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## A Comparison of Motivations behind Tourism Trips to Italy – Travellers of the Grand Tour Era vs. Modern Tourists

**Abstract.** The purpose of the article is to compare motivations of travellers visiting Italy in the past, especially in the Grand Tour period, with those of modern tourists. A literature review has revealed that during the Renaissance in the Enlightenment and in the period of the Grand Tour, travel was an opportunity to acquire knowledge, to pursue science and self-development. The empirical part of the article describes results of a study (involving focus group interviews) which indicate that modern tourists also travel to Italy for educational purposes to visit sights that are famous for their historical and artistic qualities. However, for modern tourists such trips are, to a greater extent, opportunities for “an escape from daily life” as well as a chance to get to know the culture, including the local cuisine, new people and a form of rest and recreation. Another important factor, which also played a role in the romantic period, is the desire to boast of the trip on social media.

**Keywords:** tourism motivations, Grand Tour, trips to Italy

### 1. Introduction

There are many factors that motivate tourists to travel, including external factors (demographic, social, economic, spatial, political, cultural) and internal factors, associated with individual characteristics of a given person. This latter group encompasses motivations that can be viewed as internal factors related to psychology and physiology, which, consciously or subconsciously, lead to a certain action [Middleton 1996; Niezgoda 1999]. Motivations determine the choice of a tourist destination [Yousaf, Amin, Santos 2018].

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Italy was a popular destination for travellers from the ancient times, through the Middle Ages, Renaissance, Enlightenment and Romanticism and remains one of the most frequently visited countries today [Mączak 1984; Wrześniak 2005; Wiczorkiewicz 2008]. In the Renaissance and Enlightenment period, as well as during the Grand Tour era travel was an opportunity to acquire knowledge, to pursue science and self-development. Nowadays, in the age of instant and universal access to information, it can be expected that it is easier for tourists to prepare for travelling [Yousaf, Amin, Santos 2018]; however, a question can be raised whether motivations of modern tourists are similar to those of past travellers.

The purpose of the article is to compare motivations of travellers visiting Italy in the past, especially in the Grand Tour period, with those of modern tourists. Drawing on insights from a review of the literature on the characteristics of trips to Italy undertaken in different historical periods and on the results of a survey of young tourists, the author compares motivations of past and modern tourists. The object of the study is to determine to what extent the modern tourist choosing to visit Italy is motivated by the desire to gain new knowledge and whether the choice of this destination is viewed as an opportunity for education, as was frequently the case with travellers in the Grand Tour period.

## 2. Travel motivations – the problem of definition

Choices made by tourists when deciding where to spend a holiday and then selecting individual goods and services after arriving at a given destination, can be classified as consumer behaviour, which are part of a wider field of general human behaviour [Rudnicki 2010].

The specific problem involves the question why two people in exactly the same situations can behave differently or why two people in very different circumstances behave similarly. Why is one person willing to save and wait for a dream trip to Rome, while another one prefers to spend holidays by the Baltic Sea and does not intend to save for or even consider visiting Italy.

Tourist trips, the desire to visit certain places, travel frequency can all be determined by personal motivations.

Motivations should be treated as a dynamic aspect of consumers' (tourists') behaviours, which bridges the gap between felt needs and a decision to take a certain action (travel to a specific place) [Niezgoda 2012: 23]. Motivations encompass internal factors related to psychology and physiology, which, consciously or subconsciously, lead to a certain action. They are activating forces that sustain a person's involvement and curiosity that is manifested in the desire to act [Roth, Schrandt 1982].

There are many classifications of travel motivations in the literature [Middleton 1996; Ryan 1997; Pizam, Mansfeld (ed.) 2000; Yousaf, Amin, Santos 2018]. They include motivations of consumers of tourism services, as well as types of trips that can be distinguished taking into account different motivations. Typically, motivations can be divided into the following categories:

- motivations related to physical culture and recreation, e.g. spending time on the beach, hiking in the mountains, bike trips;
- health improvement, e.g. a stay at a spa or a wellness retreat or resort;
- social motivations involving the desire to spend time with family or keep someone company, e.g. joining a trip someone else has selected, or accompanying a spouse attending a fair or a conference;
- the desire to escape from daily routine, where leaving the usual place of residence is the most important thing, while the choice of a destination is of secondary importance;
- entertainment, e.g. attending concerts or other events, festivals or parties;
- religious motivations, e.g. pilgrimages to places of worship or other religious sites to practice contemplation and experience spiritual regeneration.

It should be emphasised that in many cases one trip can be undertaken for more than one reason [Niezgoda 1998; Sonntag 2006]. In fact, multiple motivations are quite common. For example, a holiday trip to Italy can be motivated by the desire to visit places with interesting historical sites and museums (cultural motivation), but religious motives (visiting holy places) or recreational considerations (a relaxing stay in a warm climate) can also play a role. A visit to a big city can be motivated by the desire to attend a theatrical performance but additional motivation may include shopping plans or time spent in the company of friends (entertainment, pleasure, social motivations). Chris Ryan [1997: 46] and Ulf Sonntag [2006: 32] point to a reverse relationship: one motive can result in different types of trips. For instance, to gain new knowledge, a tourist may either travel to Italy and visit museums there or go to another town to take part in a meeting of a discussion club or simply go to the seaside with a bunch of guidebooks to read them on the beach.

Motivations change in the course of a lifetime. Young people tend to have different motivations (mainly meeting new people and getting to know new places) from older people (rest and recreation).

According to Władysław Gaworecki [2000: 91], tourism is a form of compensation for the conditions of modern life, as a response on the part of people unable to fully adjust to the changing environment and new needs resulting from these changes and maladjustments. It is these needs that prompt people to travel and the choice of destination depends on factors that may vary in different historical periods.

### 3. Trips to Italy from a historical perspective

Travel motivations in different historical periods varied. It is believed that the phenomenon of tourism originated in ancient times [Kraś 2008: 165] and was associated with travel for religious, commercial, diplomatic or health-related purposes. In the Middle Ages, people travelled mainly for religious reasons, which is consistent with the general characteristics of that period. In the Renaissance, it was a common custom to travel to schools in foreign countries [Maćzak 1984: 123]. This educational motivation developed in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, where travel began to be seen as an opportunity to gain enriching and learning experience and make new social contacts. It also became an indicator of high social class [Veblen 1998].

Analysis of travel in different historical periods has to be based on personal accounts and descriptions. In general, detailed analyses exist for periods starting from the 15<sup>th</sup> century, owing to the availability of historical sources. In the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries, a number of treatises were written about the types of trips worth taking and laudable *motives for travelling*. A distinction was made between *peregrinari*, denoting a trip undertaken for self-development and learning, and *vagary*, which signified vagrancy [Maćzak 1984: 8].

Travel became the thing to do for future diplomats, lovers of the antique, merchants and representatives of the nobility. There are 26 extant Polish accounts of journeys across Europe from the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries [Wrześniak 2005: 146-147]. The main category includes diplomatic journeys, where the aspect of tourism is at best of secondary nature, though the accounts contain signs of interest in the visited countries. The second group of accounts describe journeys in pursuit of education and learning. The third group consists of diaries recounting experiences of travelling that can be classified as tourism. In her analysis of these texts, Małgorzata Wrześniak [2005: 147] notes that regardless of the purpose of the journey, the travellers perceive Italy as the most beautiful country of the world, full of wonderful places, a treasure trove of sciences and arts. The diary authors devote most of their attention to the *holy places* of Rome, followed by Venice and Padua but barely mention Florence.

It can be concluded that (mostly educated) travellers of the past were motivated by the desire to get to know the objective reality and broaden their horizons. The analysis of diaries written by Polish travellers indicates that the 16<sup>th</sup> century saw the development of a typical tour of Italy [Wrześniak 2005: 157]. Travellers typically visited cities mainly to admire their arrangement and fortifications, paying less attention to works of architecture, sculpture and painting. However, by the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, landscape descriptions had become more popular and the fascination in differences started to give way to the fascination in novelty.

One can notice a conventional treatment of visited places, manifested in repetitive descriptions, which are mainly the result of the desire to acquire knowledge that could prove useful in the future political career, to learn foreign languages, to get to know as many important persons as possible and learn more about fortifications. These goals motivated people travelling in search of education as well as those who can be described as first tourists.

A typical Polish traveller to foreign lands would follow recommendations and pay attention to objects indicated by an experienced teacher. The character of accounts included in the travel diary would depend on the author's upbringing, education, erudition and on parental command [Wrześniak 2005: 161-162].

In the course of the 16<sup>th</sup> century, the fact of having travelled became a symbol of social status and a basic element of education for a nobleman planning to assume important social roles [Mączak 1984: 275-276]. What made foreign lands attractive were different, famous and praised landscapes and ancient art. Travellers admired the Renaissance culture and the reception of works of art was amplified by the scenery of the moment and the mood of the observer. Travel was seen as an opportunity to broaden one's knowledge and digest it in the mind and tourism became a "common" phenomenon (in higher social classes), a kind of cultural obligation, largely motivated by snobbery. And this is precisely the motive behind the phenomenon that can be treated as the origin of modern tourism, namely the Grand Tour.

#### 4. Motivations of trips to Italy in the Grand Tour period

The term *Grand Tour* was used by Richard Lassels in his work entitled *The voyage of Italy*, published posthumously in 1670 [Wieczorkiewicz 2008: 99]. The book was intended for "young lords" making the tour in pursuit of knowledge and moral and physical self-improvement. Personal observation was a necessity for everyone wishing to develop an independent and original opinion about cities and countries visited on the way.

The Grand Tour was no longer merely a fashion but became an element of a certain lifestyle. The whole enlightened world went travelling [Mączak 1984: 13]. The 18<sup>th</sup> century Italy attracted tourists from all over Europe. Travel to Italy was in vogue to such an extent, that, as Antoni Mączak observes, it was expected to know Italy and anyone who had never been there would feel inferior in the company of those who had [1984: 92-93]. After returning from a foreign journey, a young man was treated as a real gentleman. A. Mączak notes that Europeans in the Enlightenment developed a taste that has survived until the present day [Mączak 1984: 136]. Tourists did not fail to visit Venice, Florence, Pisa or Lucca,

going as far as Naples, and, more and more often to Sicily, and always headed for Rome [Łazarkowie 2005: 156]. The journey itself did not last long compared to the stay (frequently many months) at a given place where travellers would cultivate their national customs.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, it became customary in the aristocratic and higher nobility circles to visit Italy not just once during one, long grand tour, but more times in order to be able to discover one's favourite places and corners. The English were the first to set this trend, which was emulated by those who considered themselves to be Europeans, thus ushering in the age of modern tourism [Mączak 1984: 126].

Travel was supposed to be an opportunity where one learns to think and get to know the world in an empirical, enlightened way. Obviously, sightseeing involved experiencing selected elements of foreign reality. Many travellers, enamoured of the Italian nature and fascinated by its art (mostly from the ancient period) and new styles of painting, were repelled by the sight of Italian streets and crowds and horrified by the state of inns and public safety. Many enlightened tourists looked for relatively secluded sites, famous for their history not for the present day [Mączak 1984: 220]. Consequently, the education received by tourists of that period did not include the reality of daily life led by lower social strata of countries they visited.

It is interesting, in this context, to analyse the accounts written by Stanisław Staszic, who travelled across Italy between 1790 and 1791 as a guardian to the sons of Andrzej Zamoyski. When describing Italian cities, Staszic finds more to criticise than to praise with regard to their location, planning and art and is equally critical about Italian customs and cuisine, which are exactly the things that Polish travellers in previous centuries found admirable [Wrześniak 2010: 133].

At the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century the cultural pattern of elitist travel had changed: tourism was no longer dominated by men; more women or even whole families started to travel. Groups of tourists became increasingly commonplace [Mączak 1984: 192-193]. Travellers visited not only places of historical interest but also contemporary construction sites. For example, diaries written by rich European aristocrats making their Grand Tour of Italy describe their impressions of having visited the construction site of the royal palace at Caserta [Morelli 2007; Niezgoda 2017].

The 18<sup>th</sup>-century travel was undertaken not only for educational reasons but also to get away from daily routine and as a form of entertainment. In the Romantic era the philosophy of travel changed considerably: while travelling impressions remained the main theme, the role of the traveller's personality and psychology gained increasing importance. In addition to descriptions of places, diaries contained a presentation of the traveller [Burkot 1988: 24]. One can notice that nowadays, in the era of social media, such a presentation is becoming an

important, if not the most important element of travel accounts [Haslebacher, Varga, Murphy 2019].

The Romantic traveller, even if admired “lonely heroes” or was one of them, would mingle with inhabitants of the visited country, get to know their lives and look for others like him. He was no longer a well-prepared, one might even say, conventional tourist who ticked off all the sights and works of art – he was a real traveller. In the era of national bards, Poles would go abroad not only to get to broaden their horizons and enjoy the trip but also out of necessity following the defeat of national uprisings.

However, the legacy of the Romantic era can still be detected in modern tourism and travel motivations. Francois-Rene Chateaubriand wrote “I did not make the journey to describe it [...] I went to look for images; that’s all” [as cited in Maćzak 1984: 199]. This motivation still remains valid today, in the age of the Internet and social media – modern tourists keep looking for, capturing and sharing images, although unlike Chateaubriand, these accounts are often not based on much knowledge about the place. The emotional perception offers a way of escaping from reality. This approach has been inherited by mass tourism.

## 5. Travel motivations of modern tourists – results of an empirical study

Thanks to the development of the means of transport, the relative decline in the cost of travelling, accommodation possibilities and the services offered by specialized travel agencies, participation in tourism is no longer limited to narrow social groups [Butler 2006; Sonntag 2006; Niezgodna 2013]. According to Dean MacCannell [1999: 231]: “Now there appears to be a social mandate: everyone must go somewhere else and spend money in someone else’s home, so everyone living *there* will be able to go to someone else’s home and spend money, and so on”. Some authors believe that modern tourists are not prepared to properly perceive tourist experiences [Krasny 2009: 6] and want to visit what they are familiar with [MacCannell 1999; Maćzak 1984: 8]. According to John Urry [2007], the development of photography has significant implications for mass tourism. Tourism has become a search for photogenic objects. Tourists look for vistas they have already seen (in brochures or on social media), a phenomenon known as “scenic tourism”. Thanks to film, press, TV and the Internet, people tend to want to visit places they have learned something about [Yousaf, Amin, Santos 2018]. The extreme effect of these developments is the emergence of a “post-tourist”, who is satisfied with replicas of monuments and artificial attractions, which provide new impressions and experiences. [Winiarski, Zdebski 2008].

More and more tourists are travelling all over the world, including Italy. A question can be raised whether their motives are similar to those that inspired travellers in earlier epochs.

In order to answer this question, the author conducted an empirical study involving focus groups. The interviews were carried out in three groups consisting of 5-8 participants. The purposive sample of students from Poznan universities was selected because of shared characteristics that are relevant for the research problem. Students, just like Grand Tour travellers, stand at the threshold of adult life and education is a major goal in their lives. This type of research is exploratory and can be an introduction to quantitative research. The limitations of representativeness arising from the purposive (deliberate) selection of the sample and the qualitative nature of the study should be borne in mind.

The key objective of the study was to investigate the behavioural aspect of the respondents' attitudes. For this reason, in addition to questions about trips to Italy, they were also asked to provide details of their motivations.

The first set of issues addressed during the discussion related to the willingness to travel and preferred destinations. Respondents in one group agreed that travelling was not "an exceptional dream", and 3 persons said it was an "ordinary" activity. For participants in the remaining focus groups travelling was something special that they were looking forward to. One response exemplifies the special character of travel:

*Travelling is the only thing that will remain with my for ever after I have bought it.*

This theme was explored further during the discussion on the frequency of travel. In all focus groups, the respondents indicated that they travelled more than once a year and their limited holiday travel was the result of obligations related to studies and work. Members of two groups pointed out that even obligations provide opportunities for travel (staying abroad as an Erasmus student or working abroad). It was stressed, however, that such stays cannot be treated as tourist travel. One respondent said:

*Travelling is an opportunity to combine business and pleasure.*

The discussion in one group was summarized by one person who noted that "travelling is not an exception but almost a matter of daily life", and it is motivated by the desire to "be like others".

The second group of questions addressed the attractiveness of Italy as a destination. Most participants in all focus groups believed that Italy is an attractive place to visit. However, in all three groups some students indicated they would prefer to go to "more exotic countries", to "other continents". One person said that "Italy is too familiar, everyone has been there". It can therefore be concluded that in the information age Italy is not as attractive as it was in the Grand Tour era.



In the discussion about motives for trips to Italy, the participants listed such reasons as “historical sights”, “interesting cities”, “delicious food”, “beaches”, as well as “cool people” and “parties”. Only one persons mentioned museums. In all three groups, “exploring the culture” was given as an important motive. A number of comments emphasized the educational aspect of travelling:

*Travelling is an opportunity to get to know things we learned about at school.*

*I travel because I want to learn and see how the world functions.*

*I travel to broaden my horizons.*

The mention of “monuments and cities” refers to the educational motives and knowledge, “beaches” – to rest and recreation, while the other reasons have to do with social relations, which were not important in the Grand Tour.

Another group of questions was to elicit more details in response to the question: “Why do you travel or would you travel to Italy? and focused specifically on motivations. Most respondents in all groups said they “want to get away from the daily routine”. Some added that daily life was “grey”, “boring” and a trip to Italy was/would be a nice change that “could bring more colour to your life”. These answers indicate that tourist travel can be a form of escapism [more details in Niezgoda 2013]. It is not always important for these tourists that they are going to Italy but rather they will be staying at an all-inclusive hotel. Such tourists may also decide to go on a bike trip to the Alps, because it this form of vacationing is fashionable in their circle of friends, though they would prefer simply to relax in a comfortable place. The fashion of travelling to “escape the daily reality” motivates tourists to pursue various unusual activities (bungee jumping, windsurfing, swimming with dolphins, etc.). These motivations are also associated with the desire to collect experiences [Niezgoda 2013]. As the mere act of travelling used to reflect social status in the past, the same is true of tourist experiences nowadays [Peters, Weiermair, Katawandee 2006].

Another group of motivations revealed by the respondents is connected with the idea of “getting to know people and places”. These are similar to motives discussed in the earlier part of the article, namely the desire to learn about the world and the pursuit of education. One comment shows the attraction of Italy as a good place for sightseeing:

*I want to visit Italy to see all the monuments, but what matters most of all is the Chance to experience life in a different place.*

For the respondents, getting to know other people, their way of life and the local cuisine, is more important than motives inspiring the Grand Tour. For travelers of the past, aspects of daily life and experiencing the local cuisine were rather a matter of necessity than an opportunity to gain knowledge while visiting places.

Another important motive mentioned by all three groups was the chance to learn a foreign language.

Discussions in all three groups also revealed motives associated with rest and recreation, spending time on the beach, for example at an attractive hotel in Rimini, hiking in the Alps, bike trips around the Garda lake, etc. In two groups the participants mentioned social motivations, such as wanting to spend time with family or accompanying others, for example, on a tour that someone else had booked. In one group some respondents mentioned religious motivations associated with participating in pilgrimages and visiting places of worship, especially the Vatican.

Health motivations did not appear in any of the groups. During the discussion, the participants were asked about trips motivated by the desire to impress other, especially by sharing photos on social media. The respondents admitted they liked to share photos because:

*It is something you are expected to do.*

*When you've visited the place, you absolutely have to let others know about it.*

This is similar to the motivation that existed in the Romantic era, where the presentation of the traveller plays a key role.

In summary, modern tourists do not always travel to in pursuit of knowledge. Sometimes they just one to confront their memories or expectations with experiences of others. In the past epochs, the point of reference for such comparisons were experiences collected in diaries written by earlier travellers who went to great lengths to document their journeys. Nowadays tourists post their holiday photos on social media, which takes just a moment and does not cost anything. The result is a huge volume of photos and comments that are often not directly related to the main character of the visited places.

## 6. Summary

The typical Grand Tour put the Italian culture in a privileged position. The country became the object of reflection for Montaigne, Descartes, Montesquieu, Goethe and many other travellers [more details in Wieczorkiewicz 2008]. Many travelling thinkers describe the country, which still remains one of the most popular holiday destinations. It is hard to disagree with Antoni Mączak, who notes that from the perspective of a baroque tourist, the directions of travel have changed, but Italy remain the axis, destination and main attraction of the grand tour [1984: 130].

In the previous epochs, especially in the Grand Tour era, trips to Italy were mainly motivated by the pursuit of education by visiting places of historical interest and artistic value.

For modern tourists, a trip to Italy to gain knowledge can be an example of a trend described by Richard Butler [2006: 15], which marks a return to elit-

ist forms of tourism. It is consistent with a growing interest in education on the part of young tourists, which was noted by Anish Yousaf, Insha Amin and Jose Antonio Santos [2018]. The results of the study described in this article confirm observations made by Carlos Monterrubio [2019], who notices that nowadays, in addition to educational motives, there are other, more important reasons, connected with the desire to “escape from the daily routine”. The most important motivation for travel is to need to leave the permanent place of residence. The trip itself can be used merely for entertainment or as an opportunity to collect new experiences. In such situations, the choice of a destination is of secondary importance. Attractions, such as works of art and cultural monuments of Italy used to be the main motivation in the Renaissance and the Enlightenment. For the modern tourist it does not matter if the destination is Rome, London or Dubai. In contrast to past travellers, what matters more is the pursuit of entertainment, attendance at concerts and other events, festivals or typical night parties. This difference in motivations is consistent with the findings of Ulf Sonntag [2006], who emphasises that modern tourist look for “multi-option” experiences, choose various destinations, travel more often and quickly react to market changes. This corresponds to the phenomenon of “Three-minute culture”, which results in a constant search for new places and experiences by tourists. The ubiquity of the media (mainly visual, in Western countries) means that more and more things appear “ordinary” and it is very difficult to find the “extraordinary” experiences that tourists are still looking for [Urry 2007: 152].

As pointed out by Christina Haslebacher, Peter Varga and Hilary Murphy [2019], many modern tourists focus on self-presentation by sharing photos on social media. Instead of describing specific works of art or monuments, the way it was done, for example, in the travel diary written by Stanisław Staszic, tourists post photos of a cup of coffee or a café they have ordered at a local café. Sometimes they include a caption saying “Florence, but often the comments under the photo do not provide any indication as to the destination and the purpose of the trip. The findings of the study described in the article confirm that trips to Italy made by modern tourists are mainly motivated by the desire to get to know people [Yousaf, Amin, Santos 2018], experience the local cuisine and wine [Deichmann, Murphy 2018], practice foreign languages [Yousaf, Amin, Santos 2018], search for photogenic objects [Urry 2007] and collect new experiences [Sonntag 2006].

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## Porównanie motywacji wyjazdów do Włoch – podróźni epoki *Grand Tour* vs. współcześni turyści

**Streszczenie.** Celem artykułu jest porównanie motywów wyjazdów do Włoch podróźnych w epokach historycznych, w szczególności w czasie *Grand Tour*, z motywacjami współczesnych turystów. Na podstawie przeglądu literatury stwierdzono, że w dobie renesansu, oświecenia, a także w czasie *Grand Tour* podróż służyła celom poznawczym, nauce, doskonaleniu, poznaniu. W części empirycznej zaprezentowano wyniki badania (metoda zogniskowanego wywiadu grupowego), które wskazują, że motywacją podróży do Italii dla współczesnych turystów jest również edukacja poprzez odwiedzanie ważnych miejsc z uwagi na ich walory historyczne i artystyczne. Jednak dla obecnych turystów ważniejsze są motywy związane z „ucieczką do codzienności” oraz poznanie kultury, w tym kuchni, nowych ludzi, chęć odpoczynku i rekreacji. Ważnym motywem (choć nawiązującym do epoki romantycznej) jest chęć pochwalenia się odbytą podróżą na portalach społecznościowych.

**Słowa kluczowe:** motywacje turystyczne, *Grand Tour*, podróże do Włoch

