

## COMMUNITY BASED TOURISM DEVELOPMENT – INSIGHTS FROM SPLIT, CROATIA

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### **Abstract**

**Purpose** – The purpose of this paper is to analyse the concept of community and the impacts tourism development poses to it from the community members' perspective. Also the paper analyses whether community members are capable to manage their own (tourism) development and what might be possible ways in which they affect the choice of the policies and measures aimed at optimization of tourism impacts.

**Methodology** – Besides providing the theoretical analysis and framework, the paper aims to explore the attitudes of the citizens of Split towards tourism development impacts and the role of tourism in building the “sense of community”. Their involvement and participation in local tourism development and policy making will also be viewed through the prism of Social Exchange Theory (SET). The pilot research on 132 community members was conducted using structured questionnaire.

**Findings** – The theoretical part of the paper will explore the notion of community and its relation to the destination concept. Also, it will introduce the founding of the Social Exchange Theory (SET) to explore the attitudes of the local community members towards tourism development impacts. The empirical research will test the dependencies developed through the theoretical part and give valuable insights about the state of the art found in the Split destination/community context.

**Contribution** – Although it is agreed upon by practitioners and researchers that community participation is essential in providing positive attitudes towards tourism and its impacts, their interrelations have not gained substantial attention in Croatian academic community. This paper aims at filling this gap and thus contributing to better understanding of these constructs and their dependencies, which can also help in optimizing tourism management practices.

**Keywords:** community, tourism development, Social Exchange Theory, Split, participation

### **INTRODUCTION**

Tourism impacts, both positive and negative, are most apparent at the “local level”, be it defined as a “tourist destination” or a „destination community”. Each of these notions has been used in the literature, sometimes as synonyms, thus making confusion and misunderstanding. However, differences do exist and it is necessary to point them out.

The notion of **tourist destination** originally stands for a geographical area consisting of the services and infrastructure necessary for the visitors (tourists) stay. Hence, it may be a hotel, site, city, country or region. It is a highly flexible and dynamic area whose borders are determined by tourist demand (Hitrec, 1995; Petrić, 2011) and may be artificial or natural by its origin. Also, it may be viewed as a system consisting of different subsystems and elements (Gunn, 1988; Mill and Morrisson, 1992; Laws, 1995; Hall, 2005; Petrić, 2011, etc.), as a product (Manente & Mighetti, 2006), a

product portfolio (Harold, 2007; Petrić, 2011), or simply as a market place where tourism demand meets supply.

From such an ambivalent definition it is obvious that the spirit of community or *communitas* (Oxford Dictionary) is not always the essence of destination's functioning. On the other side, *communitas* should be inherent to the concept of "**destination community**". Community itself can also be defined from different standpoints, as a social group based on geographical proximity (Mackenzie and Dalby, 2003), as a localised social system binding social groups and institutions (Miller, 1993; Gandy, 2002) or as a form of communion based on a common identity or set of beliefs and practices (Lave, 2003). James (2006) categorizes community using all the three basic standpoints, as "*communities of place*" that may range from the local neighbourhood, village, town, city, region up to the planet as a whole; as "*identity-based communities*" that gather individuals on the basis of ethnicity, religion or culture and as "*organizationally based communities*" that include different kind of informal or formal associations and networks. The most common explanation of tourist destination being a geographical area visited by tourists due to its resources and attractions is close to the concept of "*communities of place*". However, if thinking of destination in Murphy's (1985) sense of the word (although it is intrinsically connected with the territory), it must be primarily thought of as both the *identity-based* and *organizationally based community*.

Hence, **destination community** is a specific, tourism oriented community that is based upon empowerment, the existence of mutual interdependence among members, a sense of belonging, connectedness, faith and trust and common expectations, shared values and goals, or so called "sense of community" (Beeton, 2006: 11). In such a community, tourism should be deeply embedded in the local milieu and residents accept it as a part of their everyday's life (Petrić and Mrnjavac, 2003).

## 1. COMMUNITY RESIDENTS' PERCEPTION ON TOURISM IMPACTS

Possession of the sense of community is an important precondition for its members to fight against negative impacts tourism produces. As Chen and Raab (2009) point, since the late 1980s, tourism researchers have paid much attention to understanding residents' reactions to tourism development in the community, which also coincided with a new trend emerging in the market, where more and more cities and regions have begun to consider tourism as an important means to boost the local economy. However, at the same time, apart from the rising awareness of the benefits tourism produces in local communities, a number of the tourism related costs have also been recognized. In order to understand what happens in the process of tourism development in a local community, models of the two well-known scholars, i.e. Doxey and Butler have been used by a number of authors. However, despite their popularity they have been often questioned due to their assumption that residents' opinions and perceptions on the impact of tourism are homogenous (Claiborne, 2010). Just the opposite, many of the empirical studies (to be discussed later) have proved that resident's perceptions towards tourism impacts may vary related to a number of factors.

It is useful to know that most of the studies focused on understanding the perceived impacts of tourism by residents on a local community and their lives have been based on the “social exchange theory” (SET). Ap (1992) explains it as a general sociological theory concerned with understanding the exchange of resources between individuals and groups in an interaction situation. Applying this theory to tourism, Andereck et al. (2005) point that residents’ attitudes toward (and their support for) tourism in their community will be influenced by their evaluations of the actual and perceived outcomes tourism produces in their community. Hence, despite the fact that some have questioned the appropriateness of this theory, Andereck et al. (2005) as well as many other researchers find it useful for researching residents’ perception on costs and benefits related to tourism impacts on their local community.

As stated earlier, residents’ perceptions towards tourism impacts may vary related to a number of factors. Hence, some researchers have found that *greater length of residency in the community* (McCool and Martin, 1994; Madrigal, 1993) and *native-born status* (Davis et al., 1988; Urn and Crompton, 1987) have been linked to greater negative perceptions of tourism. In some studies focus has been put on the relationship between the so called *community attachment* (Jones et al., 2000) and attitudes towards tourism. Community attachment may be measured as length of stay and/or having been born or grown up sentiment about the community and involvement in the community (McGhee and Andereck, 2004). As concluded by Gursoy and Rutherford (2004) contradictory results on this matter in a number of studies seek for further investigations. In the same time they stress that the contradictions in the findings can be explained by the fact that different measures have been used to define community attachment. Some researchers showed that *socio-demographic variables* appear to have little relationship to residents’ perceptions of development (McCool and Martin, 1994; Petrić and Pranić, 2010). On the contrary Chen (2000) suggests that *gender* can explain attitudes toward tourism. Andriotis (2004) proves *occupation and education* being important predictors while the impact of *age* on perceptions toward tourism has been confirmed by Chen (2000) and Teye et al. (2002). Some authors such as Ap (1992), McCool and Martin, (1994), Hall and Lew (1998) prove that those residents who *benefit from tourism* are likely to view it positively.

By analysing papers by Allen (1988), Long (1990) and Perdue (1993), Johnson et al. (1994) have concluded that resident perceptions towards tourism are related to the *level of economic activity* within the community. It even happens that residents of communities dependent on tourism can clearly differentiate between its economic benefits and social costs without necessarily leading to their opposition towards further tourism development (King et al., 1993; cited in Johnson et al., 1994).

By exploring perceptions of the local community of the Bigodi village, Lepp (2007) has shown a connection between residents’ attitudes and their *behavioural intention*. Capenerhurst (1994, cited in Claiborne, 2010) argues that if community residents feel their *identity* to be threatened by the tourism industry, they will develop attitudes which are at best doubtful and at worst hostile and further suggests that the *size* of the community is also important to consider in relation to the reactions to tourism. As Sharareh & Badaruddin (2013) have reported in their recent study, there is a number of other variables useful for measuring the relationship between tourism development and

residents attitudes, such as: *involvement with decision making, stage of destination life cycle, tourist type, degree of cultural difference between residents and tourist*, that have already been used to a smaller or greater degree in a number of empirical researches.

## **2. “COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM” OR “TOURISM VERSUS COMMUNITY” MODEL OF DEVELOPMENT**

By analysing ways tourism in a community has been developing so far, generally two basic models can be identified. The first may be named “tourism vs. community” model of development and the second one is known as “community based tourism” model.

The “*tourism vs. community*” model is “unsustainable” model of development, characterised among other things by: fragmented and unorganised foundations of the community with no sense of community; top-down decision making and management structures; no impacts by residents on the process of decision making; prevailing opinion that tourism develops spontaneously, with no limits whatsoever, etc. (Asker et al., 2010).

As opposed to the above described model, “*community based tourism*” model is a form of a “locally driven tourism” model. It has been in the focus of interest ever since Murphy wrote his book “Tourism - A Community Approach” (1985). However, the idea of community-based forms of development has an even longer history.

Thus, Mansuri and Rao (2004: 4) point that special significance goes to Gandhian notions of village self-reliance and small-scale development, which Gandhi saw as an antidote to the corrosive effects of modernization and colonial rule. They also mention strong influence of the work of Olson (1973) and Hardin (1982) and later of Demsetz (1970) and North (1990), who pointed on the need to act collectively for the purpose of achieving a common goal or pursue a common interest. After these early works that discussed community-based approaches to development driven by anti-colonial and anti-modernization goals, the issue of locally driven development has become the mainstream of development theory.

Hence, community based development, generally speaking, relies on communities to use their social capital to organize themselves and participate in development processes, in at least some aspects of project design and implementation. Specifically, communities that opt for tourism as a growth generator should take care that it supports local economic development, respects and encourages equitable participation of local community, is ecologically sustainable and minimises impact on the environment, conserves and promotes living cultural heritage and welfare and educates visitors about culture and nature (Asker et al, 2010).

### 3. COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN THE PROCESS OF TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

From what has been said above it is evident that negative impacts of tourism often occur due to locals having no control over its development. Therefore, local participation in tourism development is necessary to create the desired outcomes for communities (Blackstock, 2005).

However, despite its importance, as Tosun, (2000) and Timothy (2002) argue there are many constraints to local participation in tourism development, such as operational, structural and cultural limitations. Jenkins (1993, cited in Mason, 2007:120) lists several impediments to local participation, from poor understanding of complex technical planning issues, through apathy amongst some, if not a majority, of citizens, to the increased cost in relation to staff, time and money.

Nevertheless, despite the obstacles, if community aims to adopt more sustainable approach to tourism development it would seem essential that its residents are involved in planning and management processes. However, as Pretty (1995, cited in Mason, 2007:118) claimed, participation can get different forms. For example, in so called “manipulative participation” actual power lies within groups beyond the local community. Opposite to it, there is “interactive participation” and “self-mobilisation” when local people actively get involved in decision making. Similar to Pretty’s classification, Tosun (2006, as cited in Rasoolimanesh, 2016) identified three forms of community participation – coercive participation, induced participation and spontaneous participation, the last one being the highest level of community participation that can generate trust, ownership and social capital among the residents.

However, when it comes to the operationalisation of the participation process in the destination community, as Tosun (2010) points, many dilemmas appear and many questions are raised, such as how the participatory tourism development approach will be initiated, who will initiate it and what should be the best form and mode of participation...

Yet, despite confusion on how participation should be integrated into management and planning process, according to some authors there are few techniques that have been employed so far. Thus, as cited by Petrić and Mrnjavac (2003), Gill (1996) explained the technique of *'living room meetings'*, that involves informal gatherings of small groups of community member in a moderated situation throughout the community; also they mentioned Fitton’s idea on *'the planning for real'* method (1996), which is a form of town meeting that involves bringing the community together before the planning process begins. Another method with considerable success is *household questionnaires* (Haywood, 1988; Simmons, 1994; cited in Petrić and Mrnjavac, 2003) which may be combined with other approaches. Furthermore, although rarely employed, there is also a possibility of running the *community referendum*. McGee (2009: 570-571) writes that “the idea of holding elections where people can exercise a direct voice in planning the future of their communities must now be fully recognized as a fundamental human right with broad support in international law.”

At the end of this short report on community participation issues, it can be concluded that despite difficulties and open dilemmas the very idea of participation in tourism development processes is gradually becoming the mainstream within (tourism) development related literature.

#### **4. EMPIRICAL RESEARCH – THE CASE OF SPLIT**

##### **4.1. Tourism development state of the art in Split – is there a success story or development nightmare?**

The city of Split has been founded in 305 A.D. as a fortified villa of a retired emperor Diocletian, and later on developed into a medieval town, keeping traces from all periods and incorporating them into a harmonic whole. In 1979 the historic core of Split was declared a World Heritage Site on account of its well-preserved architecture from all periods, but also because of the fact that it is still a living organism with all urban functions. During the course of time, Split has become the administrative, university and economic centre of the middle Dalmatia, but in 1990-ties its development has been threatened by a devastating process of deindustrialization of suburban areas which took the city on a crossroad without a clear idea on where to go to. Due to the lack of development vision, tourism has gradually become the most dominant, if not the only economic activity in the city. Unfortunately tourism itself has also been developed without a clear development vision and the foresight to limits of its growth. Hence tourism demand has been growing constantly, from approximately 80.000 arrivals and 110.000 overnights at the end of the 1990-ties up to with 394.054 arrivals and 1.111.379 overnights in 2014 (Split Tourism Board, 2015). This trend has raised the real estate prices in the historic core and the whole city. Apart from the gentrification process, a rapid “*tourismification*” has been changing the usage of the old buildings in the historic core turning them into seasonal accommodation facilities (Mikulić and Petrić, 2013). According to the Tourist board data, out of 14.188 beds available in Split in 2014, only 2.908 were hotel beds (or 20 %) while the rest of 80% or 11.280 was in supplementary capacities, dominantly private households and apartments. Worthwhile mentioning is that narrow protected zone of the old historical centre and its nearest surroundings host approximately 42% of all the accommodation capacities, while all the other parts of Split host the remaining 58%. Overall infrastructure is not sufficiently developed to follow the rapid growth of demand. Local government, unfortunately, neither takes care about the public goods nor does actively manage tourism development processes, leaving them completely to the arbitrariness of local entrepreneurs.

Regardless the aforementioned situation, tourism, especially the one with the prefix “cultural”, has become an ever repeated “mantra” of all local authorities, with obviously no true understanding of the real meaning of neither tourism nor culture or their interrelatedness. As a result, poorly managed “cultural tourism”, to a great deal “consumed” by daily visitors, dominantly cruise ship visitors, has additionally deteriorated the quality of life in the historic core of the city, transforming it into a stage for non-authentic, tourist performances. The situation has been additionally

worsened by sudden party tourism appearance brought up by a number of low cost carriers and Ultra festival organisation, bringing to Split thousands of “party” tourists.

Hence, success story that Split is recently selling through media due to the ever rising numbers of tourists has its dark side. City government obviously has no clear vision on how to position the city on the market or what consequences it will experience in the near future because of such uncontrolled and unplanned tourism development. However, on the other side, there are thousands of small entrepreneurs and room renters who, in absence of other activities, are involved in tourism business. Many of them don't even consider the possibility of doing tourism on a whole-year basis and are probably not even interested in participating in its management and planning. The question is also whether they even care about possible negative impacts tourism produces in the local community. In order to answer dilemma about the Split residents' perceived views about tourism development and resulting impacts, a pilot study has been conducted and findings are presented in the rest of the paper.

#### **4.2. Empirical research methodology**

The online questionnaire using snowball sampling technique was used to collect the data (Tkalac Vercic et al., 2010). The questionnaire consisted of 18 questions, out of which 14 were multiple choice and 4 were 5-point Likert scale questions. The scales in the questionnaire were borrowed from previous studies in which they were tested for validity and reliability. Thus, apart from the socio-economic profile of respondents the questionnaire included:

- community attachment scale borrowed and adapted from Gursoy and Rutherford (2014),
- urban tourism impacts scale, borrowed and adapted from Chen (2001),
- tourism support scale, as well as trust in tourism support institutions borrowed and adapted from Nunkoo and Ramkisson (2011),
- control over tourism development, based on the van Breugel (2013),
- questions about the participation in tourism development developed by the authors.

The on line survey was conducted from 26<sup>th</sup> December 2015 till 26<sup>th</sup> January 2016. At the end, 147 questionnaires were collected. After eliminating respondents not living in Split, 132 valid questionnaires were obtained and further analysed.

The sample is comprised mostly of females (65.9%) while the prevailing age range is 26-35 (38.6%) followed by 36-45 (35.6%), comprising together 74.2% of the sample. Most of the respondents have college degree (56.8%) followed by high school (22.7%). The majority of respondents live in the town for more than 20 years (79.5%) with most being born in it. As for the employment status, most of the respondents are employed (74.2%) and do not earn any revenues through tourism (60.6%). However, each fifth respondent (19.7%) earns the minority and each tenth (9.8%) a majority of their revenues through tourism. Compared to population structure (National Statistics Bureau, 2011) we find the overrepresentation of females, as well as differences in gender and education level structure. In addition to sample size, this is the main limitation of this research.

The respondents' answers about the first core concepts in the focus of this paper – *community attachment* show that the highest agreement is found for “*I feel like at home in Split*” (with 89.6% of respondents agreeing), while the lowest (little less than one third agreeing and the most having a neutral attitude) is found for “*I am satisfied with Split as a community*”. The other two statements (“*I am acquainted with what is going on in the community/Split*” and “*I would feel sorry if I had to move from Split*”) achieved positive but not very high grades/agreement (3.52 and 3.73 average grade, respectively, mode 4 for both).

As for the attitudes of the respondents regarding their perception of tourism impacts, interesting findings have been obtained (Table 1).

Table 1.: **Tourism impacts attitudes**

		Strongly disagree			Strongly agree		Mean	Mode
		1	2	3	4	5		
CE	Meeting tourist from other regions is a valuable experience for better understanding of their culture and society	3	4,5	8,3	47,7	36,4	4,10	4
EB	Tourism has led to increased consumption in Split	3	4,5	6,1	55,3	31,1	4,07	4
EB	Tourism has created more jobs in Split	3	1,5	9,8	60,6	25,0	4,03	4
EB	Tourism has brought economic benefits to local population and small entrepreneurs in Split	2,3	8,3	18,2	52,3	18,9	3,77	4
CE	Tourism has enhanced different cultural activities of local population in Split	3,8	9,8	18,2	57,6	10,6	3,61	4
EB	Tourism has attracted new investment in Split	4,5	12,1	22	45,9	15,9	3,56	4
CE	Tourism has led to greater cultural exchange between tourists and local people	6,1	10,6	29,5	39,4	14,4	3,45	4
CE	Tourism has produced positive impacts on cultural identity of our community	3,8	11,4	36,4	35,6	12,9	3,42	3
CE	The standard of living of local population has increased significantly because of tourism	2,3	20,5	36,4	36,4	4,5	3,2	3
ED	<i>Tourism has resulted in unpleasantly overcrowded beaches, walking trails, parks and other outdoor spaces of Split</i>	3,8	29,5	24,2	28,0	14,4	3,20	2
SC	<i>Tourism has changed the traditional culture in Split</i>	6,8	25,8	29,5	31,1	6,8	3,05	4
ED	<i>Tourism has resulted in traffic congestion, noise and pollution</i>	5,3	34,1	22,0	30,3	8,3	3,02	2



		Strongly disagree			Strongly agree		Mean	Mode
		1	2	3	4	5		
SC	<i>Local residents suffer for of living in a tourism area</i>	15,2	28	35,6	13,6	7,6	2,70	3
ED	<i>Construction of hotels and tourist facilities has destroyed the natural environment in Split</i>	7,6	43,9	28,8	18,2	1,5	2,62	2
SC	<i>Tourism has led to vandalism increase in Split</i>	15,2	50	24,2	9,8	0,8	2,31	2
SC	<i>Investments in tourism facilities are a waste of taxpayers' money</i>	21,2	49,2	19,7	7,6	2,3	2,2	2
SC	<i>High-spending tourist have negative effect on our local way of life</i>	18,9	56,1	16,7	6,1	2,3	2,17	2

EB = economic benefits

SC = social costs

CE = cultural enrichment

ED = environmental deterioration (Chen, 2001)

*Comment: Negative impacts are written in italic style*

Source: authors' research

The highest grade/perceived benefit is attributed to the social impact of cultural exchange followed by three economic impacts - increased consumption, jobs creation and economic benefits to local population and small firms. Moreover, the first half of the list is occupied solely by economic and social benefits. After these, the negative impacts follow with only one (tourism induced crowding) being recognized i.e. achieving a grade somewhat over 3 (neutral). The other negative social and physical impacts are not perceived as such by the respondents thus confirming our doubt about Split residents not being conscious about negative sides of tourism development.

As per *tourism support attitudes*, the highest grade was given to the statement “*I am proud that tourist are coming to Split*” (average grade 4.19, mode 5) followed by “*Tourism should continue to have an important economic role in Split*” (average grade 4.1, mode 4). On the other hand, indicatively, the lowest grade was awarded to the statement “*I believe that the citizens of Split have the control over the tourism development in their town*” (average grade 2.43, mode 2), followed by “*I believe I personally have the possibility to influence the tourism development in Split*” (average grade 2.71, mode 3). These findings are completely in line with answers to the question on ‘who the decision-makers for most issues in tourism development are’. Only 9.1% respondents think it is *the local community* while most (50.8%) think it is *the group of individuals within the community* and 29.5% attribute it to *subjects outside the local community*. Of those who believe decisions are made outside the local community, 58% have answered the question about who these subjects are - 26.5% consider *the entrepreneurs' interest groups* to be the most influential, 20.5% think it is *the city government* and 17.4% think it is the group of *individual powerful entrepreneurs*. These findings reveal that respondents find the community as a marginal stakeholder in the tourism planning process, while they perceive the powerful interest groups and entrepreneurs, from within and outside the community, playing the major role in this process. This is in line with the basic characteristics of the “*tourism vs. community*”

development model discussed earlier. Unfortunately the presence of this model has also been confirmed by residents' perceptions on participation in tourism planning and decision making as well as by the lack of trust in "tourism" institutions.

Namely, the highest majority of respondents (82.6%) claimed never to have been involved in any kind of meeting with public bodies' representatives related to tourism development issues. More precisely, 48.5% were not even thinking about getting involved. However, when asked directly if they were ever asked about their opinion regarding tourism development in Split, 84.8% said they were not; 10.6% said they have been consulted while 4.5% said they didn't know.

Respondents were also asked to point out how often the information about the key decisions in tourism planning is currently publicly available in Split and how often they think they should be presented. The results (Figure 1) show large discrepancies between the actual and desired state of the art in this area.

Figure 1: **The availability of information about key decisions for tourism development in Split**



Source: authors' research

Regarding trust in "tourism" related institutions, the results imply that it is generally at low level. Namely, out of the 7 institutions listed, highest grades (being 2.96 and 2.85) were attributed to Tourism Board of Split and County Tourism Board respectively, while the lowest (2.16) was for the Ministry of construction and physical planning followed by the city government (2.21).

These findings lead to the conclusion that development model of tourism in Split can be labelled as "tourism vs. community" type.

When asked about the optimal method of local community participation in tourism planning, the respondents prefer informal meetings/workshops with local authorities' representatives where views of locals would be noted and taken into consideration (37.9%). The other three options (referendum, on line forums, community representatives in management bodies) have similar share of support (ranging from 19.7 to 17.4%) while some respondents have written that all of these should be used and combined. This demonstrates the willingness of community members to take an active part in tourism planning process.

As stated in the literature review, residents' perceptions towards tourism impacts may vary related to a number of factors. To validate this assumption, we tested the difference in tourism impacts attitudes and support regarding the respondents' socio-demographic characteristics, using Mann-Whitney U and Kruskal Wallis test. The findings indicate difference in several attitudes with features related to highest number of attitudes being age and revenues from tourism. The relevant attitudes are:

- for age :
  - The standard of living of local population has increased significantly because of tourism (p=0,015);
  - Tourism helps Split develop in the right direction, (p=0.007);
  - I am proud that tourist are coming to Split, (p=0.045);
  - I believe I personally have the possibility to influence the tourism development in Split, (p=0.002);
  - population has increased significantly because of tourism, (p=0.041);
- revenues from tourism:
  - Tourism has created more jobs in Split, (p=0.023);
  - Tourism is the most important economic activity in Split, (p=0.01);
  - Tourism should continue to have an important economic role in Split, (p=0.049);
  - I believe I personally have the possibility to influence the tourism development in Split, (p=0.038).

These overlap in one statement/attitude – *“I believe I personally have the possibility to influence the tourism development in Split”*. A closer look at the analysis reveals that within the age groups, the highest mean ranks are found in the youngest age group (18-25), followed by 36-45 age group. As per revenues from tourism, the highest mean rank is recorded within those earning all of their revenues from tourism with ranks being decreased with the decrease of share of tourism revenues. Simultaneously, the statement/attitude related to most socio-demographic features is *“The standard of living of local population has increased significantly because of tourism”* which is found to be statistically different within different age groups, different length of residence and different work status. The highest mean rank is found within 36-45 age group (77.32), those living in Split for 11-15 (91.83) years and unemployed (70.81), just slightly above the employed respondents (70.13).

Two more statements/attitudes were overlapping in two features – the aforementioned and commented *“I believe I personally have the possibility to influence the tourism development in Split”* and *“Tourism is the most important economic activity in Split”* being related to place of birth and revenues from tourism. Within these, higher mean rank was found for those born in Split and the highest for those earning the majority of their revenues from tourism. These results support the foundations of SET theory and findings from previous studies, thus supporting Gursoy and Rutherford's (2004) conclusion on contradictory results of existing studies calling for further investigations on the subject. However, due to the research limitations, mostly posed by sample size and structure and the destination specifics, the findings are to be regarded as indicative and cannot be generalized.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Tourism development model and its resulting impacts are most evident from the community members' perspective – at the end of the day, it is the community residents that will harvest them or be suffocated by them. For this reason, this issue has often been in the focus of tourism research. We add to this body of research by providing insights and evidence from a currently booming tourism destination – the town of Split, in which tourism is one of the rare viable economic activities. In such context, very often the development myopia occurs blurring the view on negative tourism impacts. Combined with interest/entrepreneurial lobbies' pressures, it can lead to devastating and hardly reversible negative development legacies. The study findings mostly confirm our initial assumption about the “*tourism vs. community*” development model being in place. Also, differences in attitudes regarding socio-demographic characteristics were found as well as evidence supporting SET theory assumptions. The myopia effect is also found, evident in hardly any negative tourism effects being perceived and economic benefits prevailing, although not being perceived as strong as initially presumed. However, residents' do express the willingness to participate in the tourism development decision-making and think more transparency in the process is needed. The practical implication of the paper is the urge to empower the local community for tourism development participation and tourism impacts understanding.

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