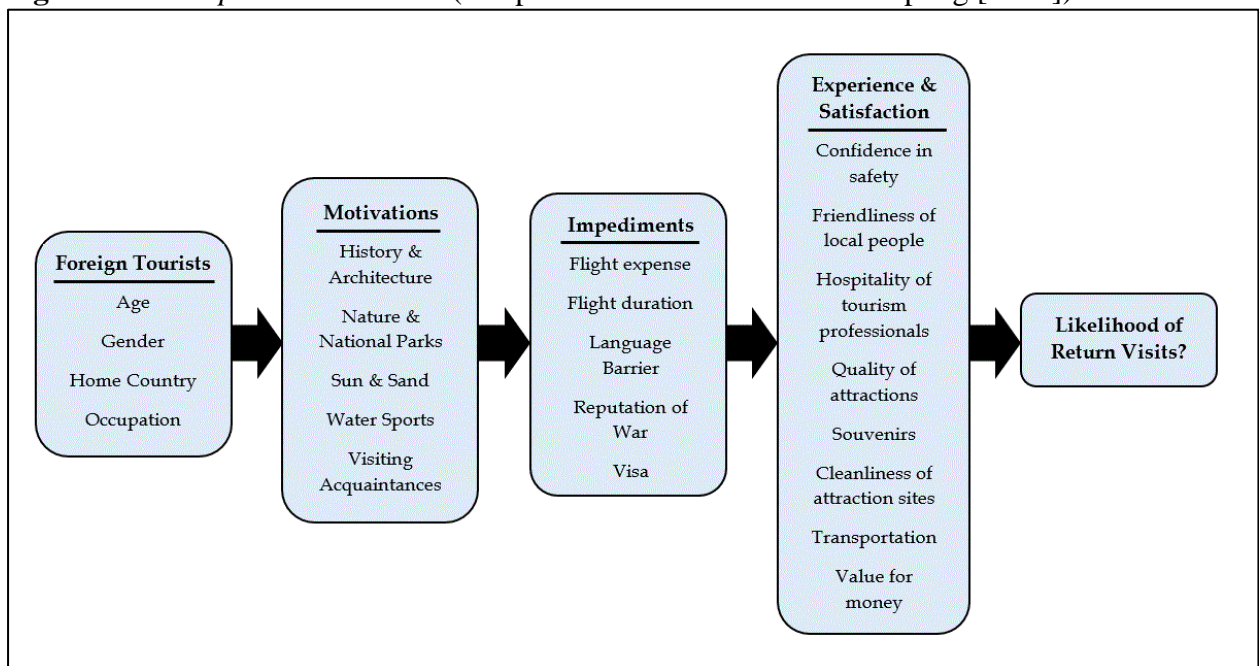
Methodology

The survey instrument used in this research is deliberately brief and simple to increase the willingness of tourists to complete it. All survey responses were collected over four weekdays in May 2017 during a university class trip on the topic of “global tourism and transportation”. Survey teams, local students, and hospitality professionals used the convenience sampling technique to approach respondents at tourist attractions in and near the cities of Zagreb and Dubrovnik. These locations are selected because of their population size (Zagreb), role as gateways/transportation hubs (Zagreb), and/or abundance of tourism offerings (Dubrovnik). The attractions include Plitvice Lakes National Park, Dubrovnik's Old Town, and the Elaphite Islands. The survey's physical copies were distributed in English. When necessary,

survey teams were prepared to verbally translate the questions into German, Spanish, Portuguese, or Chinese. The teams returned with 168 completed surveys, which provide the basis for this analysis.

The conceptual framework used in this study is adapted from Deichmann & Frempong (2016), who derive their expectations from the literature on traveller motivations and impediments. Adaptations to the framework relate to contextual relevance when applying it to Croatia rather than Ghana. As one example, the impediment of “fear of tropical diseases” is removed from the framework, and “reputation of war” is added in its place, as some tourists continue to associate this region of former Yugoslavia with the war of dissolution that took place from 1992-95 (Šuligoj, 2017).

Figure 2: *Conceptual Framework* (Adapted from Deichmann & Frempong [2016])



The survey instrument is based upon Alejziak’s (2013) “tourism motivations and inhibitors” framework from the context of Poland. The questionnaire is constructed as follows: it begins by focusing upon trip purpose and motivations for selecting Croatia over other destinations. It then goes on to examine inhibiting and satisfaction levels. It concludes with simple questions

about the respondent, including age, gender, occupation, and origin, all characteristics that have been shown to help guide tourist behavior (Kozak, 2002; Bernini & Cracolici, 2015). Responses are then evaluated in the context of these categories as self-reported by respondents.

The survey questions are mixed-format. Following Sayer's (2010) appeal to researchers to "triangulate" their methods, the questionnaire includes both qualitative and quantitative questions. Most of these are generated from the literature above, and the answers are measured on a Likert scale, followed by additional open-ended questions that invite respondents to add responses that fall outside our a priori expectations. The 168 collected surveys were then coded and entered into IBM-SPSS 21.0 by the authors, and finally analysed using cross-tabulations and a close examination of open-ended answers.

Analysis

This analysis section generally follows the format of the surveys, except it first provides the reader with an overview of the respondents. This discussion sheds light on national origin, as well as demographic and life cycle characteristics that have been shown elsewhere to impact responses (Kozak, 2002; Bernini & Cracolici, 2015). After that, we analyse the motivations and inhibitors that impact the decision to travel to Croatia. Finally, we probe into visitor satisfaction with various aspects of the industry and examine intention to return.

About the Sample

As shown in Table 1, the vast majority of participants in our survey are from European origins, followed by North America and Asia. North Americans and Latin Americans tend to spend more time in Croatia than Europeans, most likely due to the considerable time investment required to travel across the Atlantic Ocean to Europe, and scarcity of direct long-distance flights to Croatia. Asians spend the second-shortest amount of time, plausibly due to

considerably less vacation time across most of Asian origin countries, as reported by the International Labour Organization (2013).

Table 1: World Regional Origins of Respondents

World Region	n	Percent of total n	Number of Nights
Europe	105	62.5	8.24
North America	29	17.3	11.00
Asia	17	10.1	8.71
Latin America	9	5.4	10.78
Oceania (A/NZ)	8	4.8	9.63
Total/Overall	168	100.0	8.98

Note: the number of respondents by specific country can be found in the Appendix. In this and subsequent tables, North America includes only Canada and the USA, as Mexico is culturally more accurately associated with the rest of Latin America.

With regard to gender, more than half (92) of the respondents to our questionnaire are female, with an average age of 39 years, followed by 69 men, with an average age of 42 years. Also, six respondents did not answer this question, and one made a note that they are “gender non-conforming.” The regions in the sample are quite balanced by gender, except for North America, with 21 female and only six male respondents. North America stands out also with regard to average age (29.82); the average age of all other world regions is over 40 years. Three-quarters (75%) of respondents report that they are employed, with the rest being students (13.1%) or retirees (11.9%).

Motivations for Visiting Croatia

The first section of the survey instrument examines motivations for visiting Croatia. When asked to identify the main purpose of their trip to Croatia, 151 of 168 (or 89.9%) listed “vacation/holiday.” The next most common purpose was heritage or historical travel, for only 11 respondents, followed by eight tourists visiting friends or relatives (“VFRs”), seven travelling for education, and six on business assignments. Therefore, following Gray’s (1971)

framework, the vast majority of respondents in this sample can be considered “pleasure” tourists.

To unveil more specifics about Croatia's attractiveness, respondents were then asked: "when deciding to visit Croatia, how important were the following considerations?" On a Likert scale, answer choices range from unimportant (0) to important (5), with the means for each category reported in Table 2.

Table 2: Motivations for Travelling to Croatia

Motivation	n	Mean
Other (specify)	25	4.68
History or Architecture	166	3.94
Sun & Sand	166	3.66
Nature	165	3.63
Water Sports	160	1.75
VFRs	159	1.35

According to our survey, the most important motivations from the pre-identified categories include history/architecture (3.94), “sun & sand” (3.66), and nature (3.63), with water sports and VFRs reported as being only slightly important. The category “other” invites respondents to write in their motivations, which include food (eight), “price/value” (four), and drink/wine (three). These responses validate Kivela’s (2017) focus on gastronomy as an increasingly important characteristic of the Croatian tourism landscape. Other responses mentioned multiple times include clean beaches, relaxed way of life, the ease of travelling within Schengen (*sic*; as of 2018 Croatia is not part of Schengen), and or visiting a “new” place (*terra incognita*) they have not yet seen.

We also observe evidence of landscape complementarity with Croatia across world regions. In other words, tourists from regions that have relatively brief recorded histories (Latin and North America) or possess dramatically built environments and physical landscapes (Asia and North America) show a tendency to be motivated by these complementary attributes of Croatia. Water sports and VFRs do not appear to have a major impact on any group, and the

category of “sun & sand” appears to mainly motivate North Americans, Europeans, and travellers from Oceania, which in our sample includes only respondents from Australia and New Zealand.

Table 3: Motivations by World Region (note numbers in *bold italics*)

World Region		Sun & Sand	Water Sports	VFRs	Nature	History	Other
Oceania	Mean	3.75	2.00	1.88	3.63	3.75	5.00
	n	8	8	8	8	8	1
Asia	Mean	3.06	1.94	1.31	4.00	4.18	-
	n	17	17	16	17	17	0
Europe	Mean	3.75	1.60	1.38	3.39	3.81	4.60
	n	104	98	98	103	103	15
Latin America	Mean	2.38	.88	1.50	4.38	4.56	5.00
	n	8	8	8	8	9	3
North America	Mean	4.00	2.31	1.10	4.07	4.14	4.67
	n	29	29	29	29	29	6
Overall	Mean	3.66	1.75	1.35	3.63	3.94	4.68
	n	166	160	159	165	166	25

Life cycle stage has been shown to impact tourism behavior (Pearce & Lee, 2005; Bernini & Cracolici, 2015) including motivation, and therefore it makes sense to glance at differences in motivations across our three broad categories. One notable observation from Table 4 is that older travellers who are retired have the least interest in “sun & sand” (2.60) and water sports (.65). It appears that all life cycle stages are strongly attracted to Croatia’s rich history and natural landscapes. Notably, only a few respondents report any passing familiarity with the tourism heritage site listing system of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization). Even fewer can list any of the ten UNESCO-listed sites located in Croatia, noted by the United Nations as cultural masterpieces or natural superlatives (UNESCO, 2017).

Table 4: *Motivations by Life Cycle* (note numbers in **bold italics**)

Life Cycle "Stage"		Sun & Sand	Water Sports	VFRs	Nature	History
Employed	Mean	3.90	1.89	1.39	3.64	3.96
	n	124	118	117	123	124
Retired	Mean	2.60	.65	1.15	3.35	3.80
	n	20	20	20	20	20
Student	Mean	3.27	2.00	1.32	3.82	3.95
	n	22	22	22	22	22

Inhibitors of Travel to Croatia

This portion of the paper looks at inhibitors of travelling to Croatia as a destination, albeit according to respondents who have already decided to travel there. The first question asked of respondents is “when planning your trip to Croatia, how would you rate the following considerations?” with answer choices ranging from unimportant (0) to important (5). Table 5 lists these barriers to travel in order of mean response on this Likert scale.

Table 5: *Factors Inhibiting Travel to Croatia*

	n	Mean
Expense of Flight	163	2.04
Duration of Flight	163	2.03
Other, Specified by Respondent	8	1.75
Language Barrier	162	1.48
Reputation of War	160	.81
Difficulty of Obtaining a Visa	164	.24

The two main obstacles for travelling to Croatia are flight-related: expense of the flight (2.04) and duration of the flight (2.03). This corroborates findings by Alejziak (2013), whose work in Poland reveals that lack of money is the main inhibitor for travel lasting more than one week. However, it is important to note that with mean scores of 2.03 and 2.04 out of 5.0 respectively, these aspects of flying do not represent insurmountable barriers for travellers to overcome.

Table 6 indicates that barriers to travel tend to vary by tourists' region of origin. Travellers from Oceania (Australia and New Zealand) do not seem to be phased by many of the obstacles listed in the literature (Alejziak, 2013), although admittedly their sample size is diminutive. An expense of flights is the most important impediment for North Americans (2.86), while Latin Americans and Asians are more put off by the amount of time it takes to travel to Croatia (3.43 and 2.88, respectively).

Table 6: Impediments by World Region (note numbers in *bold italics*)

Region		Visa	Expense of Flight	Duration of Flight	Language Barrier	Reputation of War
Oceania	Mean	.00	1.00	1.50	.50	.00
	n	8	8	8	8	8
Asia	Mean	.76	2.06	2.88	2.82	.88
	n	17	17	16	17	16
Europe	Mean	.21	1.88	1.91	1.30	.77
	n	105	104	104	104	102
Latin America	Mean	.17	2.33	3.43	3.33	.83
	n	6	6	7	6	6
North America	Mean	.11	2.86	1.80	1.19	1.14
	n	28	28	28	27	28
Overall	Mean	.24	2.04	2.03	1.48	.81
	n	164	163	163	162	160

Also, as a Slavic culture, Croatia poses a language barrier that appears to represent the greatest challenge for Latin Americans (3.33) and Asians (2.82). Europeans, North Americans, and travellers from Oceania enjoy the advantage that English and German are both widely spoken as second languages by Croatians. Moreover, Europeans seem to be comfortable getting around in Croatia. Probably because Croatia is located in relatively familiar south-eastern Europe, none of the listed inhibitors appear to be detrimental for tourists from other countries on the continent.

Satisfaction with Travel in Croatia

This section addresses levels of satisfaction, beginning with the question “based upon your time in Croatia, how would you evaluate the following?” with answers ranging from poor (0) to excellent (5). According to our results, visitors are most satisfied with Croatia’s unique attractions and sights, followed by tidiness at the attractions (absence of litter, graffiti), friendliness of the local population, and perceived level of safety.

Table 7: Satisfaction with Aspects of the Croatian Travel Industry

Category	n	Mean	Std. Dev
Attractions and Sights	160	4.43	.781
Tidiness/Cleanliness at Attractions	160	4.24	.822
Friendliness of Locals	157	4.22	.894
Safety	162	4.19	.900
Hospitality of Tourism Professionals	160	3.90	1.035
Public Transportation	125	3.81	1.014
Value for the money	152	3.53	1.100
Souvenirs	142	2.67	1.423

It is worthwhile to note that many respondents offer no opinion about certain aspects of satisfaction, which means that they most likely did not encounter them. More than one-quarter of our respondents did not rate public transportation, as indicated by marking “no opinion” or by leaving this answer blank, which presumably means they travelled in private cars, rental cars, or with a tour group. Similarly, 26 people shared no opinion about souvenirs, and 16 offered no comment about Croatia’s overall value for the money. One respondent comments that the souvenirs they encountered are “tacky,” referring to the brightly coloured red, white, and blue magnets, hearts, and nesting Russian *matryoshka* dolls painted with Croatian themes. The two categories of public transportation and souvenirs are also associated with high standard deviations. Given their direct relation to revenue, follow-up research should address them through further probing.

Table 8 shows categories of satisfaction by tourist origin, with some noteworthy differences across world regions. Overall, the group of respondents from Oceania (Australia

and New Zealand) give the highest scores in almost every category, especially with regard to attractions (4.63), perceived safety (4.63), and friendliness of locals (4.50) and professionals (4.25). North Americans reported comparable levels of satisfaction. Perhaps this reflects their demographics (younger and primarily female) or cultural affinities with Croatia. The quality of attractions also exhibits high levels of satisfaction from North Americans (4.58) and Asians (4.47), travellers from world regions where the tourism industry is often less developed than in Europe.

Table 8: *Satisfaction by World Region* (note numbers in **bold italics**)

Region	Value	Attractions	Souvenirs	Hospitality	Friendly Locals	Tidiness	Safety	Public Transport	
Oceania	Mean	4.00	4.63	2.75	4.25	4.50	4.38	4.63	4.00
	n	7	8	8	8	8	8	8	
Asia	Mean	3.47	4.47	3.53	3.18	3.94	4.12	4.06	3.57
	n	15	17	17	17	17	17	17	14
Europe	Mean	3.43	4.37	2.32	3.94	4.20	4.23	4.09	3.80
	n	99	102	87	101	100	102	103	81
Latin America	Mean	2.20	4.29	4.00	3.57	4.33	4.17	4.33	3.67
	n	5	7	7	7	6	6	6	3
North America	Mean	4.06	4.58	2.91	4.19	4.35	4.37	4.46	3.95
	n	26	26	23	27	26	27	28	19
Overall	Mean	3.53	4.43	2.67	3.90	4.22	4.24	4.19	3.81
	n	152	160	142	160	157	160	162	125

Our findings reveal that public transportation draws the highest scores from Oceanians (4.00) and the lowest from Asians (3.57), although this difference is minor. Latin American respondents give the highest scores to souvenirs (4.00), which are substantially higher than those by Europeans (2.32) and most other groups.

As noted by Pearce & Lee (2005) and Bernini & Cracolici (2015), life cycle stage impacts many aspects of tourist perceptions. Table 9 summarizes the satisfaction levels according to broad life cycle stages. Of note is the observation that satisfaction with public

transportation is highest for student respondents and satisfaction with souvenirs is lowest for working-age travellers. We observed wide variations in satisfaction between employed and retired respondents about souvenirs, and student satisfaction with hospitality professionals, indicating that a variety of opinions exists about those industry characteristics.

Table 9: *Satisfaction by Life Cycle Stage* (note numbers in **bold italics**)

		Attractions	Souvenirs	Hosp itality	Friendly Locals	Tidiness	Safety	Public Transport
Employed	Mean	4.43	2.56	3.99	4.27	4.30	4.17	3.83
	n	120	107	120	116	119	121	94
	Std. Dev	.764	1.422	.948	.858	.787	.888	1.064
Retired	Mean	4.40	2.88	3.60	4.15	3.80	4.15	3.65
	n	20	16	20	20	20	20	17
	Std. Dev	.995	1.857	1.188	.875	.951	.988	.862
Student	Mean	4.40	3.11	3.65	4.00	4.33	4.33	3.86
	n	20	19	20	21	21	21	14
	Std. Dev	.681	.875	1.309	1.095	.796	.913	.864

To identify areas for improvement in the industry, we probe further using open-ended questions about frustrations while in Croatia. Out of 168 respondents, 27 (16%) mentioned at least one frustration, while 28 (17%) specifically mentioned “none” when asked what “frustrations or problems [they] experienced when trying to reach their travel goals?” The main categories of problems listed include transportation (14), language issues (5), frustration or confusion with Croatia’s *kuna* currency (5), expense of travel (4), hotel-related issues (3), and disappointment with the weather (3). None of these frustrations appears to have been overwhelming to the respondent that raised them.

The role of culture is evident when examining the challenges faced by foreign guests. Language is mentioned as an issue by Asian tourists, including two specific complaints that Croatian locals speak little or no English. Europeans comprise 17 of the 28 respondents who specifically mention “no frustrations” travelling in Croatia, followed by nine North Americans. Both of these observations highlight distance as a barrier to satisfaction (or, conversely, the

advantages of cultural proximity), which echoes Deichmann & Liu's (2017) finding that national tourist flows are negatively correlated with distance from Croatia. Europeans complained about transportation frustrations more than the other groups, suggesting Croatian infrastructure may lag behind European norms. However, the highest percentage of respondents displeased with infrastructure (25 percent) came from Oceania. Transportation complaints include too few ferries, an outdated (Zagreb) airport, and difficult-to-understand bus schedules.

Intention to Return

This final section addresses several important aspects of tourists' intention to return to Croatia. To begin with, 122 of 168 tourists responded to this question. We can assume that the remainder is either undecided or possibly they did not understand the question. In total, 105 respondents (62.5%) expressed their intention to return to Croatia, with only 14 (8.3%) indicating that they would not. Among these, open-ended responses include "I've already seen it", "there are too many other places to see," and "I am becoming too old to travel." Those who intend to return cited reasons such as "so much more to see here" or "enjoyed myself so much, I want to do it again."

What determines the intention to return? We find no correlation to the reports of frustrations discussed above, as "frustrated" respondents represent approximately the same proportion as those who are "content". However, it is evident that retirees are less likely to return, probably because they recognize they have limited time to do so. Concerning world regions, we note that every respondent from Oceania and Latin America intends to return to Croatia, with 26 of 29 North Americans (89.7%) indicating the same. Five of 17 Asians (29%) do not intend to return, plausibly due to a "been there, done that" mentality combined with the expense and duration of the trip highlighted in Table 6.

Limitations and Suggestions

While the present study represents a valuable starting point for a better understanding of travel motivations and impediments in the context of Croatia, it is also subject to some limitations that should be acknowledged. Beyond the small sample size, it is constrained by a sampling bias; the act of collecting data from respondents who have already travelled to Croatia arguably limits the rigor of their responses to questions addressing deterrents to travel. For example, if the issue of flight cost or duration were viewed to be insurmountable, the respondent would not have made it to Croatia, where they were asked to complete the survey. This concern notwithstanding, the most credible subjects for this type of research are those who encountered challenges first-hand and can report based upon their fresh experiences. Marin & Taberner (2008) highlight the value of gleaning insights on travel satisfaction through surveys, as well as the necessity to reflect upon the questions asked.

Other challenges during the administration of questionnaires include language constraints. In some cases, respondents did not speak English. The data collection team offered to translate by speaking German, Spanish, Portuguese, or Chinese. When translation was not possible, the would-be respondents were unable to complete the survey. Finally, in some cases, two or more respondents in a given travel group completed questionnaires yielding multiple responses that were strikingly similar, which became evident only during the data entry process.

Suggestions for future study include a dramatic expansion of this pilot project. The two-page length of the survey seems to be ideal because most people were willing to complete it. However, several of the questions should be re-written or simplified to make them more easily understandable. Also, it would be worthwhile to prepare translations of the surveys. According to the Ministry of Tourism (2016), the leading origins of tourists in Croatia in 2015 are Germany, Italy, Slovenia, Austria, Czechia, Hungary, Poland, France, and Slovakia. The top

ranking English-speaking origin of tourists in Croatia is the UK at #10. Although most Europeans are competent with English as a second language, it would make sense to at least offer translations in German and Italian to accommodate people from most of the other leading origins.

Specific topical areas that warrant closer attention in future studies of tourism in Croatia include, but are not limited to, culinary tourism (following Dwyer et al., 2017), dark tourism (Šuligoj, 2017), and film tourism (Mandic et al., 2017). Although Croatia's food, wine, history, and international productions such as *Game of Thrones* may each represent powerful travel motivations for some individual tourists, understanding their nuances will require a more qualitative approach. These probably will not rate as highly with large numbers of respondents as Croatia's established and well-known "sun & sand" and heritage travel attractions.

Conclusions

This paper reports on survey responses solicited from international visitors to Croatia during May 2017. We find that the strongest overall motivator categories include history/architecture, "sun & sand", and nature, with food, wine, and affordability also pulling tourists toward Croatia. Factors that impede tourists are mainly flight-related (expense and duration), as well as language barriers, the latter being the greatest challenge for Asian and Latin American visitors. Generally, international tourists are extremely pleased with Croatia's attractions, tidiness, friendliness, and security conditions, with public transportation, value for the money, and souvenir offerings leaving more to be desired.

With regard to policy recommendations, as the composition of international tourists in Croatia continues to expand and diversify, industry leaders should consider ways of making travel less challenging for non-Europeans. Specifically, deliberate efforts should be made by officials and hospitality service providers to provide information in other languages. Moreover,

as tourism flows increase and traffic congestion, pollution, and other negative environmental impacts of the industry become more burdensome, public transportation should be actively promoted to foreigners as a user-friendly means of getting around, especially for tourists from non-European origins, who may be less accustomed to relying upon it.

These findings support and broaden the literature on motivations and impediments to travel while demonstrating the value of using primary data as implored by Fayed et al. (2016). However, it would be problematic to put forth sweeping suggestions on how to improve Croatia's tourism industry based solely upon this rather small sample size. This exercise has shed light on some important methodological considerations that will assist in the research design of a more expansive project. Thanks to the insights gleaned through this pilot study; the survey instrument can be edited and re-calibrated for wider distribution across Croatia, leading to more specific recommendations for improving aspects of the country's tourism industry.

A copy of the survey instrument is available from the corresponding author upon request.

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Appendix: Respondent Information (number of respondents by country)

ORIGIN	Tourists	Percentage
Argentina	4	2.4
Austria	4	2.4
Australia	6	3.6
Bosnia-Herzegovina	1	.6
Belgium	1	.6
Brazil	3	1.8
Canada	9	5.4
Switzerland	1	.6
Channel Islands	1	.6
Germany	5	3.0
Estonia	1	.6
Spain	5	3.0
Finland	5	3.0
France	5	3.0
Ireland	3	1.8
India	4	2.4
Italy	2	1.2
South Korea	2	1.2
Latvia	1	.6
Mexico	1	.6
Netherlands	1	.6
New Zealand	2	1.2
Philippines	2	1.2
China	3	1.8
Romania	3	1.8
Taiwan	5	3.0
Sweden	9	5.4
Slovenia	1	.6
Turkey	1	.6
UK	55	32.7
USA	21	12.5
Vietnam	1	.6
Total	168	100.0