

## TOURISTS MOTIVES AND RESIDENTS ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE CRUISERS

**Aleksandra Dragin**  
**Vojislav Dragin**  
**Kristina Kosic**  
**Dunja Demirovic**  
**Andjelija Ivkov-Dzigurski**

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### Abstract

**Purpose** – The main purpose of this research is to analyze tourists motives and residents attitude towards the cruisers (positive and negative) in the case of Novi Sad and Belgrade, the popular port of calls on the Pan-European Corridor VII.

**Methodology** – The survey was conducted among the travelers and residents, first one aiming to exam the travel motives and possibilities of destinations improvement and second one considering resident`s attitude towards the cruisers.

**Findings** – Some of the findings were that the locals (especially younger) considered that port of call fail to adequately market their products and services to tourists from cruise ships.

**Originality of the research** – This research offers valuable data in the field of tourism destination management, regarding stakeholders in line with sustainable development.

**Keywords** cruiser, local community, interaction, Novi Sad, Belgrade, Pan-European Corridor VII

### INTRODUCTION

Tourism exists with different activities in the same area. Also, tourism is affirmed as the creator of polyvalent and open space (without border or organization that fully regulates access, capture or use of space). Lately, there are more and more examples that deny this rule, such as cities saturated by excessive (inadequate) volume of inbound tourist traffic, and in many cases, cruises are blamed for this situation.

In the scientific literature, it is pointed out that tourism is a system that includes not only the economy and tourists, but also society and the environment. So no one segment of the system can completely control the entire process. Actions undertaken within one sector will have an impact on other parts of the system. For example, tour operator who place a destination in his program (eg. cruise on Corridor VII downstream from Budapest) will significantly affect the economic and social characteristics of the community (Stojanović 2011). Some of the resulting changes will be direct and many of them indirect; some will be observed in a shorter period of time, while some will begin to manifest after a long period.

Communities that understand the potential impact of tourism can integrate this branch of business in their society in a positive way. The impacts of tourism can be sorted into several categories, primarily as economic, environmental, social and cultural influences (Stojanović 2011). Each of them can have positive or negative effects on space and

society, nature and economy. It is important to point out that not all of these impacts have the same intensity within different communities, because of different conditions and resources (Kreag 2001; Dragin 2012).

The cruises experienced full swing along the Pan-European Corridor VII<sup>1</sup> in several Danube countries, including Serbia, with the cities of Novi Sad and Belgrade, so the main focus in this paper will be given to the tourists motives from cruisers and to residents attitude towards the cruisers.

Previous publications that deal with cruises were mainly based on cruises along the oceans and seas, focusing on the economic and sociological problems (Foster 1986; Li and Petrick 2008; Duman and Mattila 2005; Jaakson 2004; Dwyer and Forsyth 1996, 1998; Mescon and Vosikis 1985; Brida and Aguire 2008; Larsen et al. 2013; Veronneau and Roy 2009). However, there are a few studies that cover the cruises in the Danube regions, especially in the case of tourists and local community (Dragin 2008, 2010; Dragin et al. 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009; 2014). This paper deals with analyzing tourists motives and residents attitude towards the cruisers (positive and negative) in the case of Novi Sad and Belgrade, the popular port of calls on the Pan-European Corridor VII. It is interesting that five European capitals are placed along the Corridor VII: Vienna, Bratislava, Budapest, Belgrade and Bucharest.

Tour packages last for a period from 6 to 24 days, and the greatest demand is present for itineraries which last 13 days. They remain in the ports for several hours, to touring the mainland. In Novi Sad, tourist usually stay between 6 and 8 hours (33%) and in Belgrade between 14-16 and 16-18 hours (about 15%) (Dragin 2012).

Tour packages offered on the Corridor VII comprise of various activities, among which stand the airline transport, railroad routes between the cities in the itinerary, accommodation facilities on vessels and in hotels, exclusive trips (sightseeing of the towns, vine tours, visits to castles and art colonies, etc.), cultural, educational and artistic programmes, dinner with the ship captain, additional services, etc. Usual capacity of ships ranges between 100 - 120 tourists.

The largest number of passengers come from Germany (30.1%), USA (26.2%), Great Britain (10%), France (9.8%) and Switzerland (3,9%) followed by others, mostly European countries (Dragin, 2010; Dragin et al., 2014). The average price of the Danube cruise is 1,440 euros, but the highest selling arrangements are in the category of 600 to 1200 euros (30%).

Annually, Belgrade visits around 60,000 tourists from the cruise ships, and Novi Sad about 40,000 (Dragin 2012). For Belgrade, it is not a big contingent of tourists in the total number of arrivals, but it is certainly a significant contingent in terms of the emitting region. On the other hand, Novi Sad thanks to cruises achieves a further 40% of the number of tourist arrivals compared to those registered in accommodation facilities in the city (<http://mtt.gov.rs/>; <http://www.mojnovisad.com/>).

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<sup>1</sup> International waterway of the Danube river: Regensburg – Black Sea

The main tourist season is from June to September, which corresponds to the favorable climate in this part of the year, and also with the holiday season. In terms of age structure of tourists from cruise ships in Novi Sad and Belgrade, it was noted that the participation of younger participants is almost imperceptibly, and that the age group of 0-30 years have a share of only 0.5%. Overwhelming dominance is observed only at the age group of 60-80 years, which is 78% . The average age of tourist on cruises is 69.4 years (Dragin 2012).

The main concern of this research are tourists motives and residents attitude towards the cruisers (positive and negative) in the case of Novi Sad and Belgrade. Some problems are considered, and the perspective of further interaction between cruise and receptive area of Belgrade and Novi Sad are analyzed.

## **1. METHODOLOGY**

In the phase of making a theoretical framework, the bibliographic (historical) method has been used. Also, it was a standard pen and paper procedure where the respondents (tourists from cruisers and local community) were informed of the general purpose of the study and that participation is voluntary and anonymous.

### **Analysis of travel motives**

The total number of respondents (tourists) was 210. A tool for collecting adequate data was developed - a questionnaire of 28 questions. The respondents were approached by co-authors of this paper near piers in Novi Sad and Belgrade from march to october in 2015. The questions are classified into three groups: the basic data of the respondents (socio-demographic characteristics - sex, age, occupation, monthly income), their tourist experience in terms of cruising (so far) and data related to their current cruising.

The sample consisted of women (57.6%) and men (42.4%), with the average age of 67.2. According to the country of origin, 42.8% of respondents come from USA, 49.1% from Europe, and the rest are from Australia and New Zealand. The described structure of respondents is in line with the structure of total tourist traffic in Serbia (Dragin, 2010). The majority of respondents are retained (74.8%). Even 89% of them had a previous cruise experience (20% cruised five times and more). So far they have cruised to the following destinations: the Caribbean, Alaska, Panama, France, Russia, etc. and 91.4% of them is in Serbia for the first time. Previous cruises were the most dominant source of information for this cruise. However, the answers to the question of what will they see in Serbia (what will they visit in Novi Sad / Belgrade) indicate that they were poorly informed. Even 47.1% of them did not answer this question, 16.6% said they did not know, and some of respondents gave scant answers: city tour, fortress, churches and “Serbian show”.

A special attention was given to questions about the travel motives, experience gained during the travel, the most attractive elements of the tourist offer in Novi Sad and Belgrade within international cruises along the Corridor VII, the opinion tourists had about Serbia before and after the visit, and if there is a need to improve something

which is related to the destination. The survey was done in order to comprehend the manners in which tourists experience destination. Respondents chose the offered answers and / or gave answers.

### **Analysis of local community perception**

Population sample of 364 respondents (175 residents from Belgrade and 189 from Novi Sad). A tool for collecting adequate data was developed - a questionnaire of 15 questions. The survey was conducted in 2015, on a random basis. The questions are classified into two groups: the basic data of the respondents (socio-demographic characteristics - sex, age, occupation, monthly income etc.) and data related to their attitude towards the cruisers.

The sample consisted of women (52.7%) and men (47.3%). The age of the respondents ranged from 15 to 64 years: 32% of them were in the category 15-24, then 24% of them were 25-34, and 23% at the age of 45-54. There were no younger respondents than 15, nor older than 64. The educational structure of the respondents is almost uniform in the groups of IV (47.8%) and VII degrees of education (46.2%). There were no persons with III and V degree in education. Most respondents are in permanent employment (58%), with an equal share of clerk and factory workers, as well as those who are not in a specifically defined category. The sample is a significant percentage of those who are currently studying or for the first time actively looking for a job (27.8%).

This survey was done in order to determine the attitudes of the local community about cruises. The main questions for the local people were: Do you know that cruisers dock in Novi Sad, Serbia/Belgrade; do you support cruise tourists arrivals, or maybe offer something for them (some products); whether the Novi Sad / Belgrade is adequately prepared for this; do you think that cruising impact on your life? Respondents chose the offered answers and / or gave answers. For some questions, a 7-point Lickert scale was used.

During the process of evaluating the results, statistical methods have been used: the descriptive (frequency distribution) and the comparative method.

## **2. RESULTS**

The local community is not always aware of all influences, especially those that act indirectly or changes will be felt in a long time. It should not be omitted sensitive question of the capacity of local communities to culturally or socially connect with tourists, as well as what their general affinity for tourists (Kreag 2001).

Interactions between residents and tourists can affect the creative expression of local communities and thus provide them new opportunities (job creation through the provision of certain services to tourists or sale of handicrafts, culinary specialties, stalls, etc.), which has happened by opening souvenir shop in Novi Sad on the quay in 2006 and 2007.

There has been an increasing number of pedestrians in the coastal zones of Novi Sad and Belgrade, particularly on those routes that can benefit from a visual appearance of cruising (eg. Belgrade quay in Novi Sad).

Similarly, the interaction of the local community and different visitors (speaking different languages, different incidence...) enhances understanding and acceptance of inequality by the local population, especially in smaller communities, such as for example Sremska Kamenica (near Novi Sad), where up to 2006 cruisers docked. On the other hand, during the last decade of the 20th century, Serbia had a negative brand (in political but also in economic, social and cultural sense). Hence the arrival of cruisers in Belgrade and Novi Sad and tourists communication with local communities and the general area, there is a change in brands of these destinations, which in turn results in confidence among the local population in communicating with foreigners.

These and many other influences are evidenced by the results of research conducted with tourists from cruise ships. The finding suggests that 92.9% of respondents for the first time visited Serbia (Belgrade and Novi Sad), so the personal experience on which they will build a certain image on the country and local communities will be thanks to cruising along Corridor 7.

According to the initial motives, the structure of the tourists is as follows: 29.5% were attracted by the whole tour; 22.0% were motivated by the need to visit the countries specified in the itinerary; 17.6% wanted to get to know the natural treasures of the Danube region and 15.7% the cultural heritage of the region. In addition, 20.5% tourists classified their motive as "other" (cruising along the Danube, visits to local villages, home-hosted lunches, scenery of the Balkans, new experience, etc.).

About a third of all tourists thought that they would change/add something in the tour. For example, more information about the visited areas is needed before docking, more activities should be introduced inland, more excursions to rural areas should be offered, more opportunities to meet local communities are needed, etc.

The question of what it is that they liked most in Serbia gave rise to the following answers: architecture (25.2%), nature (16.2%), folklore (17.1%) and hospitality (13.3%). In the category "other" (20.5%) they put history, culture, friendly people, the banks of the Danube, etc. None of the interviewed tourists selected cuisine or souvenirs, which suggests that the Serbian tourist offer for the Corridor VII was not adequately designed.

It should be noted that 73.3% of the interviewed did not have any objections to the tourist offer. The objections were primarily aimed at insufficient choice of souvenirs, inadequate quality of guidebooks, the pollution of the Danube (rubbish on the banks and floating on water), tiresome walks on the land, etc.

61.9% of the surveyed said that the tour through Serbia induced a positive opinion about this region (country), which can be illustrated by the following answers: "One can get the impression that Serbia is prospering and that people look content", "This is a beautiful region", "Novi Sad has an impressive architectural style and cordial

people”, “It would be nice to visit this region again”, etc. The negative answers (27.1%) are of the following sort: “The past of Serbia is filled too much with wars”, “It is difficult to communicate with the local population in English”, etc. Nevertheless, all tourists who supplied negative answers would recommend this trip to their friends.

The aforementioned study also points out the fact that in order to achieve a greater number of positive socio-cultural influences on the space, there is a need for better information for tourists (about the destination), but also to inform local population and especially economic actors and tourist operators about cruises and the characteristics of the demand.

When it comes to education of local community, authors should not omit the problem of statistical monitoring of tourist traffic, especially if the receptive space is familiar with the scope and dynamics of tourist traffic of cruises in Belgrade and Novi Sad. According to the official methodology of national statistical data for tourist arrivals in Serbia, tourists from cruise ships are not included, because they do not spend the night on land.

Tourism creates opportunities for developing new services and activities that would otherwise not be viable in the community. Tourist expectations can improve services by local shops, restaurants and other commercial actors, which is in the interests of the residents. Thus, for example *Quality tours* planned to register the agency in Serbia that will offer cruises programs. During Tourism Fair 2010 in Belgrade, this tour operator first introduced such programs to people from Serbia.

The negative socio-cultural impacts could be seen in the following: tourists misconduct (excessive alcohol consumption, gambling, crime, drugs, prostitution...), adverse lifestyle changes, potentially endangering the everyday behavior of the local population, population displacement due to tourism development, adverse changes in the standards and values and others (Kreag, 2001). However, in this case, these changes have not been observed.

In terms of the impact of possible unethical behavior of tourists from the cruiser ships to the local community in Novi Sad and Belgrade we can not speak, given the short stay of tourists in these cities (few hours), especially if one considers that the average age of the tourists is about 70 years. In this regard, this was about the tourist segment that could not bring bad models of behavior and negative impacts. At the same time, the older segment of the population on the cruise ships is attracted to the traditional values of the area, and not looking for some alternative motives (night life, prostitution, etc).

Thus, in the tour package, tourists can see the old town center in Novi Sad and a program of cultural and entertaining character (on the boat, before dinner, cultural and art program with traditional Serbian dances and songs). Tour of Belgrade is also intended for sightseeing. Trip titled "Event of exclusive discovery" includes a tour of the old city center in Belgrade, Kalemegdan fortress, City Hall, the Orthodox church St. Sava (one of the largest in the world), Tito's memorial. After that, there is the

possibility of an optional visit to the residence of Queen Ljubica and Ethnographic Museum in a program called "Taste of Belgrade".

Belgrade and Novi Sad have become refreshed, the "new" destinations, and for many tourists an exotic destination (Tourist Organization of Serbia, 2017). That also testifies this research, where the tourists from the cruise ships were asked: How this visit to Serbia affect your image of the country? Approximately 41.9% of the respondents had no comment. The remaining 58.1% gave different answers, of which 73.3% were positive, with the following content: *the impression that people in Serbia are undergoing a period of prosperity, the impression that people seem to be happy, beautiful country, I want to re-visit Serbia, enjoyed the visit to Serbia, enthusiastic old architecture, economically stronger state than expected.*

When it comes to the satisfaction of tourists from cruise ships in terms of visual experience of Novi Sad and Belgrade, their positive impressions are primarily related to architecture, while negative are related to the present of garbage along the banks of the Danube, which is especially noticeable at the beginning of the tourist season (in March), or before the vegetation period on coastland.

The tourists who cruise down the Danube through the "Oscar Tours", enter Serbia near Bezdán, where they usually have lunch. In Novi Sad, by bus tour, they visit the environment, especially the monasteries. In Krusedol they serve wine and brandy. In Belgrade, the tour includes sightseeing and shopping. In the village of Jarak, on a private farm, they have lunch with music. The next day, they are sailing to Veliko Gradište tasting caviar from Kladovo.

Belgrade sightseeing tour includes Kalemegdan, House of Flowers, the Temple of Saint Sava Cathedral, as well as a panoramic tour of the city center. The tour lasts three and a half hours, with breaks at hotel "Majestic", thirty minutes of free time in the street Knez Mihailo, for walking and buying souvenirs. Tourists who do not want an organized tour of the city, have the opportunity to walk around downtown and explore. A great number of visitors can threaten the everyday behavior of the local community - the movement in public places, the demand for certain services (waiting at the ATM, at the cafe...). However, as dozens of tourists get off the ship and move on the site in order to visit Novi Sad and Belgrade, that this is not the case, because of their number, described dynamics of movement on land and the length of detention on the mainland.

In terms of communication, tourists from cruisers are generally not able to communicate in the languages of the local population in Novi Sad and Belgrade, but also not in their native language, so they highlighted the problem of communication with local vendors and others. Still high potential for repeat visit can be seen from the survey results. The reasons why they would revisit Serbia are: they like the sites; want to learn more details about Serbia; they want to come to Serbia and visit monasteries, rural areas and more. It is important to note that some of the tourists from cruisers have family ties with the Germans from these areas, but this fact is not used enough from the local community in order to attract such tourists and for mutual strengthening of social, cultural and economic ties.

It is important to note that in accordance with the high prices of tourist packages for cruises along Corridor VII (several thousand of euros per person), authors could assume that these tourists have high purchasing power. However, this is not the case with most tourists, as evidenced by research.

In determining the future impact of cruises along Corridor VII on NoviSad and Belgrade, and in the context of all of those factors, it is important to look at the issue in terms of the behavior of tourists on the mainland.

Although tourists from cruise ships each year visit Novi Sad and Belgrade in a higher number for local conditions, they are on land only for a couple of hours per day. During that short time, tourists from ships should establish communication with the local population, primarily in the segment sales of local products.

In addition to the aforementioned improvement of tourism infrastructure, a necessary link in the development of sustainable cruise tourism is the local community. This primarily refers to the attitude of the local community on a particular segment of tourism and the tourists themselves. In this regard, the survey was conducted, which were examined residents of Novi Sad and Belgrade.

The next group of questions relates to the disclosure of the attitudes of residents, and their assessment of acceptance of tourists.

**Table 1: Distribution of frequency and mean value for a variable: Is the coast in Belgrade/Novi Sad adequately equipped?**

Scale*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Mean
<i>f</i> (%)								
<b>Novi Sad</b>	0	0	1	3	7	15	25	6.19
<b>Belgrade</b>	4	21	18	3	2	1	0	2.59

\*absolute mismatch (1), a moderate mismatch (2), a minimal mismatch (3), indifference (4), at least agreement (5), moderate agreement (6), an absolute agreement (7)

The majority believes that the coast in Novi Sad is adequately equipped (97.9%), while residents from Belgrade have a contrary opinion for their city (86.9% have a negative opinion). Reconstruction of quay in Novi Sad and its construction in 2011 are the main reasons for the present marks.

Asked whether something should be changed in terms of planning coastline of Belgrade and landing cruise ships, they gave different answers: there should be a more complex port, conduct research and develop offers in accordance with different target groups, the development of souvenirs, improve environmental protection of coastal and river, clean coastal areas from garbage, improve the system of punishing polluters, set up an adequate tourist signs...



Most criticism is related to the arrangement of the coast in Belgrade when it comes to the hygiene (high educated respondents, aged 55-64 years) and inadequate equipment. There were also comments that all is in the "hands" of individuals and that giving opinions and suggestions will not change anything (that the comments of the local population have no effect).

Majority of the respondents (86.9%) do not know how many tourists come to Belgrade by cruise ship. However, 98.3% of respondents believe that the cruisers are important for the improvement of tourist traffic in Belgrade and that the Danube is an essential resource for improvement local tourism and economy.

All respondents from Novi Sad considered that the Danube is one of the most important resources for improving tourism and general economic development of the city of Novi Sad and Serbia. Their suggestions for further improvement of coast are related to raising public awareness and education (about preserving the environment, the importance of tourism for residents). Frequent answers are related to the needs and possibilities of expanding tourism offer of Novi Sad.

In terms of regulation of coast in Novi Sad and landing cruise ships, 19 respondents gave suggestions: build a modern tourist marina, set souvenir shops in key locations – Quay and in the city center, the construction of several restaurants on the quay (which is already implementing), setting up kiosks with newspapers, etc., complete the offer of restaurants in the city center or on the fortress, the revitalization of the complex of the fortress (especially lower center), to raise awareness of the local population (negligence towards cleanliness coast), the necessity of removing illegal dumps in the coastal region, the introduction of new facilities in the city center and the flexibility of working time of cultural institutions cruise ship visits, free the quay from excessive traffic.

Significant findings were that Novi Sad is failing to sufficiently markets its products and services to tourists from cruise ships, which can be seen in the following responses (all in the age group 25-34): *tourists come to us, and we do not sell them even one souvenir, we should made such tours for tourists to spend some money, tourists from the ships do not spend money in Novi Sad.*

Also, there were those who said they do not see big impact of cruise ship on improving tourist traffic, but it could have in the future. In this regard, it was an interesting statement of one respondent: *"loudly inform citizens about this issue!"*

Maybe in the end, it is important to point out that none of the respondents in Belgrade and Novi Sad, is not experiencing the development of cruise tourism in a negative context for the local community and the space itself. Consequently, no one has expressed resentment or hostility towards tourists from cruise ships.

## **CONCLUSION**

Even though tourists from cruise ships come in certain numbers, they primarily spend the night on board, and their retention on the mainland is only for several hours, so the uncontrolled visits or excessive use of space for tourism, which may affect the degradation of landscapes, historical sites and monuments, in this case do not exist.

When it comes to the satisfaction of tourists from cruise ships in terms of visual experience of Novi Sad and Belgrade, their positive impressions are primarily related to architecture, and negative are related to the presence of garbage along the banks of the Danube, which is especially noticeable at the beginning of the tourist season (in March), or before the vegetation period.

Detected positive socio-cultural impact of cruisers on Novi Sad and Belgrade, are: improved quality of life of the local population (services, activities ... - eg. in Novi Sad, coastal has experienced infrastructure transformation, primarily in the form of setting up the necessary infrastructure for the reception of cruise ships and passengers, setting up horti-cultural areas and sports and recreation facilities); positive changes in values and practices (eg. local people begin to more price their heritage, because they see how much visitors do); maintaining cultural identity (local population begins to cherish their heritage - conceive souvenirs, organize performances of cultural and artistic societies, etc.); promotion of cultural exchange; improves the understanding of different communities; increase tolerance of social inequality and other inequalities; increase demand for historical and cultural exhibits (education), and satisfied psychological needs.

It is important that local population who participated in a survey haven't had a negative attitude towards the mentioned segment of tourism. On the contrary, they expressed the wish that the area has to be improved in order to increase the degree of satisfaction of tourists from ships. These answers are primarily referring to the arrangement of the coast in Belgrade - the hygiene and inadequate equipment. Common responses are related to the needs and possibilities of expanding the tourist offer of Novi Sad, and on raising awareness and education (about preserving the environment, the importance of tourism for residents). The respondents were aware that economic effects are not realized enough and sufficiently.

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**Aleksandra Dragin**, PhD, Associate Professor  
Faculty of Science,  
Department of Geography, Tourism and Hotel Management,  
Trg Dositeja Obradovića 3, 21000 Novi Sad, Serbia  
00 381 63 8 306 114  
E-mail: sadragin@gmail.com

**Vojislav Dragin**, MSc, Consulting  
Public utility company "Gradsko zelenilo",  
Sutjeska 2, 21000 Novi Sad, Serbia  
00 381 63 527 635  
E-mail: vojislavdragin@gmail.com

**Kristina Kosic**, PhD, Associate Professor  
Faculty of Science,  
Department of Geography, Tourism and Hotel Management,  
Trg Dositeja Obradovića 3, 21000 Novi Sad, Serbia  
00 381 63 569 116  
E-mail: kristina.kosic@dgt.uns.ac.rs

**Dunja Demirovic**, PhD, Assistant Professor  
Business Academy, Faculty of economics and engineering management  
Cvečarska 2, 21000 Novi Sad, Serbia  
00 381 64 268 62 90  
E-mail: demirovic.dunja2@gmail.com

**Andjelija Ivkov-Dzigurski**, PhD, Full Professor  
Faculty of Science,  
Department of Geography, Tourism and Hotel Management,  
Trg Dositeja Obradovića 3, 21000 Novi Sad, Serbia  
00 381 63 810 20 91