



**Foreign Tourists as Homicide Victims in Croatia: A Routine Activity Approach**

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**Abstract**

The safety of tourists is of great importance in tourism-oriented countries such as Croatia, and the most serious threat to tourists is homicide. This paper examines the factors that have led to the homicides of foreign tourists in Croatia. For this analysis, the routine activity theory approach and its three key elements are used: a motivated offender, a suitable target, and the absence of a capable guardian. As there is no official data on crimes against foreign tourists in Croatia, the analysis was conducted using data from the media. The data for the analysis were collected using a questionnaire with 18 variables that can be divided into three groups: offender characteristics, victim characteristics, and the circumstances of the offence. The analysis showed that three factors had the strongest influence on the commission of foreign tourists' homicides: they got into disputes with unknown or little-known people; they consumed alcohol with people they did not know well; and they were alone in an unknown environment, far from the police or other people who could help them.

*Keywords: Homicides, Tourists, Routine Activity Theory, Croatia*

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## **1. Introduction**

The strong development of tourism in the second half of the 20th century, in addition to its positive effects, such as increased employment and income, the development of national economies, and a general improvement in living standards and quality of life (Ap & Crompton, 1998), has also caused negative impacts in tourism-intensive areas and countries. The negative effects of tourism and tourism development have been described in the literature since the 1970s in various areas, such as the environment (Tangi, 1977). Apart from the environment, tourism can also have negative effects on society. One of the social effects is the change in social values and norms (Pizam & Milman, 1986), which can be seen, among other, in the emergence or increase of crime, thus creating an “unwelcomed but close relationship between tourism and crime” (Mawby, 2017, p. 81).

Tourism-related crime can be classified in different ways. One of the possible classifications is the division into crimes against property and crimes against persons, or violent crimes (Pizam, 1999). Crimes against property include various forms of theft (mainly of movable property and vehicles), robbery, and burglary (in accommodation and vehicles) and are committed for economic reasons. Crimes against persons, such as homicide, rape, and assault, are usually committed for personal reasons, but may also have political or economic causes (Mataković, 2023). Notwithstanding the fact that theft is the most common crime against tourists (Holcomb & Pizam, 2006), homicide is the most serious threat to tourists. Although various studies (Chaturuka, Duffett, & Haydam, 2020; George, 2010; Mawby, 2000; Mawby, Özaşçılar, & Ziyalar, 2020) have shown that tourist victimisation, especially when it involves minor crimes, does not have a significant impact on repeat visits to the destination, homicides of tourists, apart from endangering their livelihoods, can seriously damage the image of the destination and negatively affect tourist arrivals. This is particularly evident in cases that receive intense media coverage, such as the disappearance of American tourist Natalee Holloway in Aruba, where, due to this media-covered disappearance, the proportion of American tourists dropped from almost 73% in 2005 to 56% in 2013 (Brown, 2015). Improving the negative image of a destination is a complex, long-term and expensive process, even if the tourism industry runs targeted campaigns to restore customers’ trust and convince them that the destination is safe (Avraham, 2006; Mansfeld, 1999).

Considering the importance of safety for tourists, this paper aims to identify the factors that have led to homicides of foreign tourists in Croatia. In Croatia, tourism is an important industry; in 2021, 16.1% of GDP and 19.7% of jobs were based on tourism (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2022). Furthermore, the majority of tourism traffic in Croatia is generated by foreign tourists; in 2021, foreign tourists accounted for 83.28% of tourist arrivals and 89.52% of overnight stays (Ministarstvo turizma, 2022). This information is important in the context of this paper, as various studies, such as Corona (2018), have found that homicides have a much stronger impact on foreign tourists than on domestic tourists, as foreign tourists are more intimidated by homicides than domestic tourists.

The homicides of foreign tourists will be analysed using the routine activity theory (Cohen & Felson, 1979) and its key elements. Routine activity theory focuses on routine activities in daily life. Cohen and Felson (1979) argue that the structure of routine activities influences crime and trends in crime. Criminal activities are treated as routine activities, and these routine activities are related to other routine behaviours, and the focus is on the interdependence between the structure of criminal activities and the organisation of everyday activities. According to routine activity theory, three elements must converge for crime to occur: (1) motivated offenders; (2) suitable targets; and (3) the absence of capable guardians who can prevent victimisation.

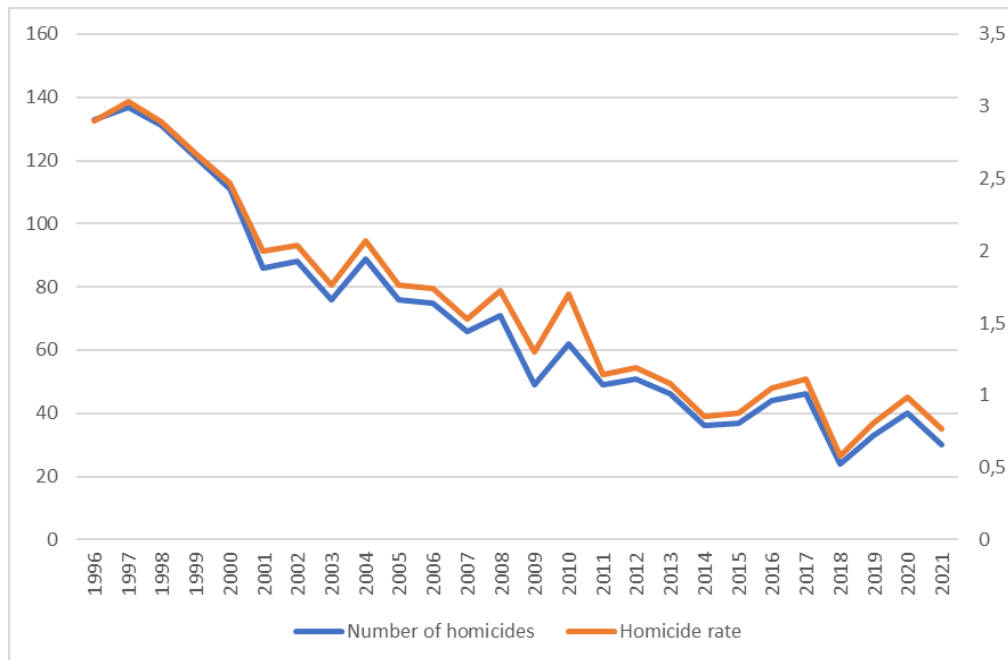
So far, the causes of mortality of foreign tourists in Croatia have rarely been addressed in the literature, with research focusing on natural causes of death (Bečić, Alujević, & Definis-Gojanović, 2011; Bečić, Jandrić Bečić, Čengija, Ćurić, Alujević, & Definis-Gojanović, 2013; Lazčić-Putnik, Dabović Rac, & Lazarić-Zec, 2005), as these are the most common causes of death, and suicides (Petri, Definis-Gojanović, & Andrić, 2003). This paper analyses for the first time the circumstances of the unnatural deaths of foreign tourists in Croatia and the factors that led to their homicides.

## **2. Homicides in Croatia**

Homicide is “generally considered the most serious of all crimes, with obviously the most serious consequences for the victim” (Smit, de Jong, & Bijleveld, 2012, p. 5). Homicides can be classified in different ways, and

one of the possible classifications is the division into intentional and non-intentional homicides. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime defines intentional homicide as “unlawful death purposefully inflicted on a person by another person” (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2013, p. 1). This definition contains three elements: (1) an objective one - a person killed another person; (2) a subjective one - the perpetrator intended to kill the victim; and (3) a legal one - the murder was against the law. Non-intentional homicides can be further divided into negligent homicide, which is committed out of recklessness or carelessness, and non-negligent homicide, which is committed under specific circumstances, such as provocation or diminished responsibility (ibid.). In this paper, both categories of homicide are analysed.

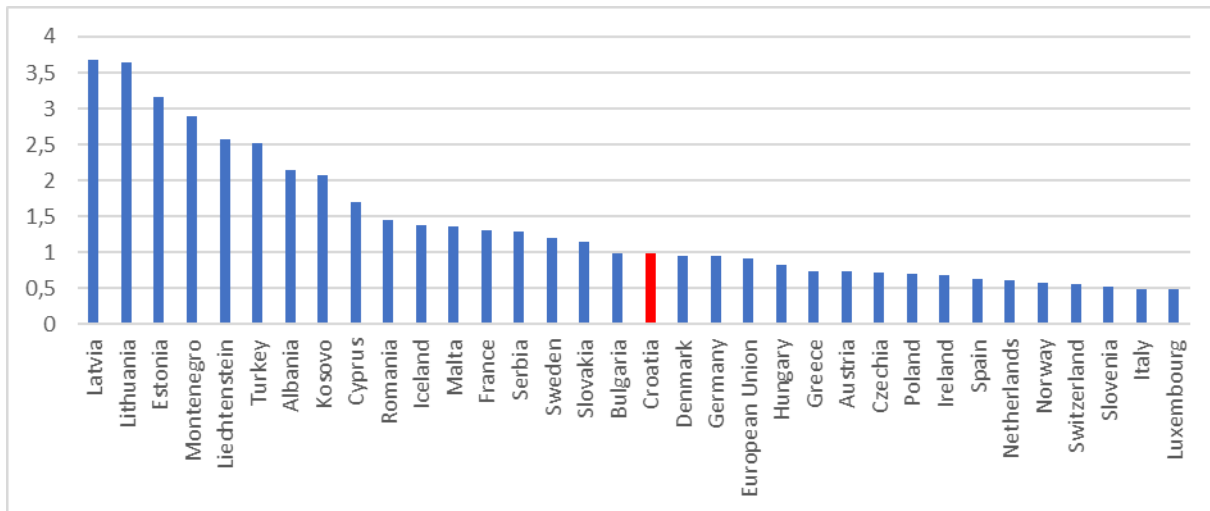
Figure 1 shows the number of homicides and the homicide rate from 1996, the first year after the end of the Homeland War, to 2021. The older data are not presented because they might show a distorted picture, as Croatia was in a different social and political system until 1991, after being in a Homeland War that lasted from 1991 to 1995.



**Figure 1.** Homicides in Croatia, 1996 – 2021

Source: Ministarstvo unutarnjih poslova (n.d.); Eurostat (n.d.).

The number of homicides has steadily declined since 1997, both in terms of the total number and the homicide rate. During the war and in the years immediately after the war, the homicide rate was above three and even four homicides per 100,000 inhabitants (Getoš Kalac & Karlović, 2014), which could be related to the accessibility of firearms (Cengija, Cuculic, Petaros, Sosa, & Bosnar, 2012). Since 2001, the homicide rate has been less than two, with a decreasing trend, and since 2017, it has been consistently below one homicide per 100,000 inhabitants. Apart from the fact that this is partly due to the passage of time since the war and its activities, this trend can be seen as a process that took place in parallel with the consolidation of democracy in Croatia (Alvazzi del Frate & Mugellini, 2012).



**Figure 2.** Homicide rates in Europe in 2020  
Source: Eurostat. (n.d.).

The homicide rate in Croatia is within the range of homicide rates in other European countries. The average homicide rate for the European Union in 2020 was 0.91 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants, and in Croatia, it was 0.99, placing the country approximately in the middle of European countries (Eurostat, n.d.). This figure is lower than the global average of 6.1 homicides per 100,000 inhabitants (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2019) and the average for countries in Central and Eastern

Europe, which was 3.46 for the period 2004 - 2008 (Marshall & Summers, 2012).

### **3. Theoretical Background: Routine Activity Theory**

Research on the relationship between tourism and crime is based on various theoretical approaches. Most research on crimes against tourists uses standard criminological theories that can generally be applied to different types of crimes; the theoretical determination of the relationship between tourism and crime exclusively is quite rare (Burton & Crotts, 2015), with exceptions such as the tourism crime cycle approach developed by Prideaux (Prideaux, 1996). The criminological theory most commonly applied to the analysis of crime related to tourism and tourist victimisation is the routine activity theory (Burton & Crotts, 2015; Maldonado-Guzmán, 2023), and the papers that used this approach cover different parts of the world, such as the USA (Roncek & Maier, 1991; Schiebler, Crotts, & Hollinger, 1996), Spain (Montolio & Planells-Struse, 2016), Ghana (Boakye, 2009), South Africa (Garidzirai, 2021), and Croatia (Recher & Rubil, 2020).

The motivation for the development of routine activity theory was a sociological paradox that emerged in the United States in the post-World War II period: despite the improvements in wealth and socio-economic conditions, such as the reduction of poverty and unemployment and better education, which until then had been thought to be the cause of crime, contrary to expectations, there was an increase in the crime rate in the USA (Miró, 2014). Since the previous theoretical approaches proved inadequate to explain the newly emerging situation, Cohen and Felson (1979) changed their perspective and shifted the focus from explaining why some people commit crime, which had been the previous theoretical focus, to explain how criminal events occur (Skubak Tillyer & Eck, 2009).

Cohen and Felson (1979) consider crime as an event; they do not analyse the motives of the offender but the circumstances in which the crime occurs (Miró, 2014). Routine activity theory states that people's routine activities influence criminal opportunities and that the routine activities in which people participate influence where, when, and to what extent crime will occur (Skubak Tillyer & Eck, 2009). Consequently, the

level of crime is related to the nature of daily activities (Carcach & Conroy, 2001). Cohen and Felson (1979) argue that changes in routine activities influence the occurrence of crime. For example, the increase in women's employment after the World War II led to houses being empty and, at the same time, suitable for burglary. On the other hand, a greater proportion of time spent away from home due to work, education, or leisure activities without capable guardians increases the number of suitable targets and affects the increase in violent victimisation (Cohen & Felson, 1979).

Seasonal changes in routine activities also affect opportunities for victimisation (Melo, Pereira, Andresen, & Matias, 2018) and one of the typical activities that represent a seasonal change in routines are holidays (Haberman, Sorg, & Ratcliff, 2017). Felson and Cohen (1980) recognised holidays as one of the possible causes of increased risk of predatory victimisation early in the development of routine activity theory. Moreover, routine activity theory assumes that criminal opportunities are not evenly distributed in society, nor are they infinite (Skubak Tillyer & Eck, 2009), and summer holidays may increase the supply of suitable targets in summer destinations (Boivin & Felson, 2018). Apart from the fact that summer holidays represent a change in routine activities, it should be noted that this change occurs in summer, when the weather is warm and people spend more time outdoors (Melo et al., 2018). Spending time outdoors increases the possibility of contact and interaction with unknown individuals who may be potential offenders (Badiora, Afón & Dada, 2017; Linning, Andresen, & Brantingham, 2017).

These longer stays in places outside the home also affected the structure of homicides (Carcach & Conroy, 2001). For example, Cohen and Felson (1979) find that in the USA between 1963 and 1975, the proportion of relative homicides decreased, the proportion of homicides due to romance or arguments decreased only slightly, and the number of felony-type homicides increased from 17.0% to 32.4% of the total number of homicides.

The following part of the paper discusses in more detail the three key elements of the routine activity theory: a motivated offender, a suitable target, and capable guardians.

### **3.1 A Motivated Offender**

Although Cohen and Felson (1979) argue that they do not focus on the characteristics of the offender but on the circumstances in which he or she commits a crime, the characteristics they saw in the offender can still be read. They believe that the offender has “criminal inclinations and the ability to carry out those inclinations” (Cohen & Felson, 1979, p. 590); thus, an offender can be anyone who has the motivation and capacity to commit a crime (Miró, 2014). Routine activity theory does not say much about the motivation of the offender (Boivin & Felson, 2018), as it is assumed that motivation is constant and the crime will be committed when an opportunity arises, which, unlike motivation, is not constant but varies (Mustaine & Tewksbury, 1997). Cohen and Felson (1979) referred to the offender as the “motivated offender” at the beginning of the development of this theory; in their later papers, such as Felson and Cohen (1980), it is no longer mentioned. The reason for this lies in their understanding that the motivation of the offender is irrelevant to the commission of the crime, but rather the physical factors that led him to commit the crime (Miró, 2014).

Tourist offenders may have different motives. These motives are economic when thefts, burglaries and robberies are committed, but their motives can also be personal when rapes or assaults are committed. Homicides and the kidnapping of tourists can be economically motivated, but they can also be committed for personal or political reasons (Mataković, 2023). To determine offenders more precisely, the Cohen's approach (Cohen, 1997) can be applied, which divides tourism-related crimes into four categories: (1) crimes committed by locals against tourists; (2) crimes committed by tourists against locals; (3) crimes committed by tourists and other foreigners against tourists; and (4) crimes committed by locals against other locals on tourism-related matters. On the basis of this classification, it can be concluded that the tourist offenders, i.e., the murderers of tourists, can be residents but also other tourists.

### **3.2 A Suitable Target**

Much more than on the offenders, the routine activity theory focuses on the victims, i.e., the suitable targets. The routine activity theory prefers



the term “suitable targets” to victims because, except persons, the target of attacks can be objects, i.e., material things. In the case of an attack on an object, the victim (e.g., the owner of that object) does not even have to be present during the attack (Badiora et al., 2017; Miró, 2014).

Felson and Cohen (1980) argue that suitable targets have at least four components: value, visibility, accessibility, and inertia. The value of the target can be material or symbolic and depends on the offender’s perception; if it is high enough, an attack will occur (Brown, Esbensen & Geis, 2010). Visibility and accessibility of the target means that it must be physically visible and accessible for attack by potential offenders (Skubak Tillyer & Eck, 2009). Target inertia refers to all physical factors that may impact on overcoming a potential attack. Large, heavy, or locked objects make the attack more difficult, as do people who are able to resist the offender, with or without a weapon (Felson & Cohen, 1980).

Tourists have all four components of a suitable target (Crotts, 1996). Tourists are valuable to criminals because they are perceived as wealthy, as they usually carry larger amounts of money, credit cards, and personal items that can easily be resold (ibid.). Furthermore, tourists are highly visible targets due to their clothing, which can differ from the local population (Biagi & Detotto, 2014). The accessibility of tourists to potential offenders increases when they spend more time outside their accommodation, which is considered safer than the outside world. Brunt and Shepherd (2004) studied tourists who were victims of crime in Cornwall, UK, and found that the likelihood of victimisation is higher when tourists spend more time outside their accommodation. Alleyne and Boxill (2003) found a similar in Jamaica, where victimisation rates were highest among tourists from Europe who did not use all-inclusive resorts. Finally, tourists have low inertia to defend themselves, as they often behave in a risky and careless manner while on holiday (Brunt, Mawby, & Hambly, 2000). In addition, the personal items they carry, such as cameras or mobile phones, also have low inertia as they are small, light and often unlocked, making them quite easy to steal (Crotts, 1996).

### **3.3 Absence of a Capable Guardian**

The third element is a capable guardian. According to the routine activity approach, a situation where a motivated offender and a suitable target

converge will not result in a criminal act if capable guardians are present nearby. A capable guardian is considered to be anyone who can stop or hinder the commission of a crime (Cohen & Felson, 1979). The concept of a capable guardian is broad and includes not only the police and other formal security forces but any person who, during their daily activities, can protect themselves or others, and their own and others' property, by their presence or activity (Miró, 2014). There are several forms of guardianship: community guardianship, self-guardianship, and formal guardianship (Mawby, 2010).

Community guardianship encompasses a wide range of persons who can perform the role of guardian: neighbours, relatives, gatekeepers, and even simple passers-by. In this sense, guardianship is informal, often unintentional, yet effective in preventing crime (Badiora et al., 2017), as the mere presence of a person, without any specific activities being undertaken, is considered sufficient to deter offenders (Boivin & Felson, 2018). The opportunities for informal community guardianship are limited in tourism as tourists do not have social ties at the destination. Tourists do not have enough time to build relationships with residents or neighbours who could act as guardians, as their visit has limited duration (Marteache & Trinidad, 2023).

A possible form of guardianship is also self-guardianship, i.e., activities that people undertake to protect themselves (Sampson, Eck, & Dunham, 2010). Self-guardianship is weaker on holiday than at home, as it is evident that people “behave in a much less rational manner while on holiday” (Walker & Page, 2007, p. 508), which is referred to in the literature as the “culture of carelessness” (Brunt et al., 2000, p. 418).

Formal guardianship consists of the police and private security forces. The number and type of formal guardians at the destination should be proportional to the security situation. Some studies, such as those by Feickert, Verma, Plaschka, and Dev (2006) and Rittichainuwat (2013), have found that the excessive presence of security officers irritates visitors and tourists, making them anxious and nervous. More important than the number of police officers is their location. To effectively reduce crimes against tourists, police officers need to be deployed in the places and at the times that attract the most tourists (Recher & Rubil, 2020).

## **4. Methodology**

### **4.1 Data Collection**

In Croatia, as in most other countries (cf. Mawby, 2017), crimes against tourists are not recorded separately in police data, i.e., no distinction is made between crimes against tourists and crimes against residents, and from the data published by the police (see Ministarstvo unutarnjih poslova, n.d.), it was not possible to obtain data on homicides against foreign tourists. Therefore, we used the media as a source of data. The media was searched on the internet, and a combination of keywords such as homicide, tourists, foreign tourists, and Croatia was entered into the Google search engine. This approach has also been used in other papers addressing various security and safety issues, such as violence at football matches (Harte & Romano, 2021), fatal tourist accidents (Reid, 2017), and domestic violence (Krishnakumar & Verma, 2021). The information on homicides was taken from the portals developed within the framework of the largest Croatian daily newspapers, such as Jutarnji list, Večernji list, Novi list, and Slobodna Dalmacija, as well as the news portal Index, one of the largest Croatian news portals.

### **4.2 Data Analysis**

The sample for this analysis consists of homicides committed against foreign tourists on the territory of the Republic of Croatia between 2005 and 2021. Given the small number of homicides committed ( $N = 9$ ), it was not possible to apply quantitative methods, so a qualitative analysis was conducted. Similar studies have taken the same approach (e.g., Niveau & Dang, 2003). The data for this analysis were collected using a questionnaire designed for this purpose. The questionnaire contains data on 18 variables, which can be divided into three groups in terms of content: offender characteristics, victim characteristics, and the circumstances of the offence. Since the data for this analysis were collected from the media, the full names of the homicide victims were included in this paper. We believe that it was not necessary to avoid their names, as they are publicly available.

## 5. Results

### 5.1 A Motivated Offender

The most important characteristics of offenders, i.e., the perpetrators of homicides against foreign tourists, are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Offender Characteristics

Homicide victim	Homicide perpetrator								
	Age	Sex	Citizenship	Influence of alcohol or drugs	Circumstances	The offender and the victim knew each other	Manner of commission	Used weapons	Committed within a group of offenders
Name unknown	44	Male	Croatia	Unknown	Quarrel over a broken rear-view mirror	No	Hit in the head	No	No
Patrick Bessinger	32	Male	Croatia	Yes	Quarrel over a comment about a hairstyle	No	A stab in the heart	Knife	No
Ugo Wilson	25	Male	United Kingdom	Unknown	Quarrel over drug dealing	Yes	Multiple stab wounds	Knife	No
Jolanta Magdalena Adameczuk	51	Male	Poland	Yes	Unknown	Yes	Hits in the head and body, drowning	No	No
Selena Macedo	28	Male	Croatia	Unknown	Unknown, possible sexual motive	No	Stabbing	Knife	No
Pawel Wydrowsky	35	Male	Poland	Yes	Quarrel	Barely	Hits in the head and body	No	Yes - 2 persons
	62	Male	Poland	Yes					
Pierangelo Cerana	50	Male	Croatia	No	Material goods as a motive	No	Hits in the head	Gas pistol	Yes - 2 persons
	48	Male	Croatia	No					
Peter Anthony Rushton	24	Male	Croatia	Yes	Quarrel, material goods as a secondary motive	Barely	Body blows, drowning	No	Yes - 3 persons
	27	Male	Croatia	Yes					
	22	Male	Croatia	Yes					
Bruna Falezza	26	Male	Croatia	No	Material goods as a motive	No	Pushing, negligence	No	Yes - 2 persons
	25	Male	Croatia	No					

The first characteristic of the offender analysed was age. At the time of the homicide, the youngest offender was 22 years old, the oldest was 62 years old, and most offenders were between 25 and 50 years old. The mean age is 35 years ( $M = 35.64$ ,  $SD = 12.38$ ), which is consistent with the research of Draganić, Kovačević, Muzinić, and Sušac (2016), where  $M =$

40.55, and the research of Getoš Kalac (2021), according to which most of the male homicide perpetrators were in the age group 21-30 years and slightly fewer in the age groups 30-40 and 40-50 years. All offenders are male, which is not surprising. Various studies conducted worldwide (e.g., Carcach & Conroy, 2001; Marshall & Summers, 2012) and in Croatia (Cengija et al., 2012; Draganić et al., 2016; Getoš Kalac, 2021; Marcikić, Petrovečki, Skavić, & Petrovečki, 1997) have found that perpetrators of homicide are mostly male. Regarding the nationality of the perpetrator, the analysis revealed that in six of the nine homicides committed, the offenders were Croatian nationals, and in three homicides, they were foreign nationals. These foreign nationals have the same nationality as their victims. Unlike in other European countries where foreigners are often analysed in connection with crime, foreigners are not intensively involved in crime or homicides in Croatia. The nationality of the perpetrator usually corresponds to the nationality of the victim. According to a study covering the period from 2010 to 2014, 85.2% of homicide offenders in Croatia were Croatian nationals (Getoš Kalac, 2021).

The following offender characteristic analysed is the influence of alcohol or drugs. Alcohol is a factor that contributes significantly to the commission of a homicide, as it increases aggression and decreases the ability to control behaviour (Carcach & Conroy, 2001; Draganić et al., 2016; Žarković Palijan, Kovačević, Radeljak, Kovač, & Mustapić, 2009). Of the nine homicides observed, the offenders were under the influence of alcohol in three cases. In two homicide cases (Pawel Wydrowsky and Peter Anthony Rushton), the offenders and the victims consumed alcohol together before the homicide. That is in line with Draganić et al. (2016), which found that 29% of perpetrators were under the influence of alcohol at the time of the homicide and that in 21% of homicides, both the perpetrator and the victim were under the influence of alcohol. In one homicide case (Patrick Bessinger), the offender was under the influence of cannabis. However, since the offender suffers from a mental disorder (Košta, 2020), it is not possible to determine from the available data whether he was motivated to commit the homicide by drugs or by a mental disorder. As various studies have shown that cannabis is not directly related to violence (e.g., Macdonald, Erickson, Wells, Hathaway, & Pakula, 2008) or that there is a moderate association between cannabis use and violence (Dellazizzo, Potvin, Athanassiou, & Dumais, 2020; Dellazizzo, Potvin, Dou, Beaudoin, Luigi, Giguère, & Dumais, 2020), it can

be assumed that the homicide was committed due to a mental disorder. There is also the possibility that this homicide was committed through the interaction of mental disorder and drugs. However, as we have already stated, it is not possible to determine with certainty the true motives of this homicide on the basis of the information disseminated in the media.

Offenders on tourists had different motives, and our analysis showed that the most common motive, which was present in five homicides, was a quarrel, and the offenders were additionally encouraged by alcohol. Material gain, i.e., carrying out a robbery with the aim of obtaining material goods, did not occur frequently and was a motive in two homicides. In one of these two homicides, it can be assumed that the homicide was not planned but happened as a consequence of an incident when the offender and victim collided.

In four of the nine homicides, the offender and victim knew each other; Jolanta Magdalena Adamczuk had the most intense relationship with her offender, as she had a romantic relationship with him (Sviličić, 2018). Ugo Wilson also knew his offender because they both belonged to the milieu of drug dealers (Sviličić, 2020). Two victims hardly knew their offenders: Pawel Wydrowsky was murdered by the people who had hired him as a yacht skipper (PSD, 2008), and Peter Anthony Rushton met his offenders in a bar (Jutarnji, 2006). These findings differ from the research conducted so far in Croatia. Research covering the period from 1991 to 2014 shows that in 42% of homicides the offender and victim were related; in 45% they were acquaintances; and only 6% of homicides were committed by a person unknown to the victim (Draganić et al., 2016). A more recent study covering the period 2010-2014 found that in the relationship between victim and offender, 17.6% of homicides were committed by strangers, 48.0% by non-spouses, and 34.4% by spouses (Getoš Kalac, 2021). It is not surprising that the homicides of foreign tourists in this segment differ from previous studies, as the victims were foreign nationals who stayed in Croatia for a short time.

In five of these homicides, the offenders did not carry a weapon, but physical force was used. In one homicide, the victim was hit with a gas pistol, and in three homicides, a knife was used. In four homicides, several persons were involved as perpetrators: three homicides involved two perpetrators, and one homicide involved three perpetrators.

### 5.2 A Suitable Target

In Table 2 are presented the basic characteristics of homicide victims: age, sex, nationality and whether they were under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

**Table 2.** Victim Characteristics

Homicide victim	Age	Sex	Nationality	Influence of alcohol or drugs
Name unknown	69	Male	Austria	No
Patrick Bessinger	23	Male	Germany	No
Ugo Wilson	26	Male	United Kingdom	Unknown
Jolanta Magdalena Adamczuk	39	Female	Poland	Unknown
Selena Macedo	31	Female	Mexico	No
Pawel Wydrowsky	35	Male	Poland	Yes
Pierangelo Cerana	61	Male	Italy	No
Peter Anthony Rushton	30	Male	United Kingdom	Yes
Bruna Falezza	71	Female	Italy	No

The analysis found that the mean age of victims was 42 years ( $M = 42.77$ ,  $SD = 17.84$ ), which is in line with the study conducted by Cengija et al. (2012), where the mean age of victims was 40 years. Cengija et al. (2012) found that victims were younger than the offenders, and in our analysis, victims were, on average, older than their offenders. Two victims are under 30 years old, and three are over 60 years old. In terms of gender, there are more males among the victims - six victims are male, and three are female. This result is in line with the research conducted by Draganić et al. (2016) for the period from 1991 to 2014, where 64% of the victims were male and 36% female. Most victims are from the countries from which most tourists and visitors come to Croatia: Austria, Germany, Italy, and Poland (Ministarstvo turizma, 2022). Regarding nationality, the only unusual victim is Selena Macedo from Mexico, a country that does not have intensive tourism relations with Croatia. Most of the victims were not under the influence of alcohol or drugs at the time of the homicides, and for two of them, it was not possible to determine intoxication on the basis of the available data. The two victims already mentioned (Pawel Wydrowsky and Peter Anthony Rushton) were under the influence of alcohol at the time of the homicide, as were their

offenders. The previous studies conducted in Croatia revealed different findings about the victims' state of intoxication. The study by Draganić et al. (2016) found that 25% of victims were under the influence of alcohol, and in the study by Getoš Kalac (2021), 46% of male victims and 13% of female victims were under the influence of alcohol. An older study covering the period from 1970 to 1989 found that even 72.4% of victims were under the influence of alcohol (Marcikić et al., 1997).

### 5.3 Absence of a Capable Guardian

Table 3 lists the circumstances of the offences: location, place, year, month, day, and time of the homicide, as well as whether the victim was alone at the time of the offence.

**Table 3.** Circumstances of the Offence

Homicide victim	Location of offence	Place of offence	Year of offence	Month of offence	Day of offence	Time of offence	The victim was alone at the time of the offence
Name unknown	Baška	Street	2021	August	Saturday	Afternoon	Yes
Patrick Bessinger	Pula	Street	2019	July	Tuesday	Night	No
Ugo Wilson	Pag	In front of the night club	2018	June	Wednesday	Night	No
Jolanta Magdalena Adamczuk	Zadar channel	Yacht	2017	June	Tuesday	Afternoon	Yes
Selena Macedo	Split	Park	2012	August	Wednesday	Afternoon	Yes
Pawel Wydrowsky	Sućuraj, Hvar	Sailing boat	2008	September	Thursday	Night	Yes
Pierangelo Cerana	Punat	Mobile home	2007	May	Saturday - Sunday	Night	Yes
Peter Anthony Rushton	Poreč	Fishing boat	2005	October	Friday - Saturday	Night	Yes
Bruna Falezza	Opatija	Street	2005	March	Wednesday - Thursday	Night	Yes

By analysing the spatial and temporal characteristics, we can determine the circumstances of the homicides and whether there is a spatial and temporal regularity or pattern in the homicides of foreign



tourists. Regarding the geographical location of the homicides, we found that all nine homicides were committed in locations on the Adriatic coast, which is to be expected since most foreign tourists in Croatia visit the Adriatic (Ministarstvo turizma, 2022). Most of the homicides, i.e., five out of nine, were committed outdoors, on the street or in a park, which is also to be expected, as foreign tourists usually visit Croatia in the spring and summer, when the weather is warm, and they mostly spend their time outdoors. The other places where the homicides were committed are also related to tourism: three homicides were committed on boats used by tourists in the summer, and the fourth was committed in a mobile home where the victim was spending his holiday (Vežnaver, 2019). These data differ from the research of Žarković Palijan et al. (2009), Draganić et al. (2016), and Getoš Kalac (2021), who found that most homicides were committed in private spaces such as houses or flats, and only slightly more than 10% of homicides were committed in open spaces such as the streets.

The analysis by year did not reveal a pattern; with the exception of 2005, when two homicides were committed, there was no more than one homicide in any year of the period studied. However, the distribution by month shows a pattern, as all homicides were committed between late March and mid-October, and most of them were in the summer. This is not surprising, as Croatian tourism is characterised by a strong seasonality; for example, in 2021, 84% of tourist arrivals and 91% of tourist overnight stays were realised between June and September (Ministarstvo turizma, 2022). The day of the week of homicides does not show a pattern, as homicides were committed on different days. However, when looking at the time of day, a pattern emerges, as three homicides were committed in the afternoon and six at night. These data are in line with other studies (Draganić et al., 2016; Getoš Kalac, 2021; Marcikić et al., 1997; Žarković Palijan et al., 2009), which have shown that most homicides in Croatia were committed in the afternoon, evening, and night, i.e., between 4:00 PM and 3:00 AM. The last feature of this analysis is whether the victim was alone at the time of the homicide commission. This information is important because the routine activity approach assumes that everyone can be a capable guardian and defend others as well as themselves (Sampson et al., 2010). Six victims were alone at the time of the homicide, which reduced the likelihood that someone could help them. In addition, the two victims were alone and intoxicated, which further limited their

ability to defend themselves. One of the victims, Bruna Falezza, was not alone at the time of the attack but was accompanied by three people who were over 70 years old (Index, 2005) and unable to defend themselves against the offenders in their mid-twenties.

## **6. Discussion**

This paper aims to explore the factors that led to the homicides of foreign tourists in Croatia. Although “every single murder is a unique and unrepeatable personal act” (Žarković Palijan et al., 2001, p. 53), homicides, like other criminal acts, have patterns, and it is possible to analyse them using different theoretical approaches. In this paper, we have applied the routine activity theory approach. Routine activity theory is suitable for the analysis of homicides related to tourism as it consistently addresses the activities of individuals and how they place them at risk (Roncek & Maier, 1991).

The analysis found that the motives of the offenders were disputes and material gain, and in two homicides, the motives were not entirely clear. Disputes were the most common motive, and some disputes happened for trivial reasons. An Austrian national, whose name is not stated in the media, was murdered on the spot because he had thorned the rear-view mirror of a passing car (Index, 2021), and German national Patrick Bessinger was murdered by an offender with a mental disorder who believed he had made negative comments about his hairstyle (Jutarnji, 2019). The homicides of Pawel Wydrowsky and Peter Anthony Rushton were committed during a dispute that arose when they had been drinking alcohol with their offenders. Peter Anthony Rushton was also robbed. However, theft was not the main motive for this homicide; the homicide was committed as a consequence of a dispute among intoxicated persons. Only a small number of the homicides had a criminal motive: Pierangelo Cerana and Bruna Falezza were murdered during robberies, and material gain was the only motive for the offenders. The homicide of Ugo Wilson also had a criminal motive, as it happened during a confrontation in the criminal milieu. In two homicides, the motives are not entirely clear: Jolanta Magdalena Adamczuk was murdered by her partner, probably due to problems in their relationship, and the perpetrator of the homicide of Selena Macedo did not reveal his motives at the trial (Urukalo, 2022).

The second element stated by routine activity theory is a suitable target, and these targets have four components: value, visibility, accessibility, and inertia (Felson & Cohen, 1980). The value of the victims who were murdered for material reasons was their personal belongings, and in the case of Selena Macedo, who was probably murdered for sexual reasons, the value to the offender was herself, i.e., her body. Perhaps the most noticeable feature of all the victims was their accessibility. All victims stayed in open spaces and were, therefore, easily accessible to the offenders. Moreover, most of the attacks happened at night in places far away from people, so the offenders could easily escape after the homicide. Some of the victims had low inertia, which attracted offenders, such as one of the victims who was 71 years old and, therefore, unable to adequately defend herself against the offenders.

The third element of the routine activity theory is the absence of capable guardians. The most obvious guardians of tourists are the police or private security forces, but most of the victims were far from them. In three homicides, it was difficult for the police or other guardians to reach the victim because the homicides were committed on boats, and only the victims and offenders were on board. One homicide was committed in a park on a hill, in a rather inaccessible place, far from the police and others who might stop the offender (Urukalo, 2022). One homicide was committed in a camp in May (Jutarnji, 2007), and there were probably only a few security guards present, as there were few people in the camp at that time of year. The routine activity theory of a capable guardian considers a variety of people who can provide protection to the victims (Miró, 2014). However, the six victims were alone at the time of the attack, so there was no one nearby who could protect them or deter the offender with their presence. One of the potentially capable guardians, according to routine activity theory, are the victims themselves, especially if they have means of self-protection (Tewksbury & Mustaine, 2003). None of the victims in this analysis used means of self-protection, which is not surprising as they were on holiday. Being on holiday, it is also not surprising that the two victims were intoxicated and, therefore, less able to protect themselves.

### ***Limitations***

A major limitation of this paper is the small number of cases included. In this paper, nine homicides of foreign tourists were analysed, as there

were no more homicides of this type that could be included in the analysis. Given the small number of homicides analysed, it is difficult to draw general conclusions. The results obtained are very local and can hardly be transferred to other countries with high level of tourism. Furthermore, as we have collected the data on homicides from the press, it is possible that some homicides have not been recorded by the press and that the actual number of homicides of foreign tourists is higher than those we have identified. During the preparation of the paper, the police data were checked (Ministarstvo unutarnjih poslova, n.d.). The number of homicides against foreigners is indeed higher than the number of homicides against foreign tourists found in the press, but homicides against foreigners also occurred in various other contexts outside of tourism. As we mentioned in the Methodology section, it was not possible to determine from the police data which of the homicides were related to tourism and which to other circumstances. Nevertheless, this analysis provides a good insight into the homicides committed and allows for a better understanding of this topic, which has not yet been explored in Croatian literature. Based on this analysis, new avenues for future research can be identified, and it may also have practical implications for the police or local authorities in destinations with many foreign tourists.

## **7. Conclusion**

This paper analyses the factors that influenced the homicides of foreign tourists in Croatia, based on the key elements of routine activity theory. Tourism is one of those paradoxical social phenomena that Cohen and Felson (1979) noted early in the development of routine activity theory. They argue that “it is ironic that the very factors which increase the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of life also may increase the opportunity for predatory violations” (Cohen & Felson, 1979, p. 605). Although in the context of tourism, violent crimes are more frequently reported to the police than property crimes, and therefore one can get the impression that violent crimes are more frequent (Ryan, 1993), it can be concluded that violent crimes among tourists and homicide, as its most serious form, are not widespread in Croatia. In the period from 2005, when the first homicide of foreign tourists from this analysis was committed, until today, nine foreign tourists have been murdered in Croatia. Considering that

more than ten million foreign tourists visit Croatia every year (Ministarstvo turizma, 2022), one could say that these homicides are isolated cases. Of course, it must be taken into account that there may have been more homicides, but they were not published in the media and consequently did not enter into this analysis. Our analysis has shown that three factors had the strongest influence on the homicides of foreign tourists: they got into disputes with unknown or little-known people; they consumed alcohol with people they did not know well; and they were alone in an unfamiliar environment, far from the police or other people who could help them. All these factors are easy to understand in the context of tourism because people want to relax and enjoy themselves on holiday and are not concerned about personal safety (de Albuquerque & McElroy, 1999).

Since informal community guardianship and self-guardianship have limited scope in tourism, the focus should be on formal police forces to protect tourists. In order to provide tourists with a safe stay and holiday, the Croatian police together with local authorities have been implementing various preventive measures for more than 20 years. One of them is the "Safe Tourist Destination" project, under which police patrols consisting of Croatian and foreign police officers have been formed to operate in places hosting foreign tourists. In addition, a Headquarters for the implementation of security measures during the tourist season was established, which coordinates various services such as the police, coast guard or fire brigade. Within this headquarters, a 24-hour on-call service has been established that tourists can contact if needed (Hina, 2022).

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