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(COASTAL) URBAN TOURISM AND QUALITY OF LIFE: RESIDENT'S PERCEPTION

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Abstract

Purpose – Urban tourism has not been adequately studied and many destinations that have conditions to develop urban tourism are still focused on other, more “traditional” types of attractions, especially coastal destinations with predominately sea and sun tourism. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine the perceptions of local residents in terms of their quality of life and their opinions on the potential shift from predominately coastal tourism to an urban tourism offering.

Methodology – The research was conducted within the territory of the city of Opatija using a structured survey questionnaire. Univariate and bivariate statistical methods were used for statistical analysis. Research questions were tested using SPSS.

Findings – Findings indicate that the residents of Opatija are not particularly satisfied with elements related to city quality of life. They are the most satisfied with air quality and green spaces, and the least, with public transport and health care. Those residents who are rather dissatisfied with the tourism development of Opatija have a significantly lower level of satisfaction with certain elements of quality of life. Further, residents show interest and support for the development of urban tourism and strongly support the shift from a seasonal distribution towards a more balanced year-round distribution of tourist flows.

Contribution – This paper contributes to the body of knowledge on urban tourism and residents' support for urban tourism development. Results can be useful to local decision makers and tourism authorities in creating policies focused on future tourism development, but also in informing and involving local residents, regardless of their connection to tourism, in tourism planning and in understanding its benefits.

Keywords: urban tourism, quality of life, local population, Croatia.

INTRODUCTION

As a result of increased urbanization, better road accessibility and air connectivity in cities, shorter stays on trips, and an increasing number of trips per year, urban tourism has become an important economic driver (Ashworth and Page 2011) and is seeing growth from year to year. At the regional and local level, urban tourism is considered an incubator for innovation and technology (Terzibasoglu 2016) and a key factor for the urban economy and development of the city: it creates jobs, stimulates exchange through income and taxes, and encourages investment in public services and infrastructure (UNWTO 2012). According to UNWTO (2012), urban tourism is a form of tourism that takes place in an urban area and is based on events, sights, historical and cultural heritage, galleries, sports, and entertainment content.

The growth of urban tourism can create pressure on natural and cultural resources, infrastructure, mobility, congestion, security, and the relationship with the local population. The presence of tourists can have either a positive or negative impact on the local population, resulting in an increase or decrease in local well-being and quality of life (Figini and Vici 2012; Bimonte et al. 2019). If there is an improvement in the cultural facilities, natural attractions, sports facilities, organization of festivals, etc., this will probably have a positive effect on the local population. (Andereck and Nyaupane 2011). However, any form of traffic congestion, noise, pollution, or crime caused by the presence of tourists — if not properly managed by local authorities — reduces the quality of life of residents and can, consequently, affect the attractiveness of the destination (Biagi et al. 2020).

There is no single definition of quality of life because it is a subjective experience that depends on the perceptions of individuals. Numerous authors agree that it is a multidimensional and interactive construct that encompasses many aspects of human life and the environment. Although some studies imply that people who live in tourist destinations might be more satisfied with their personal well-being (Bimonte and Faralla 2016), especially those who directly engage in tourism activities by providing accommodation (Soldic Frleta et al. 2022), this is a topic that needs further attention, particularly when the relationship between quality of life and tourism is examined in the context of coastal vs. urban tourism.

In order to examine satisfaction with quality of life and the effects of tourism on various life domains, this paper investigates the perceptions of the residents of Opatija, a destination renowned for its coastal identity but which also boasts many attractions and resources suitable for the development of urban tourism.

Key research questions are formulated after a concise literature review of the concepts of quality of life and urban tourism, followed by a more detailed description of the study area, research methods, and results. The paper ends with a discussion and conclusions, together with study limitations and future lines of research.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

Urban tourism has been the subject of research of numerous authors over the last twenty years (Ashworth 2003; Edwards et al., 2008; Ashworth and Page 2011), because cities, due to their geo-traffic characteristics and various facilities, are turning into urban tourist destinations and achieving a significant increase in tourist visits. In addition to rapid urbanization, affordable transportation, increased mobility, travel facilitation, new technologies, and a growing middle class, cities are becoming increasingly popular tourist destinations (Pearce 2015; UNWTO 2018).

There is no single and clearly defined definition of urban tourism in the literature. Moreover, urban tourism is a term that appeared in the 1980s and developed especially after 1990. The concept of urban tourism is defined as a complex tourism form, which is focused on the urban area. “*Adding the adjective urban to the noun tourism locates an activity in a spatial context but does not in itself define or delimit that activity*” (Ashworth

and Page 2011, 3). According to Ashworth (1989), urban tourism does not include only tourist activities focused on visiting cities but is a special form of tourism that is part of specific urban life.

Trips to cities take place for a variety of reasons, such as visiting friends and relatives, business reasons, attending congresses, getting to know other societies, cultures and religions, outdoor recreation and relaxation, entertainment, sightseeing and shopping (Page 1995; Boivin and Tanguay 2019; Sirkis et al. 2022). When talking about urban tourism, a number of primary and secondary elements are distinguished that play an important role when it comes to increasing tourist attractiveness. According to Law (2002), the primary elements, which are the main reason and basic motivation for the arrival of tourists in the urban area, include cultural facilities (theaters, concert halls, museums, galleries, cinemas), historical facilities (churches, historic streets), sports facilities, facilities intended for entertainment (casinos, nightclubs, organized events), in addition to parks and green areas, rivers, ports, etc. Secondary elements include a number of facilities that support and complement the tourist experience (e.g. hotels, shops, restaurants, etc.). Law (2002) also lists additional elements. These are accessibility, organized parking spaces, the existence of tourist offices in the destination, etc. The differentiation and attractiveness of the above elements guarantee that a city will attract many tourists with different goals and motivations. Mikulić et al. (2016) also argue that destination attractiveness can be a central determinant of competitiveness and overall success. Tourists are looking for a diverse offering with a wide range of possibilities that are likely to come together during a stay of several days (Gârbea 2013).

Urban tourism can represent a driving force in the development of many cities (Tokarchuk et al. 2017). When talking about tourism planning in urban areas, Ashworth (1989) points out four basic aspects: 1) spatial planning, planning of the necessary infrastructure, tourist capacities and facilities, 2) ensuring the necessary quality of the environment, 3) motives, experience, and satisfaction of visitors, and 4) the policy of development of management structures. Although not stated here, what is also required is the perspective of the local community, that is, the local population, which actively participates in tourist activities and whose support is in close interaction with the mentioned aspects.

Many coastal destinations have conditions for the development of urban tourism. Coastal cities that possess historical and cultural heritage can provide products that are unique and authentic, when compared with the traditional tourist experiences such as sun, sand, and sea (Carlisle et al. 2016).

Once a city becomes a tourist destination, the lives of local residents become affected by tourism activities (Kim et al. 2013). Urban tourism has the potential to be a development tool that contributes to improving the quality of life of the local population (Hall and Page 2009). Quality of life, as a comprehensive concept, multi-dimensional in its nature, is geared towards individual happiness and can be observed using subjective and objective indicators (Woo et al. 2018). Objective indicators are related to economic features (such as household income and cost of living), leisure and environment features (number of parks, recreation facilities, CO₂ emissions), while subjective indicators are related to happiness, life satisfaction, and subjective well-being (Uysal et al. 2016). Many

authors have found a positive effect of tourism on different life domains such as family life, social life, leisure life, and cultural life (Uysal et al. 2016). Magno and Dossena (2020) find that positive perceptions of the impact of tourism lead to increased community pride, improved well-being and health and general benefits for quality of life. Węziak-Białowolska (2016) stated that the social, physical, environmental, and economic features of a city complemented by the quality of governmental service, directly contribute to better urban quality of life. However, tourism can also generate negative effects for the local population, affecting several aspects of their daily life such as environmental, social, and cultural issues (Renda et al. 2011; Pasquinelli 2015; Bimonte et al. 2019). The persistence of these effects, in the end, can reduce the perception of the quality of life of the local population. In determining the perception of positive as well as negative tourism impacts, recent studies focus on economic dependency on tourism and the level of visitation of a destination, as some of the key predicting variables for better understanding differences in residents' attitudes (Đurkin Badurina and Soldić Frleta 2021).

Quality of life is often considered the equivalent of subjective well-being or life satisfaction (Shackman et al. 2005). Quality of life deals with understanding people's perceived satisfaction with the circumstances in which they live (Gannon et al. 2021). Improving people's quality of life is becoming an increasing challenge for urban planners and local governments, who have to design city management policies related to tourism development (Biagi et al. 2020).

The present study aims to investigate how tourism development affects the actual quality of life of local residents. The following research questions were asked in the paper: What is the quality of life of the local population in Opatija? Is the local population satisfied with the tourism development of the city? What are the attitudes of the population towards the development of urban tourism? The study aims to contribute to the literature by analyzing the attitudes of the residents towards the development of year-round urban tourism in relation to coastal tourism, which is now present in the destination.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter summarizes the methodological approach to the study, including a description of the research area and research methods used in order to obtain data for analysis and interpretation.

2.1. Study area

The City of Opatija was taken as a study area for empirical research due to its (170 years) long tourism tradition and mature level of tourism development, as well as the fact that, while it is a renowned coastal destination with a high intensity of tourism activities during the summer (Čorak 2005), it is also a destination with great potential for further urban tourism development. To underline the existing high level of seasonality, it is important to mention that in the past 5 years (even during the pandemic period), the highest numbers of arrivals and overnights were recorded in the summer period,

especially in July and August and partially in June and September. The overall number of arrivals and overnights in the June-September period accounts for almost 50% of the total annual number of tourists in Opatija (Tourist Board of Opatija 2023). Nevertheless, Opatija's history, highlighted by its distinctive Austro-Hungarian heritage visible in city landmarks, together with its well-maintained parks and charming promenades, the renowned Lungomare coastal promenade in particular, contributes to the appeal that this destination has outside the peak summer season (Blažević 1994). Hence, the residents of Opatija were chosen as a target group for better understanding the perceived quality of life, the influence that tourism has on quality of life, and attitudes towards a stronger focus on more year-round urban tourism.

2.2. Research methods

For the purpose of obtaining data, a survey was conducted among residents of Opatija, during February and March 2023. The questionnaire as a data collection instrument was distributed among residents, in paper as well as in online form. The quantitative approach to exploring residents' attitudes was chosen in order to capture and compare the attitudes of a larger number of residents, and to gain results comparable to similar studies on tourist attitudes, conducted in other destinations, also using questionnaires (e.g., Pratt et al. 2016; Chang et al. 2020; Soldić Frleta et al. 2022).

The structure of the questionnaire and the survey scales were adapted/developed for the purpose of complex research within the project "Sustainable development of urban tourist destinations through innovative and smart solutions", financed by the University of Rijeka. For the purpose of this study, the following concepts/variables were used:

- *City quality of life elements*: elements related to city quality of life – 10 items, 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from "very dissatisfied" to "very satisfied"
- *Potential for the development of urban tourism in Opatija*: items developed for the purpose of examining the attitudes of residents towards further development of the urban tourism offering in Opatija and extending the tourist season – 5 items, answers on a Likert-type scale, ranging from "completely disagree" to "completely agree"
- *Socio-demographic profile*: questions depicting socio-demographic profile of the respondents, including their economic dependence on tourism (binary) and satisfaction with the tourism development of Opatija, as grouping variables for analyzing potential differences among perceptions of the above listed concepts,

Scales related to quality of life were adopted from the Report on the quality of life in European cities, 2020, published by the European Commission (Bolsi et al. 2020), while other items/questions were included in the questionnaire to shed more light on the particular topic of the study (attitudes towards urban tourism development) and to add to the understanding of the relationship between tourism and perceived quality of life of residents of Opatija.

For the purpose of using satisfaction with tourism development as a grouping variable for identifying potentially significant differences among responses (as presented in Tables 2-6), answers related to satisfaction with tourism development were re-coded

from the original five-point Likert scale into three categories. These categories encompass residents who are rather dissatisfied with the tourism development of Opatija (those who expressed they are either very dissatisfied or somewhat dissatisfied), residents who are neutral (neither dissatisfied nor satisfied), and residents who are rather satisfied (those who reported they are either somewhat or very satisfied with the tourism development of Opatija).

The survey was conducted onsite and online, using convenience sampling as a nonprobability sampling technique, suitable for obtaining the sample of subjects/units from the population (Etikan et al. 2016). Participation in the survey was voluntary and anonymous, as stated in the introduction part of the questionnaire. The onsite survey was conducted by the authors and research assistants at several of the most frequented public spaces in Opatija (squares, parks, local market) as key social gathering places for residents. The respondents, who were willing to take some time to answer the questionnaire, were given enough private space to individually answer questions and the authors/research assistants were available for additional explanations, if necessary. The online survey was conducted by posting a link to the online questionnaire in two major Facebook groups gathering the residents of Opatija.

A total of 119 usable questionnaires were collected and analyzed, and the results are presented in the following section.

3. RESULTS

In this chapter, key research results are presented, starting with the socio-demographic profile of respondents, and followed by results of the analysis of their perceptions on city quality of life and values related to urban tourism.

Table 1 presents key information on socio-demographic variables.

Table 1: **Socio-demographic profile of respondents (N= 119)**

| | N | % |
|------------|----|------|
| <i>Sex</i> | | |
| Male | 56 | 48.3 |
| Female | 60 | 51.7 |
| Missing | 3 | |
| <i>Age</i> | | |
| 15-19 | 3 | 2.5 |
| 20-24 | 12 | 10.1 |
| 25-34 | 13 | 10.9 |
| 35-44 | 27 | 23.5 |
| 45-54 | 24 | 21.0 |
| 55-64 | 21 | 17.6 |
| 65-74 | 14 | 11.8 |
| 75+ | 3 | 2.5 |

Table 1 (continued)

| | N | % |
|--|----|------|
| <i>Education level</i> | | |
| Elementary school | 2 | 1.7 |
| High school | 46 | 38.7 |
| College and undergraduate (bachelor level) | 59 | 49.6 |
| Master level or PhD | 12 | 10.1 |
| <i>Length of residence in Opatija</i> | | |
| Less than 5 years | 3 | 2.5 |
| From 5 to 10 years | 8 | 6.7 |
| From 10 to 20 years | 16 | 13.4 |
| From 20 to 30 years | 27 | 22.7 |
| Whole life | 65 | 54.6 |
| <i>Economic dependence on tourism</i> | | |
| It's part of my income (either as a main or additional source of income for me or my family) | 69 | 57.5 |
| No | 51 | 42.5 |
| <i>Satisfaction with the tourism development of Opatija</i> | | |
| Very dissatisfied | 14 | 11.9 |
| Somewhat dissatisfied | 18 | 15.3 |
| Neutral (neither dissatisfied nor satisfied) | 39 | 33.1 |
| Somewhat satisfied | 36 | 30.5 |
| Very satisfied | 11 | 9.3 |

Source: authors' research

The socio-demographic profile of the respondents implies a rather balanced and normal distribution in terms of male vs. female respondents and economic dependency on tourism. A large number of respondents (almost 60%) hold college, undergraduate, Master or PhD degrees. What might be significant in terms of research results is the fact that a little over 54% of the respondents have lived their whole lives in Opatija and another 35% have lived in Opatija for more than 10 years.

The next table (Table 2) presents information on the satisfaction of residents with city quality of life elements, and the results of ANOVA for statistically significant differences between city quality of life elements based on Satisfaction with tourism development as a grouping variable.

Table 2: **Satisfaction of residents with elements of city quality of life (N= 119)**

| Elements of city quality of life | Mean values | | | | ANOVA results | |
|--|---|--|---|---|---------------|------|
| | Overall satisfaction with the elements of quality of life | Residents rather dissatisfied with tourism development (1) | Residents neither dissatisfied nor satisfied with tourism development (2) | Residents rather satisfied with tourism development (3) | F | Sig. |
| Public transport | 3.13 | 2.72 | 3.26 | 3.43 | 5.384 | .006 |
| Health care services | 3.31 | 3.13 | 3.38 | 3.40 | .769 | .466 |
| Sport facilities | 3.32 | 2.75 | 3.56 | 3.57 | 8.417 | .000 |
| Cultural facilities | 3.64 | 3.25 | 3.79 | 3.83 | 4.238 | .017 |
| Green spaces | 3.98 | 3.75 | 4.05 | 4.11 | 1.320 | .271 |
| Public spaces | 3.57 | 2.84 | 3.77 | 3.96 | 13.652 | .000 |
| Schools and other educational facilities | 3.79 | 3.53 | 3.97 | 3.87 | 2.737 | .069 |
| The quality of the air | 4.30 | 4.09 | 4.46 | 4.34 | 2.643 | .076 |
| The noise level | 3.45 | 2.97 | 3.82 | 3.53 | 6.012 | .003 |
| Cleanliness | 3.61 | 2.97 | 3.90 | 3.87 | 11.978 | .000 |

Source: Authors' research

As can be seen from Table 2, the residents of Opatija are not particularly satisfied with elements related to city quality of life (overall mean for all elements is 3.61). They exhibited the highest level of satisfaction with air quality and green spaces, while the least level of satisfaction was measured for elements related to public transport and health care.

In order to better understand the complex relationship between tourism and quality of life and to shed more light on the variation of residents' responses, T-test and ANOVA were conducted, taking into account the respondents' economic dependence on tourism and satisfaction with tourism development as potential criteria for statistically significantly different responses to elements of city quality of life. T-test results revealed no significant difference between respondents who have certain incomes from tourism activities and those who do not, but when it comes to the level of satisfaction with tourism development, there are some statistically significant differences among the groups with regard to satisfaction with city quality of life elements, as can also be seen in Table 2.

The nature of differences among groups, based on their satisfaction with tourism development, was further explored using the post hoc test. The Games-Howell post hoc test was used due to the fact that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was violated. The results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: 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. |
|---------------------|--------------|-----------|-----------------------|------------|------|
| Public transport | dissatisfied | neutral | -.538 | .225 | .051 |
| | | satisfied | -.707* | .216 | .005 |
| Sport facilities | dissatisfied | neutral | -.814* | .230 | .002 |
| | | satisfied | -.824* | .224 | .001 |
| Cultural facilities | dissatisfied | neutral | -.545 | .233 | .057 |
| | | satisfied | -.580* | .222 | .030 |
| Public spaces | dissatisfied | neutral | -.925* | .241 | .001 |
| | | satisfied | -1.114* | .239 | .000 |
| Quality of air | dissatisfied | neutral | -.368* | .153 | .049 |
| | | satisfied | -.247 | .155 | .258 |
| Noise level | dissatisfied | neutral | -.852* | .262 | .005 |
| | | satisfied | -.563 | .262 | .088 |
| Cleanliness | dissatisfied | neutral | -.929* | .243 | .001 |
| | | satisfied | -.904* | .226 | .001 |

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Source: Authors' research

Post hoc test results reveal that those residents who are rather dissatisfied with the tourism development of Opatija also have a significantly lower level of satisfaction with public transport, sport facilities, public spaces, quality of air, noise level and cleanliness than do residents who are rather satisfied with Opatija's tourism development.

In terms of attitudes towards the (further) development of urban tourism in Opatija, as a response to the seasonal pressure of existing predominately coastal tourism, a set of statements was developed to examine the residents' attitudes concerning this issue. It is important to note that the respondents were given a general definition of urban tourism before they started to express their level of agreement with the statements. The mean values of responses of residents can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4: Mean values for variables related to urban tourism development in Opatija (N=116)

| Variable short name | Variable | Mean value | SD |
|----------------------|--|------------|-------|
| Already_urban | Opatija is already an urban tourist destination. | 3.55 | 1.141 |
| Facilities for urban | Opatija has facilities and an offering suitable for urban tourism development. | 3.51 | 1.091 |
| Urban_developing | Urban tourism is being actively developed in Opatija. | 3.26 | 1.131 |
| Urban_year round | Opatija should continue to actively develop urban tourism and increase the number of tourists and visitors year-round. | 3.89 | 1.173 |
| Remaining_seasonal | The existing situation with a high intensity of tourism activities in summer months and a more peaceful time during the rest of the year should be maintained in the future. | 2.56 | 1.269 |

Source: Authors' research

Table 4 indicates that respondents display a certain interest and support for the development of urban tourism in Opatija, together with a rather low level of agreement with the continuation of the existing state of high tourism seasonality. In order to gain better insight into the rather substantial differences in responses to this topic (SD over 1 for all variables), ANOVA was conducted, taking into account economic dependency on tourism and satisfaction with tourism development, as well as socio-demographic variables as potential predictors of attitudes towards more intensive urban tourism development as compared to keeping the status quo with a seasonal coastal tourism offering.

While economic dependency on tourism as a criterion (again) did not reveal any significant differences in responses regarding urban tourism, nor did any differences emerge in the analysis of the socio-demographic profile, the ANOVA of satisfaction with tourism development, as a grouping variable, gave somewhat different results, as presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Results of ANOVA on urban tourism variables

| Variable | Residents rather dissatisfied with tourism development (1) | Residents neither dissatisfied nor satisfied with tourism development (2) | Residents rather satisfied with tourism development (3) | F | Sig. |
|----------------------|--|---|---|--------|------|
| | Mean values | | | | |
| Already_urban | 2.84 | 3.61 | 3.98 | 11.156 | .000 |
| Facilities for urban | 2.66 | 3.51 | 4.09 | 22.382 | .000 |
| Urban_developing | 2.47 | 3.18 | 3.85 | 18.724 | .000 |
| Urban_year round | 3.56 | 3.87 | 4.13 | 2.268 | .108 |
| Remaining_seasonal | 1.94 | 2.76 | 2.83 | 5.851 | .004 |

Source: Authors' research

In order to explore the nature of the statistically significant differences found among the groups in four out of five examined items, a post hoc test was performed. The Games-Howell post-hoc test was used, due to the fact that the assumption of homogeneity of variances was violated. The values of the post-hoc test are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Results of Games-Howell post hoc test for urban tourism variables

| Dependent Variable | | | Mean Difference (I-J) | Std. Error | Sig. |
|----------------------|--------------|-----------|-----------------------|------------|------|
| Already_urban | dissatisfied | neutral | -.762* | .271 | .019 |
| | | satisfied | -1.135* | .271 | .000 |
| Facilities for urban | dissatisfied | neutral | -.857* | .237 | .002 |
| | | satisfied | -1.429* | .228 | .000 |
| Urban_developing | dissatisfied | neutral | -.715* | .250 | .015 |
| | | satisfied | -1.382* | .216 | .000 |
| Remaining_seasonal | dissatisfied | neutral | -.826* | .288 | .015 |
| | | satisfied | -.892* | .274 | .005 |

*. The mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level.

Source: Authors' research

The results presented in Table 6 underline the fact that residents who are less satisfied with the tourism development of Opatija also have a statistically significantly lower level of agreement with urban tourism variables than do residents who are neutral or satisfied with Opatija's tourism development. It is interesting to note the extent of differences in mean values, particularly when it comes to the variables related to Opatija's facilities for urban tourism, the active development of urban tourism, and remaining highly seasonal in terms of tourism intensity.

4. DISCUSSION

The obtained results of empirical research illustrate the specific contextual characteristics of Opatija as a mature tourist destination. They support the notion that tourism impact on community residents' well-being may vary significantly as a direct function of the stage of the community in the tourism development life cycle, as discussed by Kim et al. (2013). So, this research begs the following question: If tourism impact is indeed perceived by local residents, then could this influence vary depending on the stage of tourism development of the destination? The answer to this question is very important for local authorities in order to be able to act more effectively on the quality of life of the residents as well as to formulate specific tourism development policies. Some particular elements of city quality of life are a specific part of Opatija's distinctive identity, such as clean air and green spaces, while others, such as public transport, are variables highly dependent on the respondents' personal situation. For example, it may be that not all of the respondents use public transport. Having in mind that the results support the statement that residents who are not satisfied with the tourism development of Opatija also exhibit a statistically significantly lower level of satisfaction with certain elements of city life quality, it is possible to presume the direct and important link between tourism and perceived city quality of life. This underlines the importance of the further

exploration of residents' overall perceptions of the positive and negative impacts of tourism on a destination as a whole.

As a very interesting point, the results of this study show that those respondents who are involved in tourism activities are not necessarily satisfied with the tourism development of Opatija. While most of the other studies use economic dependence on tourism as a variable suitable for better understanding and finding differences in residents' attitudes towards tourism impacts and support for future tourism activities (Chang et al. 2020, Almeida Garcia et al. 2015), this study emphasizes that those who are engaged in tourism activities do not necessarily form a homogenous group in terms of their attitudes. Moreover, the general level of satisfaction with tourism development was revealed as a much more useful grouping variable for examining statistically significant differences among responses regarding city quality of life and prospects for urban development. This might also be linked to the mature stage of tourism development in Opatija, and is in line with the conclusions of Pratt et al. (2016) who argued that different studies conducted in destinations with a long tourism tradition, where tourism is already an inseparable part of local community, lack variables suitable for the control of tourism development and "it is difficult to assess whether changes in quality of life and life satisfaction can be ascribed to tourism or other factors" (Pratt et al. 2016). This is important also for urban tourism research, as the results of empirical research reveal that residents who are not satisfied with the tourism development of Opatija are more skeptical towards existing urban tourism development efforts, but are also not in agreement with maintaining the status quo in terms of seasonal coastal tourism.

CONCLUSION

The research aim was to investigate the impact of tourism on quality of life of the local population in Opatija as well as the attitudes of the population regarding the development of urban tourism. The findings indicate that residents of Opatija are not particularly satisfied with elements related to city quality of life. Residents who are rather dissatisfied with the tourism development of Opatija have a significantly lower level of satisfaction with certain elements of quality of life. Further, residents show interest and support for the development of urban tourism. Those residents who are less satisfied with the tourism development of Opatija have a statistically significantly lower level of agreement with urban tourism development than do residents who are neutral or satisfied with Opatija's tourism development.

This paper contributes to the body of knowledge on urban tourism and residents' support for urban tourism development and, in particular, can provide a platform for further research in destinations that possess the characteristics of coastal as well as urban destinations. The practical implications of the paper lie in the presentation of the complexity of perceptions and attitudes of the residents of Opatija towards city quality of life as well as urban tourism development. As mature tourist destinations often face decline due to the saturation of the tourism market, a shift towards new forms of the tourism offering can result in "reviving the magic" and increasing visitation numbers. It is important, however, not to forget that such a shift needs to be accompanied by a parallel enhancement of local quality of life and demonstration of sensitivity to residents

and the community as a whole (Butler 2012). Hence, these results can be of use to local decision makers and tourism authorities not only in devising policies focused on future tourism development, but also in informing and involving local residents, regardless of their connection to tourism, in tourism planning and helping them to understand the benefits of tourism.

One of the limitations of this study lies in the research sample that mostly consists of residents who have either lived their whole life or a very long time in Opatija. Therefore, their opinions might differ from the perception of residents who have lived in Opatija for a shorter period of time. Additionally, there is a chance (as in other research related to residents' attitudes toward tourism) that responses collected in March, as is the case in this study, might somewhat differ from results obtained in July or August, in the heart of the tourist season.

In terms of future research, there is a potential for comparative study of perceptions of residents in different coastal destinations with urban tourism potential, using the same research instrument, in order to better understand residents' support for year-round tourism.

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