

TEODORA HRISTOVA GOSPODINOVA

**THE IMPACT OF THE COMMUNIST HERITAGE
ON THE DESTINATION IMAGE AS PERCEIVED
BY WESTERN TOURISTS.
THE CASE STUDY OF POLAND AND BULGARIA**

Masters in Management

Dissertation made under supervision of:

Professor Júlio Mendes

Professor Nelson Matos



UNIVERSIDADE DO ALGARVE

FACULDADE DE ECONOMIA

2019

THE IMPACT OF THE COMMUNIST HERITAGE ON THE DESTINATION
IMAGE AS PERCEIVED BY WESTERN TOURISTS. THE CASE STUDY OF
POLAND AND BULGARIA

Declaration of authorship of work

I declare to be the author of this work, which is original and unpublished. Authors and works consulted are duly cited in the text and are included in the list of references.

(Teodora Hristova Gospodinova)

© **Copyright:** TEODORA HRISTOVA GOSPODINOVA

The University of Algarve has the right, perpetual and without geographical boundaries, to archive and make public this work through printed copies reproduced in paper or digital form, or by any other means known or to be invented, to broadcast it through scientific repositories and allow its copy and distribution with educational or research purposes, non-commercial purposes, provided that credit is given to the author and Publisher.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would first like to thank Professor Nelson Matos of the School of Management, Hospitality and Tourism of the University of Algarve. His door was always open whenever I ran into a trouble or whenever I had a question about my research or writing. He consistently allowed this dissertation to be my own work but steered me in the right direction whenever he thought I needed it. In effect, honestly speaking, there were lots of doubts during the process of writing.

I would also like to acknowledge and thank Professor Júlio Mendes of the Faculty of Economics from the University of Algarve. I am gratefully and indebted for his very valuable comments on this dissertation.

Another person to which I am deeply thankful is Professor Isabel Teotónio who help me in the data analysis process.

Finally, I must express my very profound gratitude to my parents and to my boyfriend for providing me with unfailing support and continuous encouragement throughout my years of study and through the process of researching and writing this thesis. This accomplishment would not have been possible without them.

Thank you sincerely,

Teodora

ABSTRACT

Over recent years the importance of destination image on tourists' decision-making process has been increasingly analysed as an important factor. However, the researches into this topic are still maturing. As noted previously, the tourism industry in the Post-Soviet countries has not been a subject of great interest from scholars. However, the uniqueness of the cultural and historical background of these countries contributes to tourism flows which are important to explore. Therefore, this dissertation examines the impact of the communist heritage on the destination image perceived by foreign consumers, focusing on two the post-communist countries – Bulgaria and Poland, which have a long history connected to communism due to Soviet occupation in the years between 1945 and 1991.

Drawing on theories of tourists' perceptions, heritage tourism, and destination image conceptualization, an empirical study was conducted using mixed methods. The semi-structured questionnaires with mixed questions (open-ended questions, semantic, Likert scale) were distributed online (via Facebook, Viber, and e-mail) to Western tourists.

The findings of this research showed that the respondents in both sampling groups had positive perceptions about the overall destination image of each post-Soviet country. However, regarding the communist heritage aspect, while Poland is significantly recognized as a cultural and heritage destination, Bulgaria's best-perceived elements as a destination, are its attractive scenery/natural landscape and good weather.

The findings in the study contribute to a clearer understanding of the communist heritage of the post-Soviet states by empirically evaluating the main characteristics of Poland's and Bulgaria's destination image.

Furthermore, significant implications for tourism managers and researchers are highlighted, including defining greater promotional endeavours that would increase Poland's and Bulgaria's brand recognition and value, and the development of new, more satisfactory tourist products.

KEYWORDS

Tourist Destination, Destination Image, Heritage Tourism, Communism, Tourists' Perceptions.

RESUMO

Nos últimos anos, a importância da imagem de destino no processo de tomada de decisões dos turistas tem sido cada vez mais analisada como um fator importante. No entanto, as pesquisas sobre este assunto ainda estão em desenvolvimento. Como observado anteriormente, a indústria do turismo nos países pós-soviéticos não tem sido objeto de grande interesse por parte dos acadêmicos. No entanto, a singularidade do contexto cultural e histórico desses países contribui para os fluxos de turismo que são importantes para explorar. Portanto, esta dissertação examina o impacto da herança comunista na imagem de destino percebida pelos consumidores estrangeiros, concentrando-se em dois países pós-comunistas - Bulgária e Polónia, que têm uma longa história ligada ao comunismo devido à ocupação soviética nos anos entre 1945 e 1945. e 1991.

Com base nas teorias de identidade de destino e percepção de imagem de destino, foi conduzido um estudo empírico usando métodos mistos. Os questionários semi-estruturados com questões mistas (questões abertas, semânticas, escala Likert) foram distribuídos on-line (via Facebook, Viber e e-mail) para visitantes ocidentais.

Os resultados desta pesquisa mostraram que os turistas estrangeiros em ambos os grupos de amostragem tiveram percepções positivas sobre a imagem geral de destino de cada uma dessas repúblicas pós-soviéticas.

No entanto, em relação ao aspecto do património comunista, embora a Polónia seja significativamente reconhecida como um destino cultural e patrimonial, os elementos mais bem vistos pela Bulgária como destino são os seus cenários atrativos / paisagem natural e o clima.

Destacam-se implicações significativas para os gestores e investigadores do turismo, incluindo a definição de maiores esforços promocionais que aumentem o reconhecimento

e o valor da marca da Polónia e da Bulgária, juntamente com o desenvolvimento de novos productos e serviços de turismo que sejam satisfatórios.

As descobertas do estudo contribuem para uma compreensão mais clara da herança comunista dos estados pós-soviéticos, avaliando empiricamente as principais características da imagem de destino da Polónia e da Bulgária.

PALAVRAS CHAVE

Destino Turístico, Imagem De Destino, Turismo Patrimonial, Comunismo, Perceção dos Turistas.

GENERAL INDEX

ABSTRACT.....	iv
FIGURES INDEX	ix
TABLES INDEX.....	x
ABBREVIATIONS LIST.....	xii
CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. Scope and Objectives.....	2
1.2. Contribution of the Research	2
1.3. Structure of the Dissertation	3
CHAPTER II. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	4
2.1. Destination Image (DI)	4
2.1.1. The Concept of Destination Image	5
2.1.2. Destination Image Formation	7
2.1.3. Echtner and Ritchie’s (2003) perspective on destination image.....	9
2.2. Heritage tourism	11
2.3. Communist Heritage Tourism	13
2.4. Measurement Scales	14
2.5. Discussion.....	16
CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY	18
4.1. Pre - questionnaire	18
Data Design.....	18
Data Collection	21
Data Analysis	21
4.2. Main Questionnaire.....	22
Data Design.....	22
Data Collection	23
Data Analysis	23
4.3. Study setting	24
4.4. Historical Background	25
CHAPTER IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION.....	28
5.1. Poland: Pre-survey Findings	28
5.1.1 Socio-Demographic characteristics	28
5.1.2 Qualitative Content Analysis	29
5.1.3 Poland’s Functional-Psychological Image.....	32
5.1.4 DI Attributes and Overall DI of Poland.....	33
5.1.5 Previous Visit to Poland	36

5.2. Bulgaria: Pre-survey Findings	37
5.2.1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics	37
5.2.2 Qualitative Content Analysis	37
5.2.3 Bulgaria’s Functional-Psychological Image	40
5.2.4 DI Attributes and Overall Image of Bulgaria	41
5.2.5 Previous Visit to Bulgaria.....	44
5.3. Main Survey Findings.....	45
5.3.1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics	45
5.3.2. Destination Image of Poland and Bulgaria	48
5.3.4. Previous Experience	59
CHAPTER V. CONCLUSIONS.....	61
Limitations and Future Research	63
REFERENCES	64
APPENDIX A: PRE-QUESTIONNAIRE.....	70
APPENDIX B: MAIN QUESTIONNAIRE.....	73

FIGURES INDEX

Figure 1.1 - Outline of the dissertation	14
Figure. 2.1 - Relationship between Cognition, Affection and Conation	20
Figure 2.2 - The components of the destination image (Echtner and Ritchie, 1991)	22
Figure 2.3 - The most frequent attributes used in DI studies according to Gallarza et al. (2002)	28
Figure 4.1 – Poland’s geographical location within Europe	24
Figure 4.2 – Bulgaria’s geographical location within Europe	25
Figure 5.1 – Poland's Attribute/holistic and functional/psychological components of Poland's DI, the tourists’ perspective	44
Figure 5.2 - Assessment of the psychological characteristics of the DI of Poland, according to respondents in the pre-study (%)	46
Figure 5.3 - Assessment of the overall DI of Poland, according to respondents in the pre-study (%)	47
Figure 5.4 - Number of the respondents’ previous visits to Poland (%)	47
Figure 5.5 – Bulgaria's Attribute/holistic and functional/psychological components of Bulgaria’s DI, the tourists’ perspective	52
Figure 5.6 - Assessment of the psychological characteristics of the DI of Bulgaria, according to respondents in the pre-study (%)	54
Figure 5.7 – Assessment of the overall image of Bulgaria, according to respondents in the pre-study (%)	55
Figure 5.8 - Number of the respondents’ previous visits to Bulgaria (%)	55
Figure 5.9 – Assessment of the affective component (unpleasant/pleasant) of the DI of Poland and Bulgaria after the visit, according to the respondents in the main survey (%)	68
Figure 5.10 – Assessment of the affective component (boring/exciting) of the DI of Poland and Bulgaria after the visit, according to the respondents in the main survey (%)	69
Figure 5.11 – Assessment of the overall image of Poland and Bulgaria, according to respondents in the main study (%)	70
Figure 5.12 - Number of the respondents’ previous visits to Poland	71
Figure 5.13 - Number of the respondents’ previous visits to Bulgaria	71

TABLES INDEX

Table 2.1 - Definitions of Destination Image	17
Table 4.1 – Structure of the pre-test questionnaire	35
Table 5.1 - Demographic profile of the respondents of the pre-survey for Poland	39
Table 5.2 – Functional and holistic attributes of Poland	41
Table 5.3 – Frequency and weighted % of terms related to the functional and holistic attributes of Poland (NVivo)	41
Table 5.4 - Psychological and holistic attributes of Poland’s destination image	42
Table 5.5 – Frequency and weighted % of terms related to the psychological and holistic attributes of Poland (NVivo)	42
Table 5.6 - Distinctive or unique tourism attractions of Poland	42
Table 5.7 – Frequency and weighted % of terms related to distinctive or unique tourism attractions of Poland (NVivo)	43
Table 5.8 - Evaluation of the seventeen (17) DI attributes for Poland (%)	45
Table 5.9 - Demographic profile of the respondents of the pre-survey for Bulgaria	48
Table 5.10 - Functional and holistic attributes of Bulgaria	49
Table 5.11 - Frequency and weighted % of terms related to the functional and holistic attributes of Bulgaria (NVivo)	50
Table 5.12 - Psychological and holistic attributes of Bulgaria’s destination image	50
Table 5.13 - Frequency and weighted % of terms related to the psychological and holistic attributes of Bulgaria (NVivo)	50
Table 5.14 - Distinctive or unique tourism attractions of Bulgaria	51
Table 5.15 - Evaluation of the seventeen (17) DI attributes for Bulgaria (%)	53
Table 5.16 - Demographic profile of the respondents of the main survey for Poland and Bulgaria (n=390/each)	58
Table 5.17 - Evaluation and ranking of the seventeen (17) DI attributes for both Poland and Bulgaria after the visit	61
Table 5.18 - Communism-related DI attributes for both countries under research	63
Table 5.19 - Pearson Chi-Square for Gender and the evaluations of the DI attributes related to the communism heritage, Poland	64

Table 5.20 - Pearson Chi-Square for Age and the evaluations of the DI attributes related to the communism heritage, Poland	64
Table 5.21 - Pearson Chi-Square for Level of education and the evaluations of the DI attributes related to the communism heritage, Poland	65
Table 5.22 - Pearson Chi-Square for Nationality and the evaluations of the DI attributes related to the communism heritage, Poland	65
Table 5.23 - Pearson Chi-Square for Gender and the evaluations of the DI attributes related to the communism heritage, Bulgaria	66
Table 5.24 - Pearson Chi-Square for Age and the evaluations of the DI attributes related to the communism heritage, Bulgaria	66
Table 5.25 - Pearson Chi-Square for Level of education and the evaluations of the DI attributes related to the communism heritage, Bulgaria	66
Table 5.26 - Pearson Chi-Square for Nationality and the evaluations of the DI attributes related to the communism heritage, Bulgaria	67
Table 5.27 – Measurement of the affective DI of Poland and Bulgaria (mean, SD, variance, maximum and minimum)	68
Table 5.28 – Measurement of the affective DI (<i>boring/exciting</i>) of Poland and Bulgaria (mean, SD, variance, maximum and minimum)	69
Table 5.29 – Measurement of the overall DI of Poland and Bulgaria (mean, SD, variance, maximum and minimum)	70

ABBREVIATIONS LIST

DI	Destination Image
DMO	Destination Marketing Organization
WTO	World Tourism Organization
DI	Tourist Destination Image
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
SD	Standard Deviation
Q1	First Quarter
df	Degrees of freedom

CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

Tourism has become one of the vital sectors of the global economy, and it has become the backbone of the economic progress in many countries (Remoaldo, Ribeiro, Santos, Vareiro, 2014). According to the World Tourism Organization (WTO), the total contribution to the global economy rose to 9.5% of global GDP when it crossed USD 7 trillion generating 266 million jobs (WTTC, 2015). Tourism has become the backbone of economic progress in many countries (Remoaldo et al., 2014).

Furthermore, tourism sustains many destinations, in which companies and organizations are involved in producing and marketing the overall tourism product within specific geographical areas (Höpken, 2015). Besides, destinations are constantly competing to successfully attract tourists. As a result, over the last four decades, the decision-making process of tourists has been a topic of broad interest among marketers and tourism managers (Remoaldo et al., 2014). The subsequent discussion attempts to explore the concept of the destination in tourism research.

As Chung, Koo, Lee, H. and Lee, S. J. (2015), and Castañeda-García, Frías-Jamilena, Rodriguez-Molina (2015) suggested, there is presently a demand for additional research about destination image.

Despite the increasing interest of this topic, there are still some regions of the world (e.g., the post-communist countries in Central Eastern Europe – Poland, Bulgaria) where the importance of creating a successful destination image is not well explored nor its influence understood (Höpken, 2015). The communist regimes have had a great and deep economic and social impact on Poland's and Bulgaria's image (Ivanov, 2009). Therefore, questions to assess the visiting tourists' perception of the communist regimes heritage gradually arise Tunbridge (2000). For instance, what perceptions, beliefs, and images Western European tourists keep of post-communist countries due to this heritage? Or which factors and what sources of information affect the destination image formation of these ex-communist countries? Lastly, what are the similarities and differences between tourists' perceptions of the destination before and after visiting Poland and/or Bulgaria?

1.1. Scope and Objectives

This study's aim is to identify to which extent the communist heritage impacts on the consumers' perception of the destination image of two of the post-socialist Central Eastern European countries – Poland and Bulgaria.

The research emphasizes the important relationship between tourism and heritage, especially in countries with such a strong bond to communism as heritage like the regimes of Central Eastern Europe. In order to accomplish the main research goal, the following objectives were developed:

- To assess the impact of communism heritage on the image of Poland and Bulgaria
- To evaluate the holistic image of Poland and Bulgaria

In this context, the study will have a bi-dimensional approach (using the cognitive and affective dimensions) and not focus on the conative element - part of Echter's and Ritchie's DI conceptualization (1991, 1993, 2003), since the study's aim is, instead of verifying if respondents would recommend or return to the destination, to confirm if the DI of Poland and Bulgaria is associated with the communist heritage and, further, what kind of feelings it arises in the respondents (Ekinçi, Hosany and Uysal, 2007).

1.2. Contribution of the Research

The contributions of the research are the following:

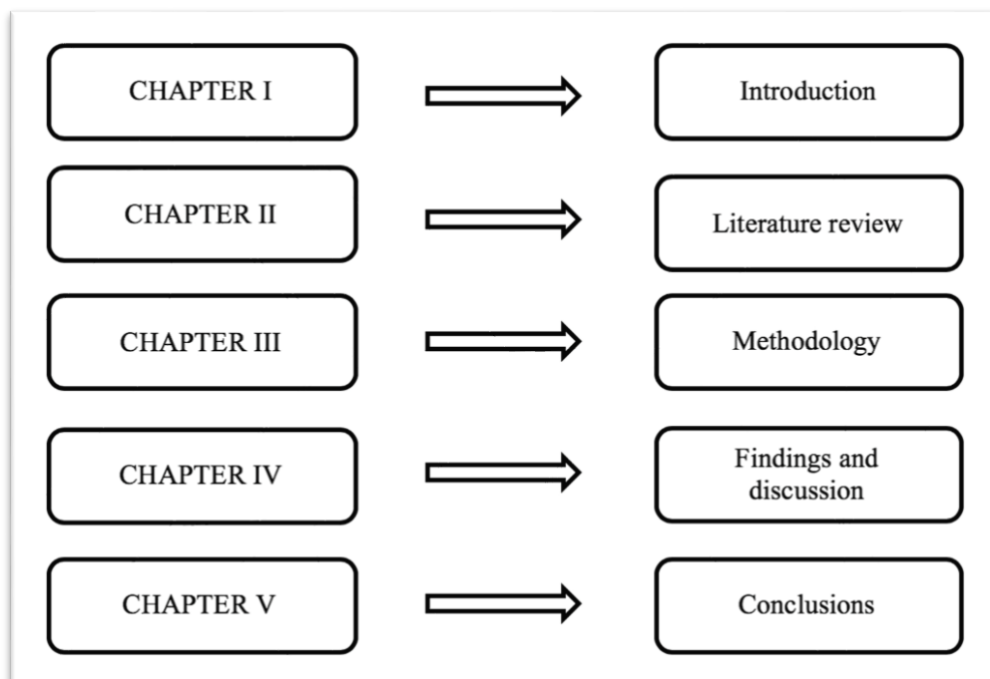
- Analyses the perceptions and images Western European tourists keep of the post-communist countries, Poland and Bulgaria, which could help destination managers to improve their promotional activities;
- This study investigates what are the similarities and differences between tourists' perceptions of the destinations after visiting Poland and/or Bulgaria, which would allow more accurate tourist products to be developed in order to contribute for a more positive destination image.

1.3. Structure of the Dissertation

This dissertation includes four chapters (figure 1.1). In the first chapter, information regarding the research purpose of the empirical study is presented. The second chapter provides a literature review. It presents a brief definition of destination image, identifies the importance of the destination image and its components. Moreover, it discusses tourism heritage and communist heritage tourism as one of its main topics.

In the third chapter, information about the methodology of the empirical study and deductive approach are presented. The methods for data design, collection, questionnaires' structure, and data analysis techniques are discussed. The fourth chapter provides information about the findings of the research and discussion. The fifth chapter addresses the conclusions and implications for practitioners, future research avenues, and limitations of the study.

Figure 1.1 - Outline of the dissertation



CHAPTER II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The following literature review explores the research that has been carried out regarding destination image over recent years and analyses its relevance to the particular situation with the post-communist countries, Poland and Bulgaria.

Moreover, the literature review discusses the phenomenon called communist heritage tourism. It has appeared in the former communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe in the early 1990s when the Western tourists became interested in life on the other side of the Iron Curtain and in the heritage sites of the communist regimes (Ivanov, 2002).

2.1. Destination Image (DI)

The following literature review explores the research that has been carried out regarding destination image over recent years (e.g., Athena, 2017; Belhassen, Shahi and Styliadis, 2017; Del Bosque and San Martin, 2008; Echtner and Ritchie, 2003; Ivanov, 2009; Rodriguez-Molina, 2015;) and analyses its relevance to the particular situation with the post-communist countries, Poland and Bulgaria.

Moreover, the literature review discusses communist heritage tourism. This type of tourism has appeared in the former communist countries of Central and Eastern Europe in the early 1990s when the Western tourists became interested in the life on the other side of the Iron Curtain and in the heritage sites of the communist regimes (Ivanov, 2002).

Over the past decades, tourism is often used as the driving force for regional development, and it has been generally accepted in the literature that destination image has influenced consumers' behaviours (Ansari, Joshi, Tyagi and Singh, 2019; Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Bigne, Ruiz and Curras-Perez, 2019; Etchner and Ritchie, 1993; Rodriguez del Bosque and San Martin, 2007). Tourists make their decision-making based on the destination images being portrayed by the destination marketers but also based on their own images that come from many different sources, including past experiences with a destination (Han, Kim, J. S., Lee and Kim, N., 2019). This means destination image influences consumers' decision-making in regard to where they will spend their holiday time and money.

Chen and Tsai (2006) also argue that the evaluation of a destination is based on the perceived quality, value and overall satisfaction with a destination.

Thus, destination image can influence the consumers' intentions to visit destinations and their willingness to recommend the destination to others (De la Hoz-Correa and Muñoz-Leiva, 2019). The destination image is a concept which tourism managers and DMOs recognize as being one of the most important factors in destination marketing (Belhassen, Shahi and Styliadis, 2017).

2.1.1. The Concept of Destination Image

A common definition of the destination image is the one given by Gertner and Kotler (2004: 42) which defines it as "...the sum of beliefs and impressions people hold about the place. Images represent a simplification of a larger number of associations and pieces of information connected to a place. They are a product of the mind trying to process and pick out essential information from huge amounts of data about a place."

On the other hand, for Lawson and Baud Bovy (1977: 10), the image of a destination is "the expression of all objective knowledge, impressions, prejudice, imaginations, and emotional thoughts an individual or group might have of a particular place." Ratkai (2004) has also looked at how destination image has been conceptualized by earlier researchers and came to the conclusion that, while many studies failed to define destination image, defining the concept has been difficult due to its subjectivity and abstract nature. As Tasci (2007: 27) reminds "Destination image is an interactive system of thoughts, opinions, feelings, visualizations, and intentions toward a destination." This means that dynamic nature (i.e., interactive system) and subjectivity (i.e., personal opinions, feelings) of the construct make it hard to frame.

As such, the definitions of the destination image are as many as the attempts to conceptualize it by scholars that have devoted themselves to the topic. Since no consensus has been reached, San Martin and Del Bosque (2008) have compiled a table to show the main similarities among definitions (table 2.1). However, most of the definitions found in San Martin and del Bosque's (2008) and Ratkai's (2004) compilations include terms

such as impression and perception of tourists to describe the concept of the destination image.

Moreover, the repetition of these terms reinforces the idea that the consumers are ultimately the ones who influence the way a destination is viewed by the world. Based on their personal impressions and perceptions, tourists have the power to influence the tourism flow to any destination (Dedeoğlu, 2019). San Martin and Del Bosque (2008), in their explanation of how destination images are formed, noted that the consumers' perception of a destination is based on information from different sources over time, which are selected, elaborated and embellished in order to have a meaningful existence (e.g., De La Hoz-Correa and Muñoz-Leiva, 2019).

Table 2.1 - Definitions of Destination Image

Author/s	Definition
Reynolds (1965: 69)	<i>the concept of image is a complex and selective mental process carried out by individuals from a flood of selected impressions</i>
Lawson and Baud – Bovy (1977: 10)	<i>An expression of knowledge, impressions, prejudices, imaginations and emotional thoughts an individual has of a specific place.</i>
Crompton (1979: 18)	<i>Sum of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that a person has of a destination.</i>
Assael (1984: 37)	<i>Total perception of the destination that is formed by processing information from various sources over time.</i>
Hunt (1987: 28)	<i>Impressions that persons hold about a state in which they do not reside.</i>
Chon (1990: 76)	<i>Results of the interaction of a person's beliefs, ideas, feelings, expectations and impressions about a destination.</i>
Echtner and Ritchie (1991: 41)	<i>The perceptions of individual destination attributes and the holistic impression made by the destination.</i>
Dadgostar and Isotalo (1992: 17)	<i>Overall impression or attitude that an individual acquires of a place.</i>
Milman and Pizam (1995: 21)	<i>Visual or mental impression of a place, a product, or an experience held by the general public.</i>

Gartner (1996: 456)	<i>An involved process and, with few expectations, destination images do not change quickly.</i>
Font (1997: 124)	<i>set of beliefs, ideas, and impressions that the public holds of the named product, and to some extent, it is part of the product.</i>
Baloglu and McCleary (1999: 3)	<i>An individual's mental representation of knowledge, feelings, and global impressions about a destination.</i>
Murphy, Pritchard and Smith (2000: 13)	<i>A sum of associations and pieces of information connected to a destination, which would include multiple components of the destinations and personal perception.</i>
Kim and Richardson (2003: 217)	<i>Totality of impressions, beliefs, ideas, expectations and feelings accumulated towards a place over time.</i>
Ahmed et al. (2006: 59)	<i>defined as what tourists think or perceive about a state as a destination, its tourism resources, its tourist services, the hospitality of its host, its social and cultural norms, and its rules and regulations which influence their consumer behaviour.</i>
Tasci (2007: 27)	<i>Destination image is an interactive system of thoughts, opinions, feelings, visualizations, and intentions toward a destination.</i>
Guerreiro (2008: 36)	<i>a place, regardless of its condition, consists of an amalgam of products and functions, designed to meet the needs of visitors, residents, investors and traders/businessmen.</i>
Hume (2010: 19)	<i>the degree of betwixt these consists in the degrees of force and liveliness, with which they strike upon the mind, and make their way into our thought or consciousness. Those perceptions, which either with most force and violence, we may name impressions...by ideas I mean the faint images of these in thinking and reasoning.</i>
Wang & Pizam (2011: 115)	<i>geographic locations with resources, attractions, infrastructure, superstructure and facilities that attract people to visit and stay temporarily for diverse reasons.</i>
(Ahmadova, 2018: 333)	<i>more important than reality DI is a decisive factor for the decision-making behaviour of potential tourists.</i>

Source: Adapted by San Martin and del Bosque (2008)

2.1.2. Destination Image Formation

In this regard, the DI formation process has been a constant concern among scholars. They have explained the destination image concept in different ways.

For instance, according to Koufodontis and Gaki (2019), the image formation is determined partly by the distance from the destination, because people are more likely to have visited the destinations near their homes and to have been exposed to information about them through the media and from friends and relatives. Gunn (1988), from another hand, has explained that tourists form an image of a destination after undergoing a process which consists of the following seven-stages: 1) accumulating mental images of the destination, thus forming an organic image; 2) modifying the initial image after more information, thus forming an induced image; 3) deciding to visit the destination; 4) visiting the destination; 5) sharing the destination; 6) returning home, and 7) modifying the image on the experience in the destination. Moreover, based on the seven stages, the author articulated that tourists' destination image is distinguished by two dimensions: organic image and induced image. The seven-stage theory involves a constant building and modification of images, which are conceived as being made up of organic or native non-tourist information about the destination (e.g., television documentaries, books, school lessons, and stories from friends' experiences) and induced or promoted information (e.g., travel brochures, publicity, and advertisements).

In other words, organic image is an individual-determined image formation that reflects the individual characteristics in information processing and interpretation, while the induced image is a destination-determined image formation that reflects the actuality of the destination (Fesenmaier and MacKay, 1997).

Crompton and Fakeye (1991) also described a process of image development linked to tourism promotion and destination choice. They posit in the same perspective as Gunn's theory, that the DI was proposed to evolve through three stages: organic, induced, and complex. In Crompton and Fakeye's (1991) conceptualization, the organic image represents an awareness of the destination and is present among individuals before destination promotions are induced. The induced images are formed when promotions are viewed and evaluated against the organic image. As a result, a complex image is formed from the previously held mental image (induced and organic) and the actual visitation and experience with the destination. Furthermore, they linked these three types of images to the three functions of promotion: to inform, to persuade, and to remind.

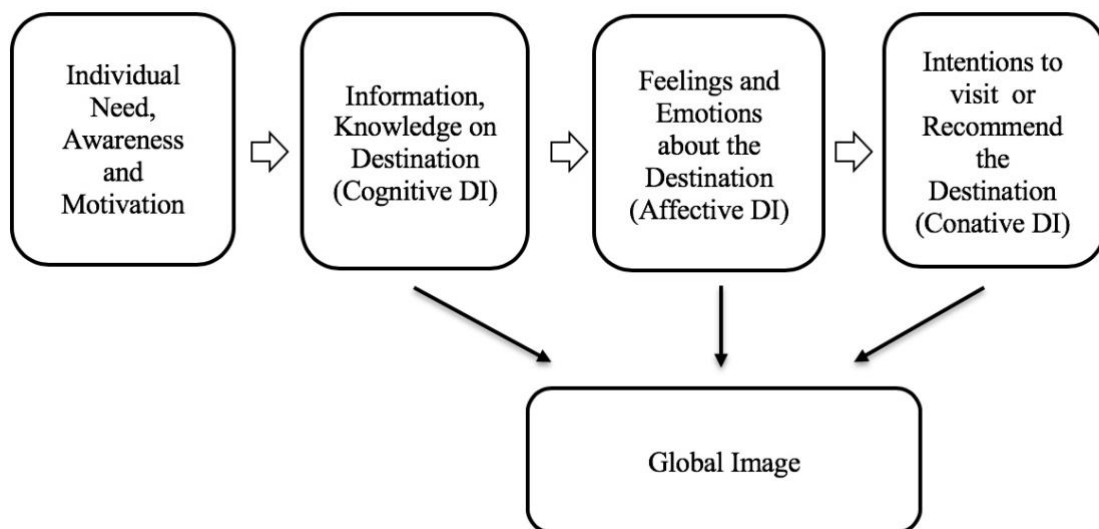
At the present time, most researchers agree that the DI is a multidimensional construct composed of three primary dimensions - cognitive, affective, and conative (Beerli &

Martin, 2004; Kim, Oh and Styliadis, 2019; Matos, Mendes and Pinto, 2015; Prayag, 2007). The cognitive component involves beliefs and knowledge about the physical attributes of a destination, while the affective one refers to the individual's feelings or emotions towards a destination (Aksoy and Kiyici, 2011; Beerli and Martin, 2004; Matos, Mendes and Pinto, 2015).

The conative component refers to the usage of the information available. It may be considered as the likelihood of visiting a destination within a certain time period (Agapito, Da Costa Mendes and Oom do Valle, 2013; Ghasemi and Kuhzady, 2019 and Page, 2009).

The three dimensions contribute to the formation of a global image that is considered to be greater than the sum of its parts (figure 2.1), and that is used by the consumer to simplify the task of decision-making (Baloglu and McCleary, 1999; Beerli and Martín, 2004; Echtner and Ritchie, 1993; Matos, Mendes, Pinto, 2012).

Figure. 2.1 - Relationship between Cognition, Affection and Conation



Source: Adapted from Pike (2004)

2.1.3. Echtner and Ritchie's (2003) perspective on destination image

The destination image construct received wide attention from scholar over the past decades, with some scholars having developed seminal works which influence the DI framework. In this regards, Echtner and Ritchie (1991, 1993, 2003) have provided a great amount of psychology and marketing research on destination image research, namely the measurement of destination image: An empirical assessment in 1993, followed by the meaning and measurement of destination image in 1991 and 2003.

Based on these studies, they concluded that most of the early studies about DI were focusing only on the cognitive element, meaning that in the older studies the destination image was defined and studied in terms of a list of destination attributes but not taking into consideration the holistic part of the image consisting of overall impression or perception. Thus, the multidimensionality of the DI formation would not be captured. Echtner and Ritchie (1991: 8) have described the process of destination image construct as:

“Destination image consists of functional characteristics, concerning the more tangible aspects of the destination, and psychological characteristics, concerning the more intangible aspects. Furthermore, destination images can be arranged on a continuum ranging from traits which can be commonly used to compare all destinations to those which are unique to very few destinations.”

Moreover, the holistic dimension of DI indicates that both the traditional attribute-based element and a total-gestalt interpretation of a destination that is formed by destination attributes are two parts of the same. The theory behind the attribute - holistic dimensions are based on studies regarding the nature of people’s information processing in the fields of psychology and consumer behaviour, in terms of how people view products as having both individual features and a holistic impression.

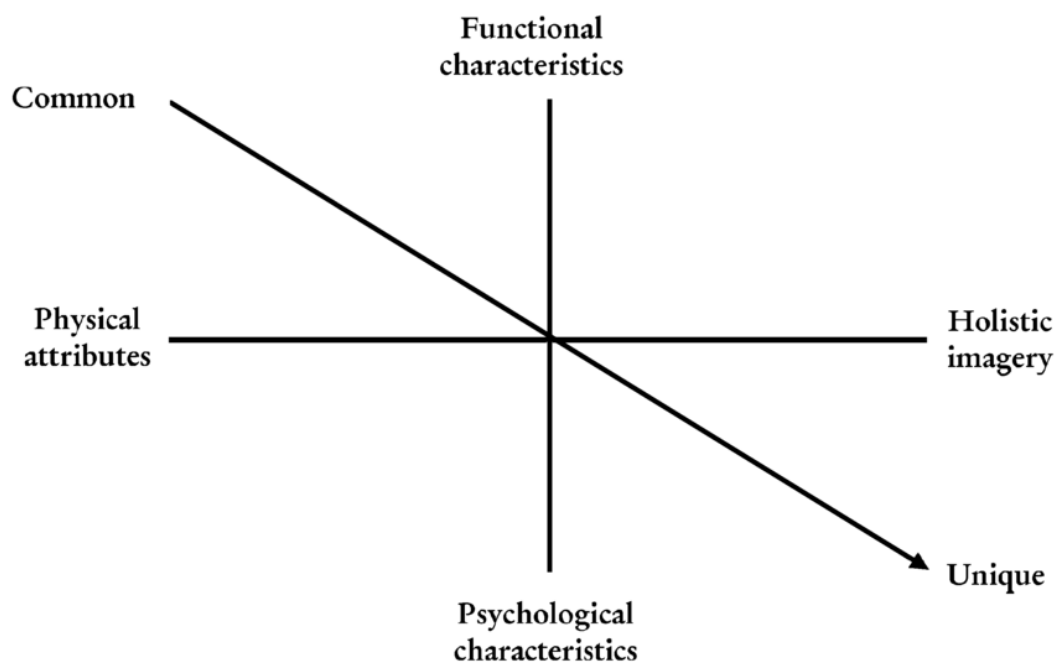
Furthermore, according to Echtner and Ritchie (1991, 1993, 2003), the holistic/overall DI component can be assessed by two open-ended questions:

- *What images or characteristics come to mind when you think of XXX as a tourism destination? (functional holistic/stereotypical segment);*

- *How would you describe the atmosphere or mood that you would expect to experience while visiting XXX? (psychological holistic/affective segment);*

Echter's and Ritchie's (1991, 1993, 2003) conceptualization of the destination image construct recognizes both cognitive and affective components of destination image construct, as well as the destination image as an overall/holistic impression, as shown in figure 2.2 (Morrison and Stepchenkova, 2008).

Figure 2.2 - The components of the destination image



Source: Echtner and Ritchie (1991)

2.2. Heritage tourism

Most researchers accept that heritage is linked to the past. It represents some sort of inheritance to be passed down to current and future generations (Hardy, 1988). Meethan (2001: 87) stated that: “heritage could be regarded as part of a symbolic system which is the foundation for creating and recreating shared values in society.” Furthermore, heritage is also seen as a “unifying sign” (Bessiere, 1998), which is preserving the collective

memory of a social group, thereby enhancing the group's social and cultural identities. Accordingly, Bessiere (1998: 26) affirmed that: "heritage, whether it be an object, monument, inherited skill or symbolic representation, must be considered as an identity marker and distinguishing feature of a social group."

As emphasized also by Johnson (1990), national heritage plays an essential and unique role in maintaining and reinforcing notions of national identity. Collins (1990) observed the heritage from a different perspective - as an accumulation of daily details and large traditions, social, racial and religious built from time and memory. Thus, associations are often made between culture and heritage, perhaps because there is a link between heritage and culture, in the past, present and future (Hall and Zeppel, 1992). In the past, mass tourism was predominant, but today tourism is experiencing post-mass tourism in which tourists strive today to find new ways to experience the destination away from the masses (Light, 2000a). Tourists, in particular, the new middle class and independent travellers – have increasingly rejected mass tourism in favour of more specialized tourism experiences (Light, 2000b).

However, a key requirement of this group is to experience the "otherness", particularly minority and non-western cultures (Munt, 1994) - such tourists seek out places removed from the traditional tourist circuit. Nuryanti (1996) assumes these post-mass tourists use their intellect and imagination to construct their own sense of historic places to build their individual voyages of self-discovery. This is the reason why tourism is increasingly linked with learning and discovery (Munt, 1994).

Besides, heritage tourism is the fastest-growing segment of the tourism industry nowadays, and a major focus of tourism in the postmodern period (Ryan, 2004). The World Tourism Organization (2014) reported that heritage and culture have become a factor in almost 50% of all international trips undertaken. However, when it comes to defining heritage tourism certainly in the tourism literature, there has been much debate about that (Fyall & Garrod, 1998).

Crampton (2006: 46) argues that definitions focus on the artifacts: "(it is) tourism - centered on what we have inherited, which can mean anything from historic buildings to artworks, to the beautiful scenery." Smith (1991: 16) claims that "these national heritage attractions, including museums and royal palaces, are often regarded as "sacred centres",

places of spiritual and historical pilgrimage that reveal the nation's unique "moral geography." As reported by Edensor (2002: 15), they are often perceived as symbolizing: "national badges of high culture representing an official version of a country's history". On the contrary, Zeppel and Hall (1992) defined heritage tourism as a form of travel experience and nostalgia for the past as well as cultural landscapes and forms. Prentice's (1993) perspective differs as he regards heritage tourism as a marketplace selling the beneficial feeling of consuming heritage through heritage tourist attractions. Portia et al. (2001), on another hand, believed that heritage tourism primarily relates to personal heritage. The definition given by The National Trust for Historic Preservation in the United States (2014) is commonly cited nowadays: "traveling to experience the places, artifacts, and activities that authentically represent the stories and people of the past," and "it can include cultural, historic and natural resources."

2.3. Communist Heritage Tourism

According to Light (2000: 214), communist heritage tourism is "a new interesting kind of tourism that emerged after 1990 in Central and Eastern Europe". It can further be defined as the consumption of sites and sights associated with the former communist regimes (Banaszkiewicz and Owsianowska, 2018).

According to Gonzalez (2008), this manifestation of niche tourism presents different aspects of experience from the communist era - lasted approximately 45 years in Poland (1945-1989) and Bulgaria (1946-1990).

As one form of special interest tourism, this phenomenon in the industry is an illustration of the ever-diversifying tourist gaze (Urry, 1990). For the Western tourists who desire an experience of the 'other', the post-communist states from the Eastern bloc offer particular opportunities: a political, economic and social system which is the antithesis of Western countries (Light, 2000).

Through museums, monuments and other heritage sites, foreign tourists can be told about the national story, presented to affirm and reinforce the national identity and self-image (Caraba, 2011). As such, the presentation of national heritage is an ideological process: as Crampton (2006: 58) states "to speak of heritage is to speak of politics".

Furthermore, the communist heritage is controversial and ideologically overburdened, linked to memories and past experiences (both positive and negative) for older generations, and unknown for younger generations (Ivanov, 2009). Hence, history is now being re-written and re-worked to draw and reinforce new national identities (Banerjee, Dutta and Husain, 2007). The legitimacy of communist interpretations of national pasts are being consciously rejected, whilst pre-communist interpretations – themselves rejected by communist authorities – are being revived (Ivanov, 2009).

Whereas, not all the post-communist countries in Eastern Central Europe are ready to commercialize their past as tourism attractions, nor do they accept communism as a tourism product (Ivanov, 2009). The promotion of such resources for the tourist gaze is rarely initiated by the countries themselves (Young, 2013). Instead, it is largely promoted by those actors and organizations that influence tourists' decision-making, particularly travel agencies and tourism managers (Ivanov, 2009).

According to Tunbridge (1994: 56), this situation creates a dilemma which the author has described as “identity versus economy”.

Young (2013) developed several studies regarding the communist heritage, focusing on the post-communist states' relationship with their past, in particular in the view of building new state identities.

For the post-communist countries in Eastern Central Europe, the priority is to place this period behind them. Yet, the post-communist heritage is a great source of revenue as it attracts many tourists, some of whom have a particular interest in seeing the legacy of the political economy which dominated the post-war history of this region (Banaszkiewicz and Owsianowska, 2018).

2.4. Measurement Scales

The literature discusses different approaches in DI measurement (Lee, 2014) which has developed to become the single most popular topic of investigation in tourism research (Pike, 2002).

According to Echtner and Ritchie (2003), the majority of researchers in DI measurement studies were not successful in integrating both relevant psychological and functional characteristics of the DI. In essence, most of them support the quantitative approach with structured methods, such as Likert scales and semantic differential scales, to measure the

image of a particular destination (Echtner and Ritchie, 2003). Thus, these studies have only emphasized the physical attributes and the general features of the destination image.

Echtner and Ritchie (2003) and Gallarza et al. (2002) define DI as a complex and multidimensional concept. Moreover, Gallarza et al. (2002) examined 25 studies within the years between 1979 and 1999 and composed a group of 20 DI attributes. As a consequence of the diversity of the destination types, only more general attributes were studied for this list (figure 2.3).

Other researchers conclude that both cognitive and affective image explain the DI better than only the physical attributes of the destination (Baloglu and Brinberg, 1997; Guzman, 2012; Martin and Rodriguez del Bosque, 2008; Walmsley and Young, 1998). Moreover, they argue that the implementation of qualitative research (unstructured methodologies) at the primary stage would support to reveal a complete set of destination image attributes (Echtner and Ritchie, 2003).

Figure 2.3 - The most frequent attributes used in DI studies

Authors	Attributes Studied																			
	Various activities	Landscape, surroundings	Nature	Cultural attractions	Nightlife and entertainment	Shopping facilities	Information available	Sport facilities	Transportation	Accommodation	Gastronomy	Price, value, cost	Climate	Relaxation vs. Massific	Accessibility	Safety	Social interaction	Resident's receptiveness	Originality	Service Quality
	Functional										Psychological									
1. Crompton (1979)										x		x	x	x		x				x
2. Goodrich (1982)		x		x		x		x		x	x			x						x
3. Sternquist (1985)		x		x	x	x		x		x	x			x						x
4. Haathi (1986)		x	x	x	x			x				x		x	x					x
5. Gartner and Hunt (1987)			x	x				x		x			x							x
6. Calantone and al. (1989)		x	x	x	x	x		x	x			x		x		x				x
7. Gartner (1989)		x	x	x	x			x												x
8. Embacher and Buttle (1989)		x	x		x						x	x	x		x		x			x
9. Guthrie and Gale (1991)		x			x		x	x		x	x	x		x	x		x	x		x
10. Ahmed (1991)		x	x	x	x	x		x					x							x
11. Chon (1991)		x	x	x		x			x	x	x				x	x				x
12. Fakeye and Crompton (1991)		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x					x
13. Crompton et al. (1992)		x		x								x	x		x		x	x		x
14. Carmichael (1992)		x										x			x					x
15. Chon (1992)		x	x		x		x		x		x			x	x		x			x
16. Echtner and Ritchie (1993)		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
17. Driscoll and al. (1994)		x	x		x	x						x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x
18. Dadgostar and Isotalo (1995)			x	x	x	x		x		x	x			x						x
19. Muller (1995)			x		x	x					x	x	x	x	x	x				x
20. Eizaguirre and Laka (1996)						x				x	x	x		x	x	x				x
21. Schroeder (1996)		x	x	x	x	x		x		x	x	x		x						x
22. Ahmed (1996)		x	x	x	x	x		x												x
23. Oppermann (1996a, 1996b)		x		x					x	x	x	x				x				x
24. Baloglu (1997)		x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x					x			x
25. Baloglu and McCleary (1999)		x		x	x			x		x	x	x	x			x				x
Total	8	19	12	18	17	15	3	16	8	14	15	16	12	12	12	10	7	20	7	4

Source: Gallarza et al. (2002)

Qualitative research is based on constructivist epistemology and explores what it assumes to be a socially constructed dynamic reality through a framework which is value-laden, flexible, descriptive, holistic, and context-sensitive (Yilmaz, 2013). Thus, qualitative research is mainly exploratory research and is used to gain an understanding of underlying reasons, opinions, and motivations. This approach provides insights into the problem or helps develop ideas or hypotheses for potential quantitative research. (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005).

Reilly (1990) pioneered to use the open-ended questions to construct which permits participants describing their experiences in their own words.

Jenkins (1999) developed a comprehensive model for carrying out the destination image research that integrating both qualitative (focus group, interview, content analysis, triad as well as photographic elicitation) and quantitative (two rating scales) approaches.

2.5. Discussion

The destination image is considered as a "more important element than any tangible resources because it motivates tourists to act or not to act led by perceptions, rather than reality" (Calderón, Gallarza and Gil, 2002: 61). Thus, DI has become one of the most discussed issues in the literature on tourism (Mills and Stepchenkova, 2010).

The mental image or visual representation of a destination is still a concept which is ill-defined since the process of designing these mental images is individual. Moreover, visual representations do not remain static. They constantly evolve due to the flow of information and experience tourists collect all the time (Li and Pan, 2011).

The role the different information sources play in promoting destination helps and contributes for potential tourists creating their image of a destination, due to their general knowledge and feelings, and also because of external influences, such as friends and relatives, advertisements, intermediaries, and even their own past experiences (Munhurrun et al., 2015).

In this regard, the image projected by tourist destinations through the promotional activities as well as all sources of information to their potential tourists is a topic of crucial interest to tourist destination bodies.

The reason for this interest is due to tourists wishing to create and co-create their own narratives (Lee, McKercher and Seongseop, 2009; Munhurrun et al., 2015). Experiences are not just added values of products or services anymore, but valuable goods themselves. According to Puczko (2009: 25): "Customers are longing for experiences derived from the consumption of products and services, not for obtaining product or service". Furthermore, as stated by Nuryanti (1996) tourists construct their own view of what historic sites are and build their individual voyages of self-discovery.

However, a key requirement of this group is to experience the "otherness", particularly minority and non-western cultures (Munt, 1994). These "places of otherness" are real sites or events (Hetherington, 1997) that are less known, challenging, and hold multiple meanings (John, 2011).

Promoting communism heritage attractions could diversify the tourism product in Bulgaria and Poland, generate revenue and help to reduce the seasonality. More important it may permit the destination to create unique tourism experiences (Gilmore and Pine, 1998) that may contribute to memorable events or experiences (Kim et al., 2014).

However, the communist past is still a sensitive topic for the local people. As a result, communist heritage tourism raises issues concerning the relationship between the economy and the politics of identity in the region.

CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY

The data for both pre-questionnaire and the main questionnaire was gathered from two basic approaches - structured and unstructured methods. According to Reilly (1990), a compound of structured and unstructured methodologies should be used in order to fully capture the elements of destination image – attribute, holistic, functional, psychological, common, and unique. Thus, the primary data collection which was conducted consists of semi-structured questionnaires with mixed questions (open-ended questions, semantic, Likert scale), portraying Echtner and Ritchie (2003), theoretical concepts and operational scales.

4.1. Pre - questionnaire

Data Design

A pre-test questionnaire was conducted for both Poland and Bulgaria, as a first step of the research (APPENDIX A). The **first section** consisted of questions regarding the respondents' sociodemographic profile (age, gender, marital status, level of education, nationality, travel companion) (Beerli & Martín, 2004; Baloglu & McCleary, 1999a;).

The **second section** of the pre-test questionnaire inquired potential respondents about three open-ended questions to apprehend the functional, psychological and unique components of the tourism destination image. The three open-ended questions were:

- **Question 1:** *In three words, what images or characteristics come to mind when you think of Poland/Bulgaria as a holiday destination? (functional and holistic element);*
- **Question 2:** *In three words, how would you describe the atmosphere or mood that you would expect to experience while visiting Poland/Bulgaria? (psychological and holistic element);*

- **Question 3:** *In three words, which attractions or characteristics unique to Poland/Bulgaria you can think of? (in order to determine which attractions tourists consider to be distinctive);*

To aid the content analysis of the tourists' responses, the free elicitation technique was used, to collect descriptive adjectives of the Polish and Bulgarian DI, since it has benefits (it is easier to collect data, analyse and to find differences) (Reilly, 1990). This analysis led to the identification of the particular attributes, which were considered the most frequent among the pre-test sample related to the DI attributes for each country. Thus, the measuring scale regarding this type of attribute was adapted to each setting.

The **third section** of the pre-test questionnaire conducted was formed of 17 DI attributes displayed on the standardized scale in order to measure the common components of the destination image. (Echtner and Ritchie, 2003). The respondents were asked to rate DI attributes below while thinking about Poland and Bulgaria as a destination. All attributes (17) were then ranked on a scale between 1 (Strongly Disagree) and 5 (Strongly Agree).

All the DI attributes used in the pre-questionnaire were kept in the main questionnaire as well, however, there were two components in the main analysis, one for each country under research, which were eliminated ("*Good weather*" for Poland and "*Pride of the communist past*" for Bulgaria) (table 4.1), because they had the lowest level of agreement and it was found they do not represent correctly the image of both countries under study (Echtner and Ritchie, 2003). Moreover, due to the main study objectives, an additional component ("*Rich communism history*") was added to the list of DI attributes for both countries.

The other three questions in this section (Section III) aimed to assess the tourists' overall perception with Poland and Bulgaria as tourism destinations, by the use of a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "Strongly negative" (1) to "Strongly positive" (5); "Unpleasant" (1) to "Pleasant" (5); "Boring" (1) to "Exciting" (5).

In the **final section** (Section IV) of the pre-test questionnaire, the tourist's previous destination experience was measured to verify the tourists' familiarity with the destination (Oppermann, 2000; Frías-Jamilena et al., 2013 and Polo-Peña et al., 2013).

Table 4.1 – Structure of the pre-test questionnaire

	Measurement techniques	Questions	Authors
<p>Section I</p> <p>Socio-demographic profile of the respondents</p>	Semi-structured questions;	Age; Gender; Nationality; Level of education;	Um and Crompton (1990); Stern and Krakover (1993);
<p>Section II</p> <p>Functional, psychological and unique components of the DI of Poland and Bulgaria</p>	Three open-ended questions	<p><i>Question 1:</i> What images or characteristics come to mind when you think of Poland/Bulgaria?</p> <p><i>Question 2:</i> How would you describe the atmosphere or mood that you would expect to experience while visiting Poland/Bulgaria?</p> <p><i>Question 3:</i> Which attractions or characteristics unique to Poland/Bulgaria you can think of?</p>	Echtner and Ritchie (2003); Kattiyapornpong and Nel (2009); Santos (1998);
<p>Section III</p> <p>DI attributes and overall DI of Poland and Bulgaria</p>	<p>Five-point Likert scale;</p> <p>7-point semantic differential scale</p>	<p><i>DI attributes:</i> weather, natural landscape, gastronomy, architecture, access, value for money, communist attractions; safety; cleanness; residents; shopping; nightlife; relaxing; sporting facilities; pride of communist past;</p> <p>Boring/exciting; unpleasant/pleasant; positive/negative overall DI</p>	<p>Kim and Yoon (2003);</p> <p>Echtner and Ritchie's (2003);</p> <p>O'Leary and Deegan (2005);</p> <p>Jetter and Chen (2011);</p> <p>Sirichote (2012);</p>
<p>Section IV</p> <p>Previous experience within the destination</p>	Semi-structured question	Including this visit, how many times have you visited Poland/Bulgaria?	Echtner and Ritchie's (2003); Castañeda-García, Del Barrio-García and Frías-Jamilena (2018);

Data Collection

The study targeted people aged between 16 - 65 years old, both female and males, with different educational background, who do not originate from a post – Soviet country. The pre-test questionnaire was designed with the tool Google Forms.

The social media platform Facebook and the instant messaging software application, Viber, were chosen for the distribution of the pre-test for three reasons. First of all, because of Facebook allows for interacting with customers; secondly, because of the Viber allowance for a group chat with up to 250 people. The third reason is their reach among social media users in the Western world.

According to 2018 Global Digital Report, Facebook remains the most widely used social media platform used by 68% of the US adult population and 73% of the Western European population. Viber, on the other hand, Viber has 1.05 billion users for the Q1 2019 (Statista, 2019). Therefore, Facebook and Viber were chosen as their features are more suitable for the study.

The first stage of the data collection process consisted of a questionnaire-based pre-survey amongst a convenience sample of 46 tourists for each country under research, Poland and Bulgaria. It was conducted over a period of two weeks from the 1st of June to the 15th of June (2018).

Data Analysis

In the result of the distribution of the questionnaire and the collection of replies, the data from the pre-test questionnaire were converted from Google Forms into Excel-sheets.

In order to decipher the results of the open-ended questions, the terms and expressions mentioned by the respondents were classified into categories with a common meaning. For instance, the terms “impressive landscapes”, “beautiful landscapes”, “beaches” were grouped into the category “weather”. Furthermore, NVivo, the qualitative data analysis computer software, was utilized in order to count the frequency of specific words and to determine their weighted percentage in relation to the overall amount of terms mentioned.

In order to visualize the results, the words mentioned were presented in tables in descending order.

The frequency of socio-demographic elements (age; gender; nationality and level of education) as well as variables concerning the previous experience the respondents have with the two countries under research, Poland and Bulgaria, were measured and the results were presented in tables and pie charts. The evaluation of the DI attributes for both countries under research, Poland and Bulgaria, was presented in percentage.

4.2. Main Questionnaire

Data Design

The main questionnaire for the countries under research, Poland and Bulgaria, was organized into three identical sections, excluding the section with the three open-ended questions about the functional, psychological and unique components of the DI of Poland and Bulgaria.

The **first section** asked four questions about respondents' socio-demographic profile (age; gender; nationality and level of education). The **second section** of the main questionnaire for each country consisted of the 17 most frequent DI attributes, based on the pre-test sample results (APPENDIX B). Furthermore, the participants of the study were suggested to assess the performance of the two destinations, related to each attribute, either according to their knowledge, for instance from personal experience, or according to their imagination of Poland and Bulgaria as tourist destinations on five-point Likert scales, as applied by Agapito et al. (2010), Baloglu and McCleary (1999); Jetter and Chen (2011); O'Leary and Deegan (2005); Sirichote (2012). The scales ranged from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Afterward, the mean of each attribute was calculated.

Two seven-point semantic scales were used for the measurement of the affective component as applied by Agapito et al. (2010) and Beerli and Martín (2004b). As recommended by Russel et al. (1981), two independent bipolar dimensions were considered as adequate and therefore appropriate to capture the affective perception of an

individual holds on a specific place like a travel destination. According to Russel et al. (1981), the scales should range from "unpleasant" to "pleasant" and from "sleepy" to "arousing". A variation of the adjective "arousing - sleepy" was applied without misplacing the author's idea. The five-polar dimension in this section (Section II), ranging from (1) "Strongly negative" to (7) "Strongly positive", aimed to assess the global DI of Poland and Bulgaria. In the **third section** of the main questionnaire, the participants were asked to state how many times they have visited Poland/Bulgaria. There were two options to choose from, namely: (1) It was my first time and (2) Other.

Data Collection

The main questionnaire was conducted online for a period of five weeks from the 1st of September to the 17th of October (2018), initially distributed to 30 people for each country under research, Poland and Bulgaria. It was then tried to implement the snowball technique, so those people were asked to respond and then to pass along the questionnaire to other people and so on. Additionally, the main questionnaire was posted into ten Facebook groups for traveling experience and surveys. Lastly, it was raised a convenience sampling of 390 western respondents for each country under research, Poland and Bulgaria.

Data Analysis

Once the processes of distribution of the main questionnaire and the collection of responses was completed, the data were converted from Google Forms into Excel-sheets. Afterwards, it was analysed with the program IBM SPSS Statistics 23. The descriptive statistics was made in order to provide a fundamental understanding of the samples.

The frequency of socio-demographic components as well as variables regarding the previous experience with the two countries under research, Poland and Bulgaria, were measured and the results were presented in tables and pie charts. Furthermore, the means and the standard deviations of the DI attributes were measured and presented in a table containing a ranking column. The phi coefficient (mean square contingency coefficient) was used to measure the degree of association between the socio-demographic

components and the DI attributes related to the communist heritage of Poland and Bulgaria. The results of the evaluation of the overall DI was presented in bar charts.

Furthermore, the means, standard deviations, variances of the attributes, and minimums and maximums were calculated and provided in a supplementary table.

4.3. Study setting

The two countries selected for the study were Poland and Bulgaria, due to the historical bound between these two countries and communism, and also due to the well-preserved state of communism heritage history, sites, and cultural values. Poland (figure 3.1) has a population of 38,032 million by 2019. This country is located in Central Europe, and at the northwest is located the Atlantic Ocean and at the East the Eurasian frontier (Wandycz et., 2019). Moreover, it is bordered to the north by the Baltic Sea, to the northeast by Russia and Lithuania, and to the east by Belarus and Ukraine. To the south, the border follows the watershed of the Beskid, Carpathian, and Sudeten mountains, which separate Poland from Slovakia and the Czech Republic, while to the west the Neisse and Oder rivers define the border with Germany.

Figure 4.1 – Poland’s geographical location within Europe

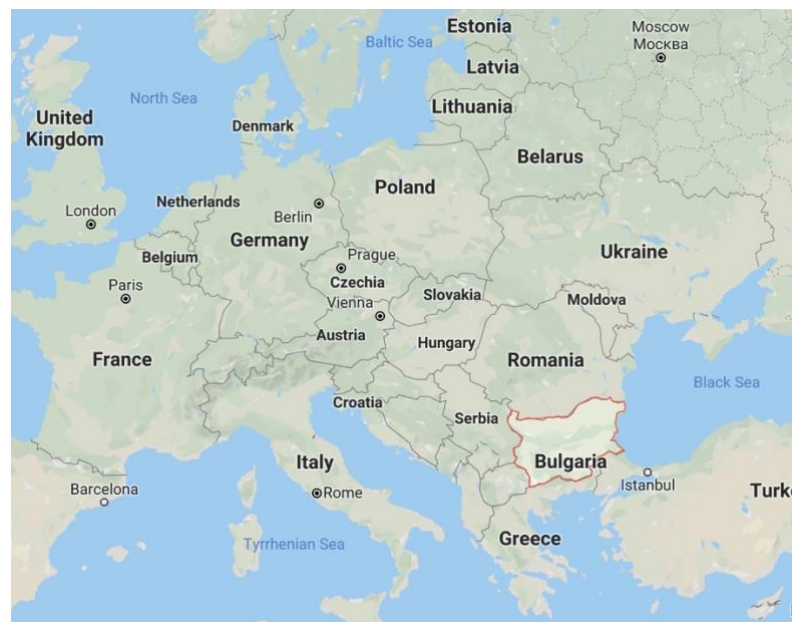


Source: Google maps

Poland's current frontiers, which extend for 3538 km were drawn in 1945. Warsaw, the country's capital, combines modern buildings with historic architecture, most of which was heavily damaged during World War II but has since been faithfully restored in one of the most thoroughgoing reconstruction efforts in European history (Wandycz et., 2019).

The other setting chosen was Bulgaria, with a population of 6.991 million by 2019. Officially its name is the Republic of Bulgaria, a country situated in the eastern part of the Balkan Peninsula in South Eastern Europe (figure 3.2). Founded in the 7th century, Bulgaria is one of the oldest states on the European continent (Bell et., 2019).

Figure 4.2 – Bulgaria's geographical location within Europe



Source: Google maps

Furthermore, Bulgaria is bordered by Romania to the north, with most of the border marked by the lower Danube River. The Black Sea lies to the east, Turkey and Greece to the south, North Macedonia to the southwest, and Serbia to the west. The capital city, Sofia, lies in a mountainous basin in the west (Bell et., 2019).

4.4. Historical Background

The end of World War II (1939-1945) brought many changes in Europe. Many countries were destroyed and in great need of economic and social aid. This need led to the

dependency of Europe on two non-European powers: United States of America for Western Europe and the Soviet Union for Eastern Europe (Light, 2000a).

The Eastern bloc was a group of socialist states of Central and Eastern Europe, generally the Soviet Union and the countries of the Warsaw Pact - Albania (until 1968), Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Poland, Romania, East Germany (until 1990). Stalin, the Russian political leader at the time, decided to create a buffer zone of friendly states around Russia to make sure that Russia could never be invaded again (Mieriņa, 2014). This led to Communist-dominated governments over the Central and Eastern Europe between 1945-1947.

It started in Bulgaria, in 1945, when a Communist-led coalition was elected, but the Communists executed the non-Communists. Two years later, in Poland, Stalin had promised to set up a joint Communist/non-Communist government at Yalta, by inviting also 16 non-Communist leaders to Moscow, however, he would later arrest them (Mieriņa, 2014). Besides the leaders, thousands of non-Communists individuals were also arrested, later the Communist party won the 1947's election. The 'Stalinist' System had four main characteristics: 1) the supremacy of a single party over the state, 3) the personalization of power; 2) the predominance of the police over other sections of the party and state organizations; 4) the government leadership's control over the party and state. (Crampton, 2006).

Further, movement of the population across international borders in the Eastern Bloc was severely restricted. Individual and group Political ambitions were suppressed by the communist governments through special secret police organizations which conducted executions of those which did not confirm with communism or which were political dissidents. The media in all the communist countries was heavily controlled by the communist governments and was used to spread state-sponsored propaganda to the public.

All broadcasts emanating from Western media were banned. Moreover, people were encouraged to travel within the country or to other states from the Eastern bloc but not visiting Western countries or the United States (Boniface and Cooper, 2005). Under the

state atheism of many Eastern Bloc nations, religion was actively suppressed. There were heavy isolation and restrictions at all levels (Mierina, 2014).

The revolutions occurring in many of the Eastern bloc countries in 1989 were part of a revolutionary wave in the late 1980s and early 1990s that resulted at the end of communist rule in these Central and Eastern European countries. This period is sometimes called the Autumn of Nations - a play on the term Spring of Nations that is sometimes used to describe the political Revolutions of 1848 across Europe (Sadurski, 2006). The events of the full-blown Autumn of nations revolution began in Poland in 1989 and followed by Hungary, East Germany, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, and Romania. The Soviet Union ended being dissolved in December 1991 (Crampton, 2006).

CHAPTER IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

5.1. Poland: Pre-survey Findings

5.1.1 Socio-Demographic characteristics

This part consists of a descriptive analysis of the data from the pre-test questionnaire conducted. In this regards, table 5.1 presents the main socio-demographic characteristics of the 46 respondents for the first post – Soviet country under research, Poland, were:

Table 5.1 - Demographic profile of the respondents of the pre-survey for Poland

Demographics	N	%	Demographics	N	%
Gender			Nationality		
Male	18	39.1	French	8	17.4
Female	28	60.9	Italian	7	15.2
Age			Spanish	7	15.2
<18	0	0	Portuguese	4	8.7
18-25	12	26.1	British	3	6.5
26-35	35	67.3	German	2	4.3
36-55	3	6.6	Austrian	2	4.3
>65	0	0	Finnish	2	4.3
Level of education			Dutch	1	2.1
Primary	0	0	Swiss	1	2.1
Secondary	3	6.5	Greek	1	2.1
Undergraduate	18	39.1	Norwegian	1	2.1
Postgraduate	24	52.2	Croatian	1	2.1
PhD	1	2.2	Scottish	1	2.1
			Icelandic	1	2.1
			Belgian	1	2.1
			Irish	1	2.1
			Romanian	1	2.1

As seen above, the majority of the respondents were female (60.9%), aged from 26 to 35 years old (67.3%), single (63%), with Postgraduate level of education (52.2%), of French nationality (17.4%).

5.1.2 Qualitative Content Analysis

The second section of the pre-questionnaire included three open-ended questions in order to measure the functional, holistic and unique components of Poland.

The data collected from the pre-questionnaires for Poland and Bulgaria, was analysed according to its reliability, importance and context. However, some of the respondents provided non-relevant responses, such as *I don't know* or *Nothing*. Thus, these answers were excluded from the analysis.

Functional and holistic attributes of Poland. Regarding the first open-ended questions (table 5.2), when respondents were asked: *“In three words, what images or characteristics come to mind when you think of Poland as a holiday destination?”*, the answers led to the creation of six categories (history; cuisine and drinks; atmosphere; architecture; weather and nature), which resulted from the following most cited images of Poland:

Table 5.2 – Functional and holistic attributes of Poland

Category	Amount of times that it was cited	Quotations
History	31	“full of history”, “great historical places”, “interesting history”, “rich history”, “rich historical background”, “history”, “historical”, “historical areas and monuments”, “dramatic history”, “rich history on every corner”, must-see place because of the history”, “concentration camps”, “German Nazi concentration camps”, “dramatic past”, “the biggest concentration camp Auschwitz”, “communist museums”, “communism”, “Soviet bloc”, “former communist republic”, “Under socialist regime”, “hidden post-socialistic treasure”, “communism regime”, “communism feeling”, “communism attractions”
Cuisine and drinks	21	“food”, “beer”, “premium vodka”, “vodka”, “Polish vodka”, “good food”, “delicious food”
Atmosphere	17	“Colourful”, “Eclectic”, “crazy polish mountain climbers”, “lot of flowers and trees”, “nice people”, “beautiful”, “difficult language”, “colours”, “dark”, “The 2012 UEFA European Championship”, “stunning beauty”, “unfriendly”, “weekend getaway”, “Wieliczka's salt mines”, “Krakow and Lublino and Malbork castle”
Architecture	15	“architecture”, “colourful buildings”, “beautiful building”, “old colourful buildings”, “gorgeous buildings”, “architecture you must see in your life”, “beautiful architecture”, “stunning architecture”, “colourful architecture”, “the buildings”, “the colourful buildings in Gdansk”
Weather	10	“cold”, “cold weather”, “shitty weather”, “rainy weather”, “rain”, “cold weather”, “bad weather”
Nature	4	“Green landscapes”, “impressive landscapes”, “beautiful landscapes”, “beaches”

Table 5.3 – Frequency and weighted % of terms related to the functional and holistic attributes of Poland (NVivo)

	History	Cuisine and drinks	Atmosphere	Architecture	Weather	Nature
Respondents	31	21	17	15	10	4
Weighted %	67.4 %	45.6 %	36.9 %	32.6 %	21.7 %	8.7 %

Psychological attributes of Poland. Regarding the second open-ended question, *"In up to three words, how would you describe the atmosphere or mood that you would expect to experience while visiting Poland?"*, the respondents' answers (table 5.4) were divided in five categories (exciting; friendly; welcoming; severe weather and rich traditions) built upon the most cited words:

Table 5.4 - Psychological and holistic attributes of Poland's destination image

Category	Amount of times that it was cited	Quotations
Exciting	16	"thrilling", "exciting", "need to be seen", "must see", "fresh", "joy", "interesting", "attractive", "inspiring", "having fun", "nice people who like to party and drink"
Friendly	11	"friendly atmosphere", "friendly"
Welcoming	10	"very welcoming", "warm welcoming", "cozy"
Moody	7	"depressing due to the dramatic historical background", "moody", "a bit depressing due to the past of Poland"
Severe weather	5	"cold", "rainy", "foggy", "moody weather"
Rich traditions	3	"a country filled with traditions and customs", "rich history and many attractions to check out", "so many traditions"

Table 5.5 – Frequency and weighted % of terms related to the psychological and holistic attributes of Poland (NVivo)

	Exciting	Friendly	Welcoming	Moody	Severe weather	Rich traditions
Respondents	16	11	10	7	5	3
Weighted %	34.8 %	23.9 %	21.7 %	15.2 %	10.9 %	6.5 %

Unique attributes of Poland. Concerning the third open-ended question (table 5.6), "In up to three words, which attractions or characteristics unique to Poland you can think of?", the attractions which were most valued and most distinctive for the respondents were:

Table 5.6 - Distinctive or unique tourism attractions of Poland

Attributes	Amount of times that it was cited
Warsaw	22
Krakow	18
Gdansk	16
Auschwitz	13
Tatra mountains	6

Table 5.7 – Frequency and weighted % of terms related to distinctive or unique tourism attractions of Poland (NVivo)

	Warsaw	Krakow	Gdansk	Auschwitz	Tatra mountains
Respondents	22	18	16	13	6
Weighted %	47.8 %	39.1 %	34.8 %	28.2 %	13.04 %

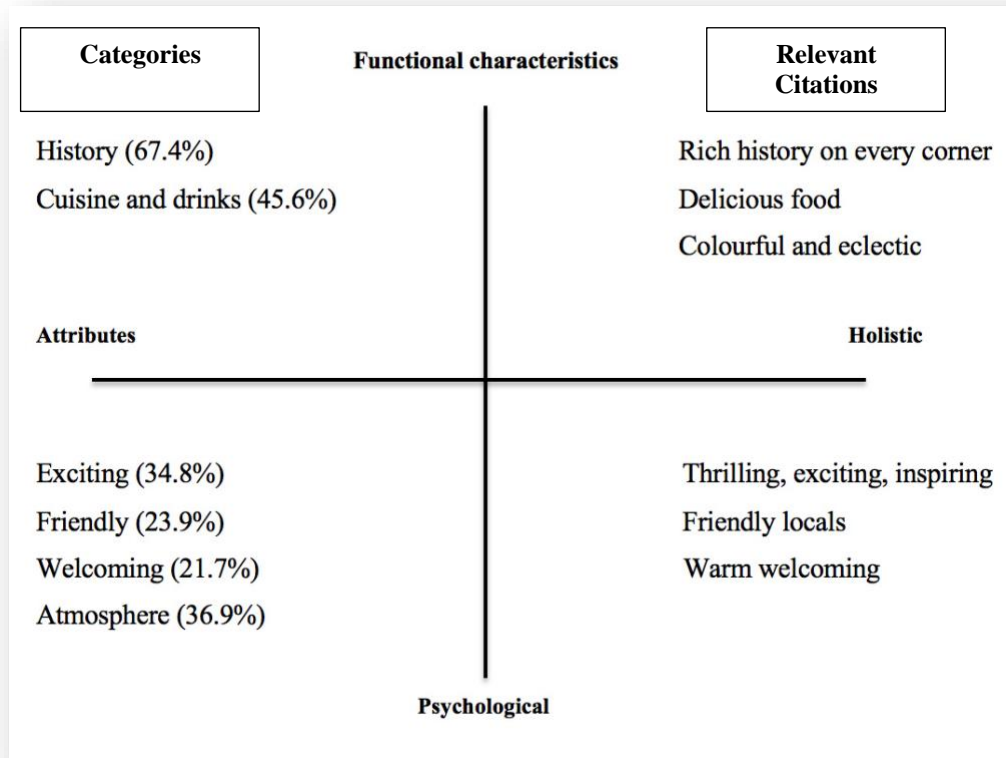
5.1.3 Poland’s Functional-Psychological Image

According to Echter's and Ritchie’s (1991, 1993, 2003) conceptualization of the destination image construct (Figure 2.2), Poland's functional and psychological characteristics, which resulted of the exploratory study applied to 46 Western tourists visiting the post - Soviet country can be distinguish about the following characteristics.

The main functional characteristics of Poland were its history ("great historical places"; "rich history on every corner"), cuisine and drinks ("delicious food"; "premium vodka"), and overall atmosphere ("eclectic"; "colourful"). While on the holistic and psychological side, tourists felt the friendliness of the residents ("friendly"; "nice locals") and their warm welcoming which made them feel "cozy" and "very welcomed" (figure 5.1). Moreover, the respondents had also time for experiences which made them feel excited ("thrilling"; "exciting"; "inspiring place") during their visit.

In terms of the unique attractions of the destination, the majority of the replies were the capital city of Warsaw, as well as the other two biggest cultural and touristic centres in Poland - Krakow and Gdansk.

Figure 5.1 – Poland's Attribute/holistic and functional/psychological components of Poland's DI, the tourists' perspective



5.1.4 DI Attributes and Overall DI of Poland

The third section consists of 17 DI attributes (table 5.8). They were selected from a list developed by Echtner and Ritchie (1991) for researchers measuring destination image. The list of the DI attributes contains functional (more tangible) and psychological (more abstract) characteristics.

The overall results show that there are no DI attributes assessed with the lowest rates ("strongly disagree" and "disagree"). The three DI attributes of Poland with the highest evaluation are *Good access*, *Interesting cultural attractions* and *Well-preserved communist attractions* (table 5.8).

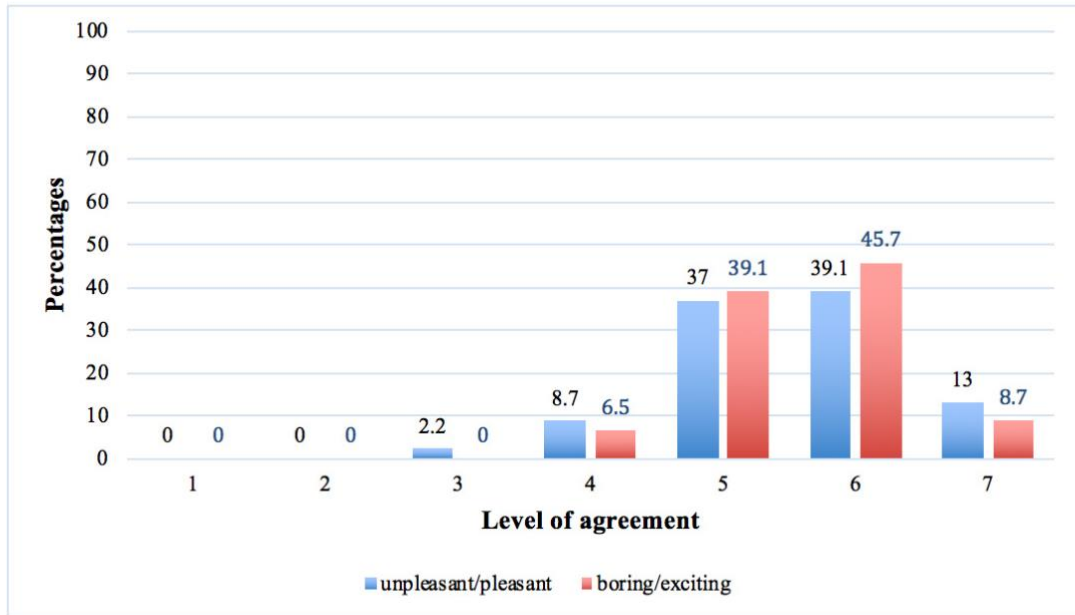
Table 5.8 - Evaluation of the seventeen (17) DI attributes for Poland (%)

DI attributes	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Good weather	0.00	32.6	34.78	26.08	2.17
Attractive scenery/natural landscape	0.00	0.00	19.56	41.3	39.13
Good gastronomy	0.00	2.17	6.52	50.0	41.3
Good accommodation	0.00	2.17	13.04	73.91	10.86
Good value for money	0.00	0.00	8.7	50.0	45.65
Good access	0.00	0.00	13.04	43.47	43.47
Interesting cultural attractions	0.00	0.00	4.34	20	76.08
Good shopping opportunities	2.17	6.52	52.17	37.0	8.7
Good entertainment	2.17	2.17	30.43	56.52	10.9
Good sporting facilities	2.17	0.00	63.04	26.02	0.00
Good nightlife	0.00	0.00	36.95	45.65	17.4
Clean destination	0.00	2.17	28.26	67.4	2.17
Safe destination	0.00	2.17	37.0	59.0	2.17
Relaxing destination	0.00	0.00	52.17	41.3	6.5
Friendly residents	0.00	2.17	26.08	54.34	17.4
Well-preserved communist attractions	0.00	0.00	23.91	39.13	39.13
Pride of the communist past	8.7	13.04	58.7	21.73	0.00

Poland's overall image as a tourism destination.

The results from the two bipolar scales were used to measure the affective image of Poland. Respondents were asked to rate their feelings about the country by rating it in a Likert-scale 1 to 7, unpleasant to pleasant. As the figure 5.2 shows, 18 respondents (39.1%) evaluated the destination affective image with a 6 which means that their view about the destination is close to be *very pleasant*. Overall, the image of the country is positive, since another 6 respondents (13%) consider Poland as a pleasant destination (rating 7).

Figure 5.2 - Assessment of the psychological characteristics of the DI of Poland, according to respondents in the pre-study (%)

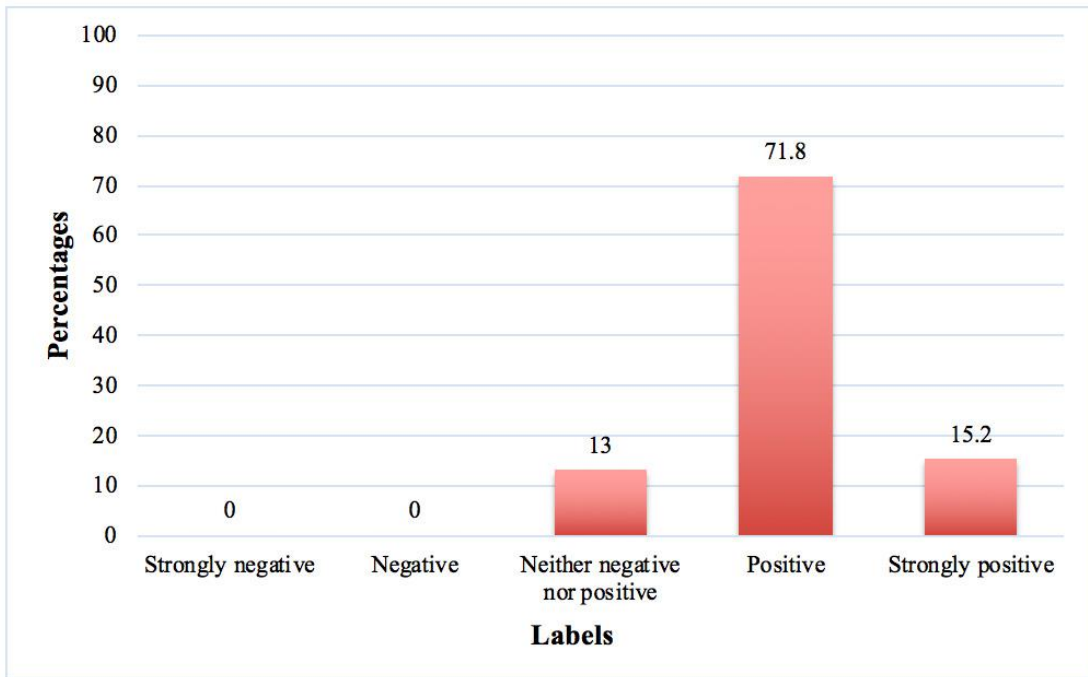


The second bipolar scale (figure 5.2) asked the respondents to evaluate their feelings towards Poland as a post-communist destination, namely to assess how "boring – exciting" it is.

As shown below, 4 respondents (8.7 %) rated Poland with 7; while the majority (45.7 %) assessed with 6. Then, as registered, 18 respondents (39.1%) gave a grade 5 and 3 respondents (6.5 %) – grade 4. Particularly one respondent (2.2 %) ranked Poland with 3 (close to be very boring) .

Overall, as figure 5.3 indicates, most of the respondents in the pre-test questionnaire (71.7 %) think Poland has a positive image or strongly positive (15.2 %) image in overall. The rest of the respondents (13%) had no opinion formed (neutral). As shown, no respondent assessed the overall destination image of Poland as negative or strongly negative.

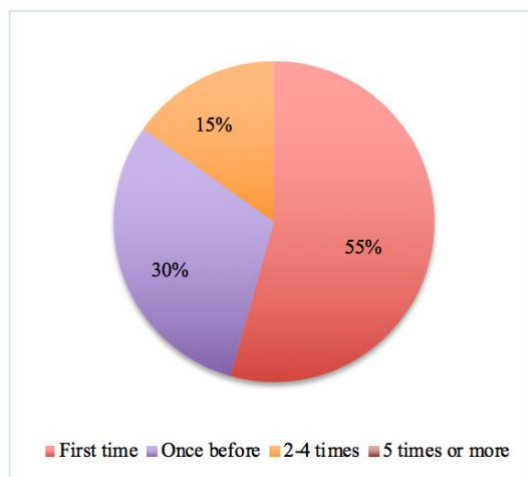
Figure 5.3 - Assessment of the overall DI of Poland, according to respondents in the pre-study (%)



5.1.5 Previous Visit to Poland

Regarding the question *"Including this visit, how many times have you visit Poland?"*, as shown in figure 5.4, the majority (25 respondents or 55%) visited the country for the first time. Further, 14 visitors or 30% has one previous visit and 7 respondents (equal to 15%) had visited Poland 2 or 4 times before.

Figure 5.4 - Number of the respondents' previous visits to Poland (%)



5.2. Bulgaria: Pre-survey Findings

5.2.1 Socio-Demographic Characteristics

As table 5.9 shows, the majority of the respondents in the pre-test questionnaire for Bulgaria were female (56.5%), aged from 26 to 35 years old (71.5%), of Italian nationality (15.2%), and with Postgraduate as level of education (47.8%).

Table 5.9 - Demographic profile of the respondents of the pre-survey for Bulgaria

Demographics	N	%	Demographics	N	%
Gender			Nationality		
Male	20	43.5	Italian	7	15.2
Female	26	56.5	British	7	15.2
Age			French	5	10.8
<18	1	2.2	German	4	8.7
18-25	6	13.2	Spanish	4	8.7
26-35	33	71.5	Icelandic	4	8.7
36-55	5	10.9	Portuguese	3	6.5
>65	1	2.2	Swiss	2	4.3
Level of education			Belgian	2	4.3
Primary	1	2.2	Finnish	2	4.3
Secondary	4	8.7	Croatian	1	2.1
Undergraduate	16	34.8	Romanian	1	2.1
Postgraduate	22	47.8	Dutch	1	2.1
PhD	3	6.5	Austrian	1	2.1
			Norwegian	1	2.1
			Swedish	1	2.1

5.2.2 Qualitative Content Analysis

By the example of the pre-test questionnaire for Poland, the second section includes three open-ended questions in order to measure the holistic and unique components of Bulgaria.

Functional and holistic attributes of Bulgaria. In regard to the first open-ended question, as table 5.10 reveals, when respondents were asked: “*In up to three words, what images*

or characteristics come to mind when you think of Bulgaria as a holiday destination?”, the answers lead to the creation of six categories (nature; customs; cuisine and drinks; history; weather and architecture), which resulted from the following most cited images of Bulgaria:

Table 5.10 - Functional and holistic attributes of Bulgaria

Category	Amount of times that it was mentioned	Quotations
Nature	32	“mountains”, “beautiful nature”, “great nature”, “high mountains/beautiful scenery”, “beautiful mountains and forests”, “beautiful landscape”, “beautiful mountains”, “nature”, “Black sea”, “mountainous”, “roses”, “mineral water”, “splendid scenery”, “lakes”, “Rila lakes”, “sunny shores”, “seaside”, “lovely beaches”, “great resorts”
Customs	24	“great mixture of weather for example skiing in the winter and warm in the summer”, “helpful locals”, “friendly people”, “Eastern Europe”, “unknown”, “Slavic language”, “cheap”, “different”, “party”, “ski”, “Slanchev briag”, “folk music”, “value for money and friendly locals”, “beautiful women”, “have to take care of own belongings because of criminality”, “nice holiday destination”, “rich traditions”, “cheap prices”
Cuisine and drinks	19	“nice food”, “great food”, “cheap alcohol”, “rakiya”, “great wine”, “authentic cuisine”, “gastronomy”, “white cheese”, “cherries”, “cheese”, “kebapcheta”, “delicious food”, “meals”, “delicious meals”, “sweets”, “delicious food”, “fantastic food”
History	15	“rich history”, “history”, “rich historical background”, “complicated past”, “historical”, “very old cities”, “communism architecture”, “ex-communist republic”, “communist spirit still there”, “Eastern bloc”, “old style Communist regime Eastern Europe”, “Soviet union”, “communism still there”
Weather	6	“beautiful weather”, “warm”, “nice weather”, “awesome weather”, “warm climate”
Architecture	5	“beautiful architecture”, “old hilly towns”, “lots of churches”, “beautiful architecture of pre-communist era”

Table 5.11 - Frequency and weighted % of terms related to the functional and holistic attributes of Bulgaria (NVivo)

	Nature	Customs	Cuisine and drinks	History	Weather	Architecture
Respondents	32	24	19	15	6	5
Weighted %	69.6 %	52.2 %	41.3 %	32.6 %	13.04 %	10.9 %

Psychological attributes of Bulgaria. Concerning the second open-ended question, "In up to three words, how would you describe the atmosphere or mood that you would expect to experience while visiting Bulgaria?", the respondents' answers regarding the atmosphere or mood of the destination (table 5.12) resulted in five categories (friendly; happy; moody; agreeable and unique) built upon the most cited words, which were:

Table 5.12 - Psychological and holistic attributes of Bulgaria's destination image

Category	Amount of times that it was cited	Quotations
Friendly	19	"friendly", "welcoming locals", "helpful people", "warm", "nice"
Happy	12	"happy place", "happy people", "people love having fun", "entertaining", "social", "busy", "fun", "relaxing", "thrilling", "relaxed"
Moody	9	"moody weather, moody people", "grumpy", "not very friendly", "grumpy"
Agreeable	6	"rich history – amazing things to see", "they speak good English and can communicate well with English tourists", "happy tummy", "not so organised", "family orientated", "magnificent scenery"
Unique	5	"Original", "Authentic", "unique spirit", "unique spirit of towns", "different than ours"

Table 5.13 - Frequency and weighted % of terms related to the psychological and holistic attributes of Bulgaria (NVivo)

	Friendly	Happy	Moody	Agreeable	Unique
Respondents	19	12	9	6	5
Weighted %	41.3 %	26.08 %	19.6 %	13.04 %	10.9 %

Unique attributes of Bulgaria. Regarding the third question, "In up to three words, which attractions or characteristics unique to Bulgaria you can think of?", the attractions which were most valued and most distinctive for the respondents in the pre-test questionnaire for the second post-communist country under research, Bulgaria, were (table 5.14):

Table 5.14 - Distinctive or unique tourism attractions of Bulgaria

Attributes	Amount of times that it was cited
Natural attractions	26
Sofia	12
Veliko Turnovo	9
Buzludzha	6
Varna	6

Table 5.15 - Frequency and weighted % of terms related to distinctive or unique tourism attractions of Bulgaria (NVivo)

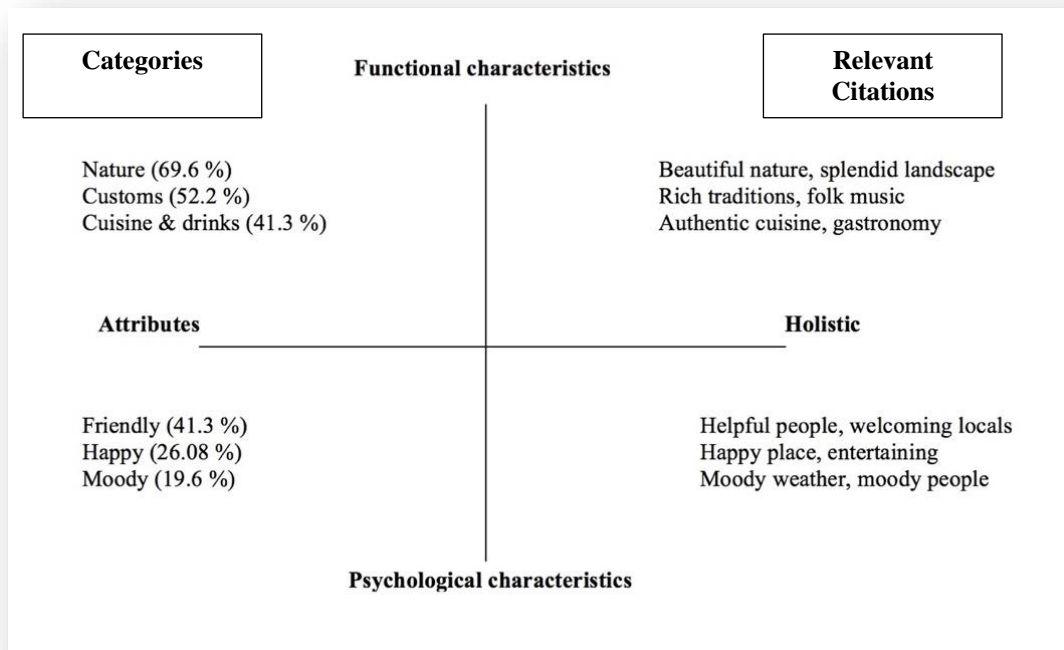
	Natural attractions	Sofia	Veliko Turnovo	Buzludzha	Varna
Respondents	26	12	9	6	6
Weighted %	56.5 %	26.08 %	19.7 %	13.04 %	13.04 %

5.2.3 Bulgaria's Functional-Psychological Image

Echter's and Ritchie's (1991, 1993, 2003) approach to the destination image construct, allows for functional and psychological characteristics of Bulgaria as a tourist destination to be evaluated. The result of the exploratory study applied to 46 respondents, permitted to identify the main functional characteristics of Bulgaria to be nature ("beautiful nature"; "splendid landscape"), customs ("rich traditions"; "folk music"), and cuisine and drinks ("authentic cuisine"; "gastronomy"). While on the holistic and psychological side, in general, respondents felt the friendliness and the happiness of the residents ("helpful people"; "welcoming locals"; "entertaining" and "happy place"). However, 9 respondents (19.6 %) referred to Bulgaria as a moody destination ("moody weather with moody people").

The unique characteristics and attractions of the destination considered to be the natural landscape, as well as the capital city Sofia, Veliko Turnovo, Varna, and the communist monument Buzludzha - the monument house of the Bulgarian Communist party (figure 5.5).

Figure 5.5 – Bulgaria's Attribute/holistic and functional/psychological components of Bulgaria's DI, the tourists' perspective



5.2.4 DI Attributes and Overall Image of Bulgaria

The third section consists of 17 DI attributes of Bulgaria. Following an identical approach with the pre-test questionnaire for the other country Poland, the elected attributes to measure DI from Echtner and Ritchie's (1991) scale are listed in table 5.15.

The overall results show that there are no DI attributes assessed with the lowest rates ("Strongly disagree" and "Disagree"). The five DI attributes of Bulgaria with the highest evaluation ("Strongly agree") are *Good weather, Attractive scenery/natural landscape, Good gastronomy, Good value for money* and *Good entertainment*.

Table 5.15 - Evaluation of the seventeen (17) DI attributes for Bulgaria (%)

DI attributes	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Good weather	0.00	2.18	21.73	34.78	41.3
Attractive scenery/natural landscape	2.18	0.00	0.00	36.95	63.04
Good gastronomy	0.00	0.00	17.4	34.78	47.82
Good accommodation	2.18	0.00	30.43	43.47	23.01
Good value for money	0.00	2.18	6.52	39.13	52.17
Good access	0.00	4.34	26.08	43.47	26.08
Interesting cultural attractions	0.00	0.00	17.39	50	32.6
Good shopping opportunities	0.00	6.52	43.47	28.26	21.73
Good entertainment	2.18	0.00	26.08	32.6	39.13
Good sporting facilities	0.00	8.7	56.52	28.26	6.52
Good nightlife	0.00	0.00	21.73	43.47	34.78
Clean destination	2.18	8.7	41.3	39.13	8.7
Safe destination	0.00	6.52	15.21	65.21	13.04
Relaxing destination	0.00	2.18	13.04	47.82	36.95
Friendly residents	0.00	2.18	17.39	43.47	36.95
Well-preserved communist attractions	0.00	4.34	45.65	34.78	15.21
Pride of the communist past	4.34	0.00	60.86	10.86	8.7

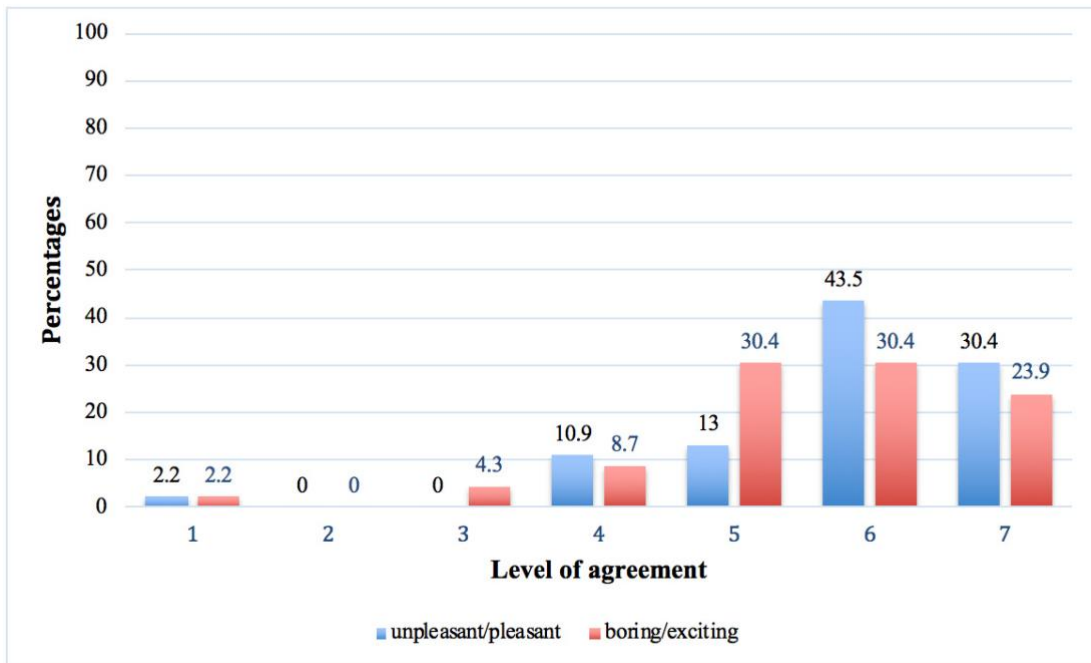
Bulgaria's overall image as a tourism destination.

The results from the two bipolar scales aimed to capture the affective image of the 46 respondents, namely how "unpleasant/pleasant" and "boring/exciting" is Bulgaria as a destination (figure 5.6).

As shown below, most of the respondents (43.5 %) evaluated the destination as *pleasant*, rating it with a 6, followed by 14 respondents (30.4 %) who assessed Bulgaria as a highly pleasant destination.

Furthermore, 6 respondents out of the 46 (13 %) assessed the level of pleasant with 5, followed by 10.9 % who ranked Bulgaria's level of pleasant with 4. As figure 4.6 reveals, only one respondent out of 46 evaluated the destination as highly unpleasant.

Figure 5.6 - Assessment of the psychological characteristics of the DI of Bulgaria, according to respondents in the pre-study (%)

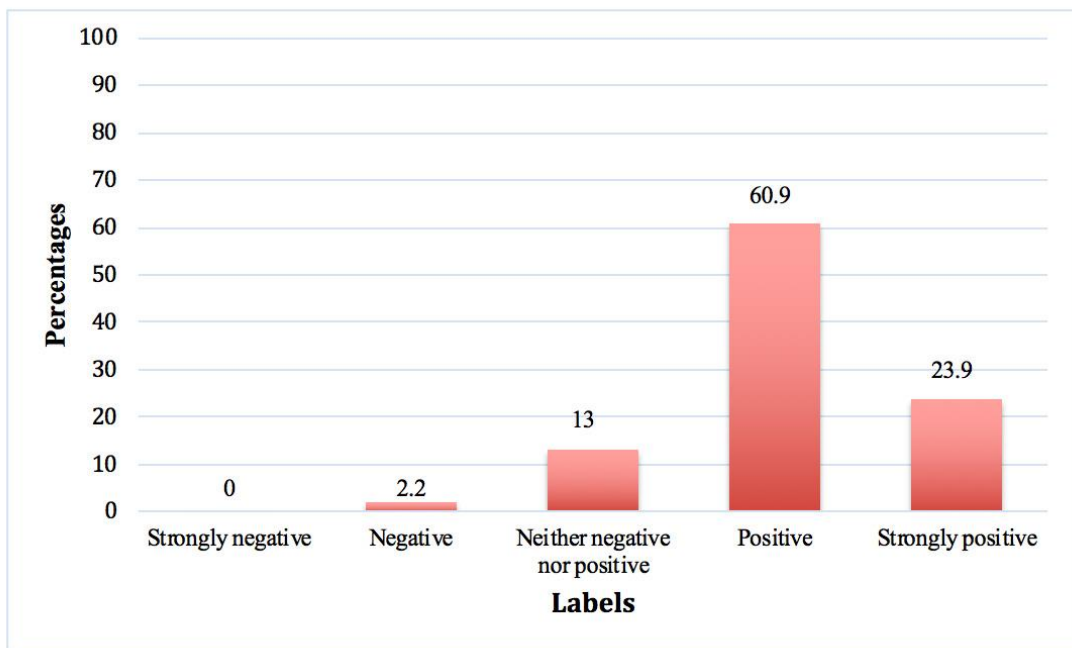


Additionally, figure 5.6 presents the results of the respondents' assessment about how "boring – exciting" is Bulgaria as a tourist destination. As shown below, an equal number of respondents (30.4 %) ranked Bulgaria with 5 and 6. Further, 11 respondents (23.9 %)

stated that Bulgaria, as very *exciting*. Surprisingly, one respondent (2.2 %) ranked Bulgaria with 1 (*highly boring*).

Overall, as figure 5.7 indicates, most of the tourists (60.9 %) think Bulgaria has a positive image or strongly positive (23.9 %) image. The rest of the respondents (13%) had no opinion formed (neutral).

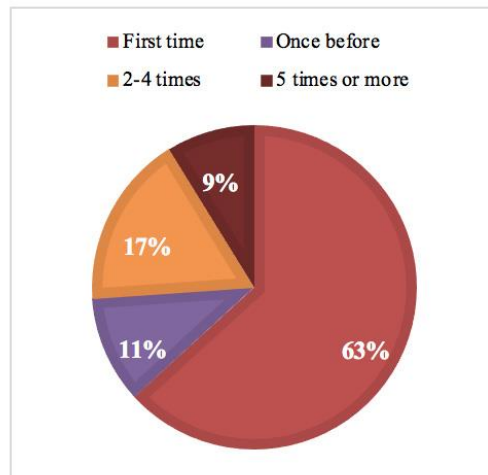
Figure 5.7 – Assessment of the overall image of Bulgaria, according to respondents in the pre-study (%)



5.2.5 Previous Visit to Bulgaria

Regarding the question "*Including this visit, how many times have you visit Bulgaria?*", as shown in figure 5.8, the majority (29 respondents, 55 %) visited the country for the first time. Only 8 participants (17 %) had already visited Bulgaria between two to four times; 5 respondents (11 %) were in Bulgaria once before; 4 participants in the pre-test questionnaire (9 %) have been visiting Bulgaria 5 times or more (figure 5.8).

Figure 5.8 - Number of the respondents' previous visits to Bulgaria (%)



5.3. Main Survey Findings

This section consists of simultaneous analysis of the results for Poland and Bulgaria, gathered from the main questionnaires. It contains socio-demographic features of the respondents, tourist DI attributes analysis, as well as hypotheses investigation, and comparison between the overall destination image of Poland and Bulgaria, perceived by 5-points Likert scales.

5.3.1. Socio-Demographic Characteristics

This section consists of the analysis of the results for Poland and Bulgaria, gathered from the main questionnaires. The number of replies collected for each country was n=390.

Table 5.16 - Demographic profile of the respondents of the main survey for Poland and Bulgaria (n=390/each)

Poland Demographics			Bulgaria Demographics		
	N	%		N	%
Gender			Gender		
Male	209	53.6	Male	199	51
Female	181	46.4	Female	191	49
Age			Age		
<18	0	0	<18	0	0
18-25	69	17.7	18-25	56	14.35
26-35	268	68.7	26-35	192	49.23
36-65	53	13.6	36-65	142	36.41
>65	0	0	>65	0	0
Level of education			Level of education		
Primary	7	1.8	Primary	16	4.1
Secondary	48	12.3	Secondary	41	10.5
Undergraduate	191	49	Undergraduate	120	30.8
Postgraduate	132	33.8	Postgraduate	174	44.6
PhD	12	3.1	PhD	39	10
Nationality			Nationality		
Italian	71	18.2	German	60	15.38
Spanish	59	15.1	French	45	11.54
			Spanish	38	9.74
German	39	10	Italian	38	9.74
French	34	8.7	Croatian	32	8.2
Croatian	27	6.9	Austrian	29	7.43
Austrian	25	6.4	Greek	29	7.43
			Portuguese	25	6.41
Portuguese	20	5.1	British	24	6.15
Greek	17	4.3	Belgian	23	5.9
Belgian	15	3.8	Dutch	22	5.64
Slovenian	4	1.02	Serbian	6	1.53
Swiss	4	1.02	Icelandic	4	1.02
Other nationality	4	1.02			
Swedish	3	0.7	Macedonian	4	1.02
Irish	2	0.5	Romanian	3	0.76
Norwegian	1	0.2	Denmark	3	0.76
Danish	1	0.2	Hungarian	2	0.51
			Other nationality	2	0.51
			Norway	1	0.25

Poland. As seen above (table 5.16), the majority of the respondents for Poland were male (53.6%), aged from 26 to 35 years old (68.7%), with undergraduate degree as level of education (49%), of Italian (18.2%), Spanish (15.1%), and German (10%) nationality.

To start, the “nationality” segmentation criterion determines whether the Western respondents in the main survey used to live in a post-communist country and, eventually, have had experience with the communist system.

It further becomes evident that the majority of the respondents in the main questionnaire for Poland comes from a country with a noticeable communism background which would possibly influence their knowledge and personal opinion over the communist heritage of Poland and Bulgaria.

As a reference, the Italian Communist Party, founded in 1921, became the second largest political party of Italy after World War II and dominated until 1991 (Enrico Morando, 2010).

In Spain, United Left (UI) was a dominant political coalition that was organized in 1986 by the Communist Party of Spain (PCE), bringing together several left-wing and far-left political organizations (source: Wikipedia). Besides, PCE was a Marxist-Leninist party - the official state ideology of the Soviet Union (USSR).

The Communist Party of Germany was a major political party in Germany between 1918 and 1933, and a minor party in West Germany in the post-war period until it was banned in 1956 (source: Wikipedia).

In accordance with several DI studies, the knowledge of the past experiences and the various information sources would probably aid in designing more adequate and effective promoting strategies for Poland as a destination for special interest tourism.

Bulgaria. Concerning the respondents of the survey about Bulgaria DI, 51% were male (n=199), with age between 26-35 years (49.23%), with Postgraduate level of education (44.6%), with German (15.38%), French (11.54%) or and Spanish (9.74%) nationality.

The distribution regarding gender shows that an almost balanced sample could be achieved in the main questionnaire for Bulgaria. In numbers, 199 responses out of the total amount were achieved from men compared to 191 responses from women (table 5.16). This distribution does not correspond to the gender-ratio for the most prevailing nationalities in the research, namely German, French and Spanish. According to the statistic platform “States101.com” for 2019, the gender ratio is 0.97 in Germany (97 men to 100 women); 0.96 in France (96 men to 100 women); 0.98 in Spain (98 men to 100 women). Thus, it doesn't further benefit the study, since not all the members of these three strategic markets could be considered as potential consumers.

Besides, identical to the results for Poland, the majority of the respondents in the main questionnaire for Bulgaria comes from countries with a rooted communism background. Along with the Italian and German Communist Parties which were the dominant political forces after World War II, the French Communist Party (PCF) has also been a part of the political scene in France since 1920.

5.3.2. Destination Image of Poland and Bulgaria

This section aims to analyse the cognitive component of the DI of Poland and Bulgaria. All participants were asked to evaluate this component regarding each attribute (17 in total) on a Likert-scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Cognitive Component

The respondents of Poland's survey about its DI, evaluated better the countries' *Well-preserved communist attractions* (3.81) (first in the ranking) among the total of 390 respondents (table 5.17). The second characteristic of Poland highly appreciated according to the ranking among the visitors, was the *Interesting cultural attractions*, followed by the *Attractive scenery/natural landscape* (3.78). The table 5.17 also indicates that two DI attributes of Poland received the lowest ranking among respondents - *Rich communism history* (3.30) and *Pride of the communist past* (2.91).

In agreement with the results from the main survey as well as some previous studies about the topic, the communist heritage of Poland is noticeably associated with the Western

tourists' familiarization of sites and sights associated with the former communist regime, however, it is currently inadequately promoted by the tourism actors and organizations at a national level. Thus, Poland still does not have a clear and coherent DI in the international arena, nor as a special interest tourist destination.

Regarding Bulgaria's DI, the *Good weather* (4.16) was ranked first, followed by the *Attractive scenery/natural landscape*, and *Interesting cultural attractions*. The attributes with the lowest level of agreement about of the destination's image, were *Well-preserved communist attractions* (2.86) and *Rich communism history* (2.8.).

In reverse to previous studies' which see the post-communist heritage as a great source of revenue as it attracts many tourists, the results from the main study showed that Bulgarian communist heritage is not a great deal of interest among the Western visitors.

Those findings raise two assumptions for further investigation:

- The DI of Bulgaria is too strong
- The communist heritage of Bulgaria is poorly promoted by the tourism actors and organizations

Table 5.17 - Evaluation and ranking of the seventeen (17) DI attributes for both Poland and Bulgaria after the visit

DI attributes	Poland			Bulgaria		
	Mean	SD	Ranking	Mean	SD	Ranking
Well-preserved communist attractions	3.81	.47332	1	2.86	1.01251	16
Interesting cultural attractions	3.78	.51769	2	3.98	.83199	4
Attractive scenery/natural landscape	3.76	.50686	3	4.05	.78061	2
Good gastronomy	3.78	.50824	4	3.96	.90095	8
Attractive architecture	3.77	.51824	5	4.05	.78061	2
Friendly residents	3.76	.51361	6	3.69	.86586	13
Good access	3.73	.54034	7	3.97	.81624	5
Good weather				4.16	.7826	1
Relaxing destination	3.73	.51225	8	3.67	.85948	14
Good value for money	3.72	.55149	9	3.97	.86037	6
Safe destination	3.69	.57636	10	3.65	.90113	15
Good accommodation	3.67	.61623	11	3.94	.8163	11
Good nightlife	3.66	.57907	12	3.96	.84676	7
Clean destination	3.65	.59569	13	3.72	.89909	12
Good shopping opportunities	3.62	.58447	14	3.95	.85374	9
Good entertainment	3.60	.63069	15	3.95	.85045	10
Rich communism history	3.30	.9808	16	2.83	.99854	17
Pride of the communist past	2.91	.97846	17			

The strength of a possible correlation between the socio-demographic variables and the DI attributes related to the communist heritage of Poland and Bulgaria was further examined in the following section.

Pearson Chi-square test

A Chi-square test of independence (“Pearson Chi-square”) between the socio-demographic features of individuals (gender, age, level of education, and nationality) and the DI attributes related to the communism heritage (go to table 4.13), was conducted. The Pearson Chi-square tests the hypothesis that the socio-demographic and communist - related components for each country under research, Poland and Bulgaria, are independent.

Table 5.18 - Communism-related DI attributes for both countries under research

Poland	Bulgaria
Well-preserved communist attractions	Well-preserved communist attractions
Rich communism history	Rich communism history
Pride of the communist past	

Furthermore, four hypotheses were tested for both countries under research, namely Poland and Bulgaria:

H1: Gender and the evaluations of the DI attributes related to the communism heritage are independent.

H2: Age and the evaluations of the DI attributes related to the communism heritage are independent.

H3: Country of residence and the evaluations of the DI attributes related to the communism heritage are independent.

H4: Level of education and the evaluations of the DI attributes related to the communism heritage are independent.

Moreover, to meet the Pearson Chi-square test's conditions, the following groups are distinguished for each country: two Age groups (1 = 18 - 35 years and 2 = 36 - 65 years); two Gender groups (1 = Male and 2 = Female); two Education groups (1 = Primary and Secondary and 2 = Undergraduate, Postgraduate, and PhD); and four nationality groups considering the results from the main survey (table 4.3.1a and 4.3.1b). For Poland, the four groups are 1=Italian, 2 = Spanish, 3 = German, and 4 = Others. Following the same procedure for Bulgaria, these groups are 1 = German, 2 = French, 3 = Spanish, and 4 = Others.

In the case of Poland, the four tables below (tables 5.19; 5.20; 5.21; 5.22) show the results of the Chi-square tests for independence between Gender, Age, Nationality, Level of education and the Polish DI attributes related to the communist heritage of the country. According to Backhaus (2015) and Eckstein (2012), a Chi-square value between 0.00 and 0.05 shows that the null hypothesis can be rejected and a correlation between the independent and dependent variable may be assumed.

Table 5.19- Pearson Chi-Square for **Gender** and the evaluations of the DI attributes related to the communism heritage, Poland

DI attributes	Value	df	Assymp. Sig (2-sided)	Contingency Coefficient
Well-preserved communist attractions	391.069882	6	.000	.578
Rich communism history	404.486026	8	.000	.713
Pride of the communist past	392.046193	8	.000	.710

Significance level at 0.05

Table 5.20 - Pearson Chi-Square for **Age** and the evaluations of the DI attributes related to the communism heritage, Poland

DI attributes	Value	df	Assymp. Sig (2-sided)	Contingency Coefficient
---------------	-------	----	-----------------------	-------------------------

Well-preserved communist attractions	397.014704	6	.000	.586
Rich communism history	441.314633	8	.000	.728
Pride of the communist past	415.900309	8	.000	.718

Significance level at 0.05

Table 5.21 - Pearson Chi-Square for **Level of education** and the evaluations of the DI attributes related to the communism heritage, Poland

DI attributes	Value	df	Assymp. Sig (2-sided)	Contingency Coefficient
Well-preserved communist attractions	392.294324	6	.000	.578
Rich communism history	441.172195	8	.000	.737
Pride of the communist past	441.172195	8	.000	.728

Significance level at 0.05

Table 5.22- Pearson Chi-Square for **Nationality** and the evaluations of the DI attributes related to the communism heritage, Poland

DI attributes	Value	df	Assymp. Sig (2-sided)	Contingency Coefficient
Well-preserved communist attractions	393.156566	12	.000	.580
Rich communism history	398.770922	16	.000	.711
Pride of the communist past	396.111406	16	.000	.710

Significance level at 0.05

Since $p < .05$ (in all cases $p = .000$), the four hypotheses (H1 - H4) of independence should be rejected (tables 4.14; 4.15; 4.16; 4.17). Thus, it is possible to reject the null hypothesis and to make a conclusion that there is a statistically significant association between the four socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents in the main survey for Poland, and the evaluations of its three DI attributes related to the communist past, namely *Well-preserved communist attractions*, *Rich communism history*, and *Pride of the communist past*.

The same test was made for Bulgaria, Pearson Chi-square test, with the results showing (tables 5.23, 5.24, 5.25, 5.26) that the four hypotheses (H1 - H4) of independence should be rejected, since $p < .05$ in all cases ($p = .000$). Hence, it is possible to reject the null hypothesis and to make a conclusion that there is a statistically significant correlation between the four socio-demographic characteristics of the respondents in the main survey for Bulgaria, and the evaluations of the two DI attributes, namely *Well-preserved communist attractions* and *Rich communism history*.

Table 5.23- Pearson Chi-Square for **Gender** and the evaluations of the DI attributes related to the communism heritage, Bulgaria

DI attributes	Value	df	Assymp. Sig (2-sided)	Contingency Coefficient
Well-preserved communist attractions	391.768744	8	.000	.707
Rich communism history	398.261954	8	.000	.710

Significance level at 0.05

Table 5.24 - Pearson Chi-Square for **Age** and the evaluations of the DI attributes related to the communism heritage, Bulgaria

DI attributes	Value	df	Assymp. Sig (2-sided)	Contingency Coefficient
---------------	-------	----	-----------------------	-------------------------

Well-preserved communist attractions	404.309925	8	.000	.713
Rich communism history	404.776532	8	.000	.713

Significance level at 0.05

Table 5.25 - Pearson Chi-Square for **Level of education** and the evaluations of the DI attributes related to the communism heritage, Bulgaria

DI attributes	Value	df	Assymp. Sig (2-sided)	Contingency Coefficient
Well-preserved communist attractions	394.304792	8	.000	.710
Rich communism history	393.202089	8	.000	.710

Significance level at 0.05

Table 5.26 - Pearson Chi-Square for **Nationality** and the evaluations of the DI attributes related to the communism heritage, Bulgaria

DI attributes	Value	df	Assymp. Sig (2-sided)	Contingency Coefficient
Well-preserved communist attractions	395.876167	20	.000	.709
Rich communism history	399.748238	20	.000	.711

Significance level at 0.05

To further test the strength of a possible correlation between the variables, the contingency coefficient (Phi coefficient) was investigated. A contingency coefficient varies from 0 to 1, suggesting no association to a perfect positive association. Backhaus (2015) explains that a phi-value above 0.3 indicates more than a trivial correlation, which, in the main questionnaires of Poland and Bulgaria, is superior to 0.5. Thus, these results indicate a weak positive association between the variables for both countries under research, Poland and Bulgaria.

Affective Component

For the measurement of the affective component, as displayed in figure 5.9, the participants in the main survey were asked to rate their feelings towards Poland and Bulgaria on two seven-point semantic scales ranging from 1 (*unpleasant*) to 7 (*pleasant*) and from 1 (boring) to 7 (exciting). As seen in the figure 5.9, the majority of the respondents (40.8%) who took part in the main questionnaire for Poland, rate the country with a ‘6’, while 12.8 % of the respondents assessed it with the maximum grade (7). No respondents rated Poland with the lowest grade (‘1 = Unpleasant’).

About Bulgaria, most of the participants in the main survey (34.1%) graded it with ‘5’. However, only 8.5% of respondents rated Bulgaria with the maximum grade, 7. In spite of this output, one respondent evaluated Bulgaria as an unpleasant destination (figure 5.9).

Figure 5.9 – Assessment of the affective component (*unpleasant/pleasant*) of the DI of Poland and Bulgaria after the visit, according to the respondents in the main survey (%)

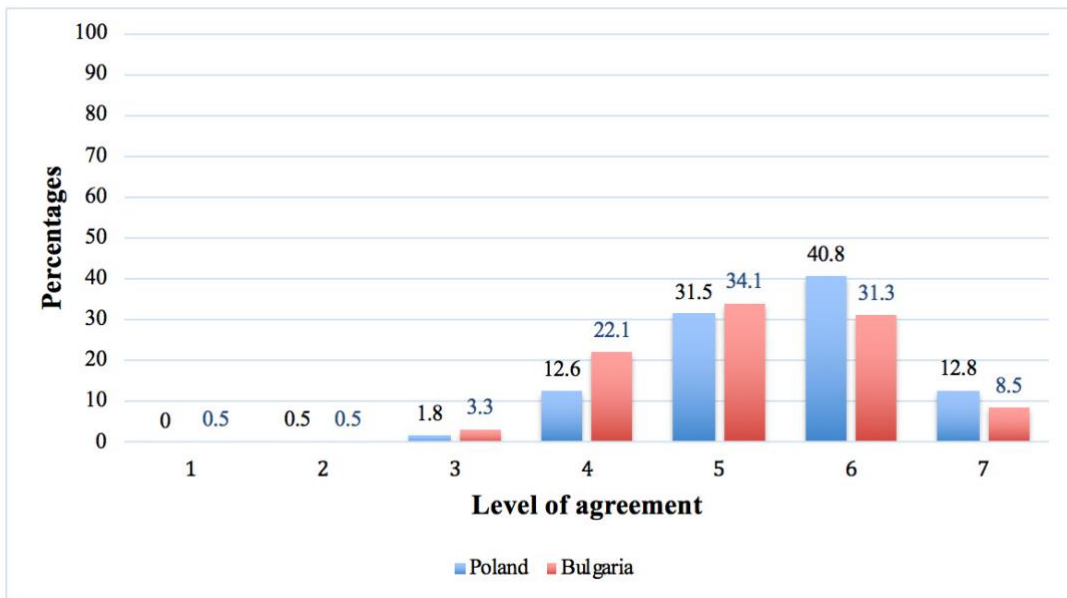


Table 5.27 – Measurement of the affective DI (*unpleasant/pleasant*) of Poland and Bulgaria (mean, SD, variance, maximum and minimum)

Country	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Variance
Poland	390	2.00	7.00	5.487179	0.963920	0.929141
Bulgaria	390	1.00	7.00	5.169231	1.032668	1.066403

Regarding if the respondents consider the DI exciting/boring (figure 4.10) 18.5% out of 390 respondents assessed Poland with the highest grade '7'. The majority, however, graded it with a '6' (Likert scale ranging from 1 boring to 7 exciting). No answer rated the country with the lowest option possible ('1=Boring'). On the other hand, Bulgaria was rated positively, the majority (35.9%) rated it with a '5'. Only one respondent gave Bulgaria the lowest ranking possible ('1=Boring'). When looking at the results of this question, findings show that visitors consider Poland as a more exciting country than Bulgaria.

Figure 5.10 – Assessment of the affective component (*boring/exciting*) of the DI of Poland and Bulgaria after the visit, according to the respondents in the main survey (%)

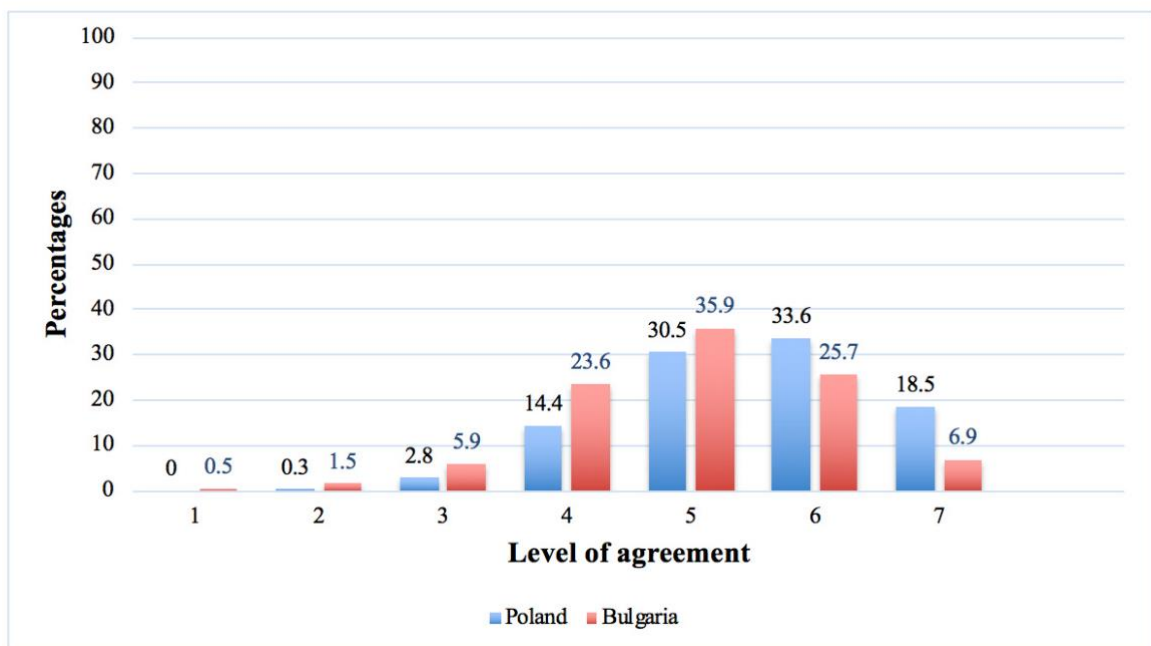


Table 5.28 – Measurement of the affective DI (*boring/exciting*) of Poland and Bulgaria (mean, SD, variance, maximum and minimum)

Country	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD	Variance
Poland	390	2.00	7.00	5.497436	1.053208	1.109248
Bulgaria	390	1.00	7.00	4.974359	1.108211	1.228133

Overall DI

The results indicate that 62.1 % of the respondents assessed the DI of Poland as ‘positive’ and only 19.5 % found it to be ‘strongly positive’. However, figure 4.11 demonstrates that 2.8% considered the destination image of Poland as ‘negative’, despite the absence of responses considering it as ‘strongly negative’. In a similar context, *Bulgaria was evaluated positively (52,8%)*. Moreover, only 5.9% of the participants expressed that Bulgarian image as ‘strongly positive’. Rather surprisingly, 8.3% assessed the Bulgarian DI as ‘negative’ and 1% as ‘strongly negative’.

Figure 5.11 – Assessment of the overall image of Poland and Bulgaria, according to respondents in the main study (%)

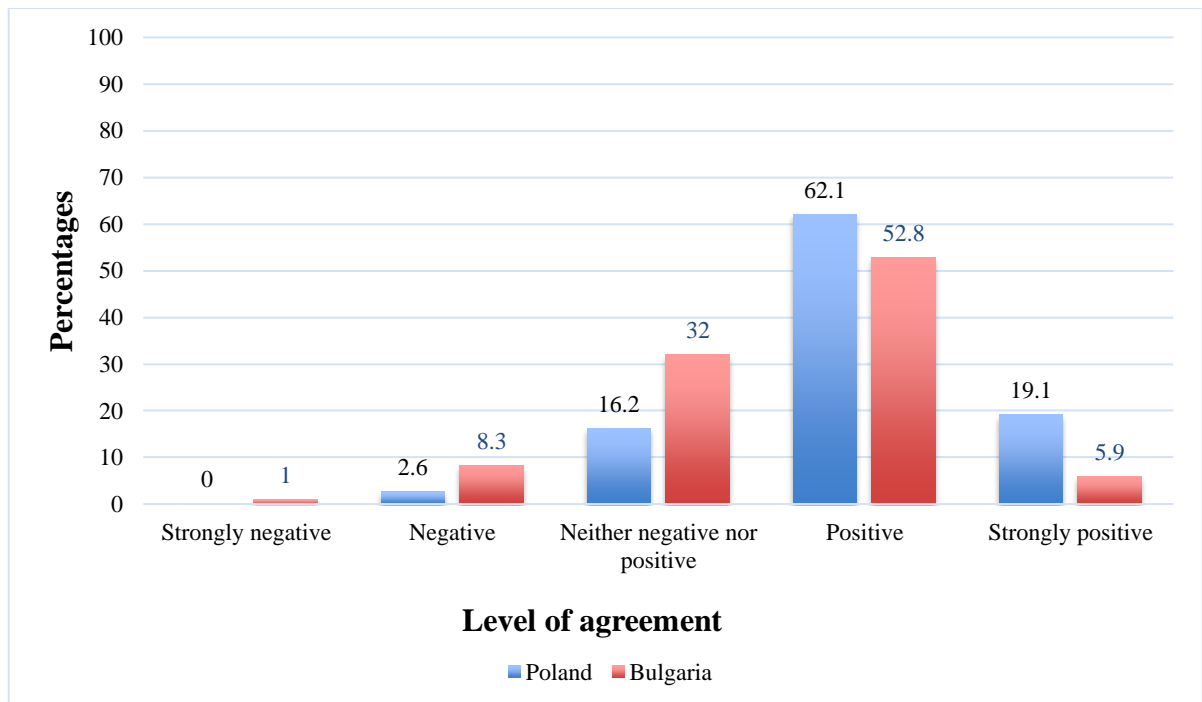


Table 5.29 – Measurement of the overall DI of Poland and Bulgaria (mean, SD, variance, maximum and minimum)

Country	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Poland	390	-1.00	2.00	.9821	.67811
Bulgaria	390	-2.00	2.00	.5692	.77829

-2.00 = "Strongly negative" -1.00 = "Negative" 0.00 = "Neither negative nor positive" 1.00 = "Positive" 2.00 = "Strongly positive"

5.3.4. Previous Experience

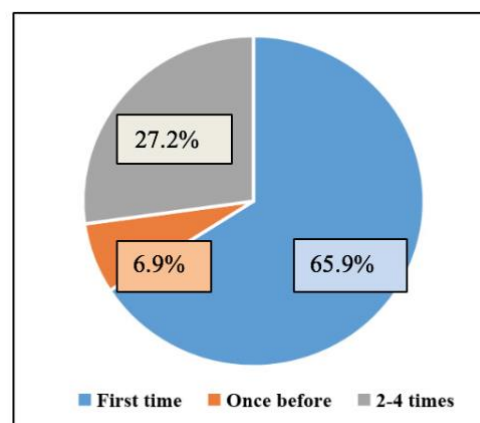
This section aims to explore to what degree the participants of the main survey have past experience with the two countries as it can explain differences in the evaluation of the destination's performance.

Furthermore, valuable information regarding the respondents that already travelled to Poland and Bulgaria can be attained. The results collected from the question *“Including this visit, how many times have you visited Poland?”* confirmed that majority of the respondents – 65.9% (257 out of 390 respondents) - visited Poland for the first time. Moreover, 27%, of the people stated they have visited Poland 2 to 4 times and only 7% of them have visited the country once previously (figure 5.12).

The great number of first-time visitors (257 out of 390 respondents) could likely be considered as a reason for the respondents' evaluation performance. The lack of first-person experience and solid knowledge about Poland could have an impact on the poor assessment of the country's communist heritage.

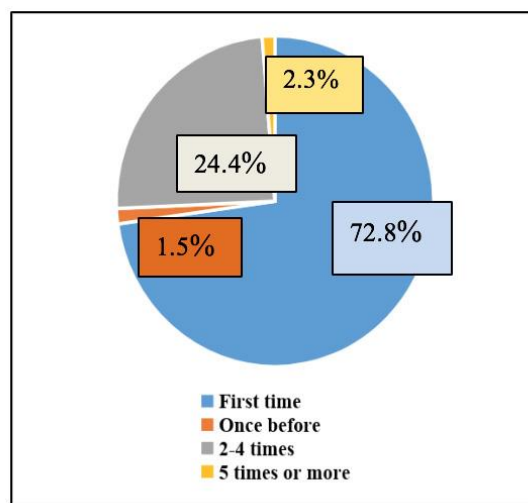
From the other hand, first-time visitors can possibly evaluate as a more pleasant and more exciting destination, than tourists who have visited Poland more than once. This would further impact the evaluation of the overall destination image of the post - Soviet country under research.

Figure 5.12 - Number of the respondents' previous visits to Poland



The results of Bulgaria, collected from the question “Including this visit, how many times have you visited Bulgaria?” showed that majority - 72.8% (284 out of 390 respondents) visited Bulgaria for the first time. Furthermore, 24.4%, of the respondents that participated in the main study, stated they had been in Bulgaria previously, at least between 2 to 4 times; 2.3% have visited Bulgaria 5 times or more, and only 1.5% of the total number of respondents have visited Bulgaria once before (figure 5.13).

Figure 5.13 - Number of the respondents' previous visits to Bulgaria



In accordance with the results for Poland, the presence of a very high percentage of first-time visitors (72.8%) could possibly be considered as a reason for the respondents' rating behaviour. In other terms, the lack of enough knowledge about Bulgaria, time and broad experience in the destination could resonate on the poor evaluation of its communist heritage. As many previous studies affirmed, the national story can be shared with foreign visitors through museums, monuments, and other communist heritage sites.

CHAPTER V. CONCLUSIONS

This study was conducted in order to fill a research gap regarding the impact of communism heritage on the DI of Poland and Bulgaria, as well as to assess their global image. Findings showed respondents in both sampling groups had positive perceptions about the destination image of each of these post-Soviet republics, Poland and Bulgaria. However, results reveal that the destinations' communist heritage awareness is currently an obstacle for the development of the countries DI, especially in case of Bulgaria.

Another important finding is that Poland's well-preserved communist attractions and interesting cultural attractions are the most captivating and competitive elements of the country's destination image. Additionally, as in all the post-Soviet countries, the significance of the communist past – as well as their future direction – is questioned, and, thus, the DI attributes with the lowest ranks are the country's rich communism history and its pride of the communist past.

Furthermore, Poland was defectively evaluated in terms of primary attributes, such as accommodation, cleanness, shopping opportunities, entertainment and nightlife.

Regarding the distinctive traits of Poland as a tourist destination, the majority of respondents in the pre-test study mentioned the capital city, Warsaw, along with the other two largest cities, Krakow and Gdansk. Thus, the rest of the attractions on the Polish territory remain undiscovered and, perhaps, neglected. Thus, more far-reaching and satisfactory marketing activities on the attractions outside of the biggest cities needs to be discussed.

In general, Poland is perceived as an attractive destination, strongly connected with its "Polish vodka", "delicious food", "colourful buildings" and "stunning architecture", but is not promoted sufficiently as a communism tourism destination.

Bulgaria, on the other hand, is not perceived as a cultural and heritage destination at all. Its well-preserved communist attractions and rich communism history are the two most

poorly evaluated attributes. Thus, according to the findings, Bulgaria is best perceived as a destination, with attractive scenery/natural landscape and good weather, and not cultural and historical (communist) heritage. In effect, the majority of respondents referred to its "sunny shores", "lovely beaches", and "great resorts", painting Bulgaria as "mountainous" and "country with splendid scenery".

Regardless of the fact that the Bulgarian communist heritage is poorly assessed by the majority of the respondents in the study, one of the most mentioned unique attractions of the destination is Buzludzha - the monument house of the Bulgarian Communist party. This further raises subjects for future studies and implies that the post - Soviet country could be possibly transformed into a high-class special interest destination in the future.

Moreover, 72.8% of the respondents in the main research visited Bulgaria for the first time, and more than half of them assessed the country's overall DI as positive. Nevertheless, some of the respondents remained unbiased or assessed poorly some fundamental DI attributes - *friendliness of the locals, safety, cleanliness, and relaxing destination*.

Altogether, the findings of this study indicate that the communication policy of Poland and Bulgaria for their destinations promotion should be improved, for the Western target market. The little awareness of the rich communist past of the two countries under research raises the question of adequate strategies in order to attract the attention of this target group. In the post-communist Eastern Europe where identities are fluid, uncertain and sometimes fragile, developing more sufficient strategies for tourism is one way for Poland and Bulgaria to present themselves to the world, as credible and legitimate post-communist democracies. This way differentiation and unique positioning can be reached.

Moreover, the study suggested a number of areas of low performance (e.g. cleanliness, shopping, level of safety, the quality level of accommodations, etc.) in both markets that were identified, and that need to be addressed. Tourism managers, policymakers, and stakeholders can define better promotional efforts to increase their brand awareness, brand recognition and also brand value. Lastly, the DI of the destinations under research can assist managers of DMOs to build more attractive tourism products, and consequently to increase the added value of the experience in the destination offering.

Limitations and Future Research

While this paper has shed some light on the extent to which the communist heritage of Poland and Bulgaria influences the Western tourists' perception of these destinations, it is not without its limitations.

From one hand, time and money restrictions the study did not consider another post - Soviet countries. From the other hand, the current study has not focused on the conative element, namely, verifying the revisit and recommend intentions to the countries under research, Poland and Bulgaria.

The last limitation is that the non-experimental and cross-sectional nature of the study is not adequate to illustrate causality among the variables examined. Nevertheless, this limitation is partly mitigated by ensuring a good theoretical foundation for the proposed relationships between the variables in the study. However, future research on the topic would be considerably enhanced by experimental, field, and protracted research designs.

REFERENCES

Agapito, D., Oom do Valle, P., & da Costa Mendes, J. (2013) The cognitive-affective-conative model of destination image: A confirmatory analysis. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 30 (5), 471-481.

Ansari, N., Joshi, M., Tyagi, S. & Singh. V. K. (2019) Influence of consumer attitude and intentions on destination image of Muslim tourists. *Revista Turismo: Estudos e práticas*, 8, 19-22.

Ashworth, G.J. & Tunbridge, J.E. (2000) *The Tourist-Historic City: Retrospect and Prospect of Managing the Heritage City*, Oxford, Pergamon Press.

Athena, H. N. (2017) Online destination image: Comparing national tourism organization's and tourists' perspectives. *Tourism Management*, 60, 280-297.

Baloglu, S. & McCleary, K. W. (1999) U.S. International Travelers' Images of Four Mediterranean Destinations: A Comparison of Visitors and Nonvisitors. *Journal of Travel Research*, 38, 144-152.

Banaszkiewicz, M. & Owsianowska, S. (2018) *Anthropology of Tourism in Central and Eastern Europe: Bridging Worlds*, Rowman & Littlefield.

Baud-Bovy, M. & Lawson, F. R. (1977) *Tourism and recreation development*, The Architectural Press, London.

Bell, J., D. Dimitrov P.; William F. & Danforth L. (2019) Bulgaria. Available at: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Bulgaria>, (accessed: 01.02.2019)

Bessière, J. (2002) Local Development and Heritage: Traditional Food and Cuisine as Tourist Attractions in Rural Areas. *Sociologia Ruralis*, 38 (1), 21-34.

Bigné, E., Ruiz, C. & Pérez, R. (2019). Destination appeal through digitalized comments. *Journal of Business Research*, 10, 103-132.

Boniface, B. & Cooper, C. (2005) *Worldwide Destinations: The Geography of Travel and Tourism 3*, Butterworth-Heinemann.

Caraba, C. C. (2011) Communist heritage tourism and red tourism: concepts, development, and problems. *Cinq Continents* 1, 29-39. Available at: https://www.ssoar.info/ssoar/bitstream/handle/document/29029/ssoar-2011-1-caraba-communist_heritage_tourism_and_red.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y&lnkname=ssoar-2011-1-caraba-communist_heritage_tourism_and_red.pdf, (accessed: 12.03.2019)

Castañeda-García, J.A., Frías-Jamilena, D.M. & Rodríguez-Molina, M.A. (2015) The contribution of website design to the generation of tourist destination image: The moderating effect of involvement. *Tourism Management*, 47 (C), 303-317.

Chen, C. F. & Tsai D. C. (2007) How destination image and evaluative factors affect behavioral intentions. *Tourism Management*, 28, 1115-1122

Chung, H. L., Lee, H., Lee, S. J. & Koo, C. (2015) *The influence of tourism website on tourists' behaviour to determine destination selection: A case study of creative economy in Korea*, *Technological Forecasting and Social Change*, 96, 130-143.

Crampton, R. J. (2006) *A Concise History of Bulgaria (Cambridge Concise Histories)*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press 2.

Dedeoğlu, B. B. (2019) *Shaping tourists' destination quality perception and loyalty through destination country image: The importance of involvement and perceived value*. *Tourism Management Perspectives*, 29, 105 - 117.

De La Hoz-Correa, A. & Muñoz-Leiva, F. (2019) The role of information sources and image on the intention to visit a medical tourism destination: a cross-cultural analysis. *Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing*, 36 (2), 204-219.

Dutta, M., Banerjee, S. & Husain, Z. (2007) *Untapped demand for heritage: A*

contingent valuation study of Prinsep Ghat, Calcutta. Tourism Management 28 (1), 83-95.

Echtner, C. M. & Ritchie, J. R. B. (1991, 1993) *The measurement of Destination Image: An Empirical Assessment*, *Journal of Travel Research* 31, 1-13.

Echtner, C. & Ritchie, J. (2003). The Meaning and Measurement of Destination Image. *The Journal of Tourism Studies*, 14 (1), 37-48.

Gonzalez, M. V. (2008) Intangible heritage tourism and identity. *Tourism Management* 29 (4), 807-812.

Hardy, D. (1988) Historical Geography and Heritage Studies. *Area* 20 (4), 333-338.

Höpken, W., Fuchs, M., Keil, D. & Lexhagen, M. (2015) Business intelligence for cross-process knowledge extraction at tourism destinations. *Information Technology & Tourism* 15 (2), 101-130.

Kavaratzis, M. & Hatch, M. (2013) The dynamics of place brands: An identity-based approach to place branding theory. *Marketing Theory* 13, 69-86.

Koufodontis, N. I & Gaki, E. (2019) Local tourism policy makers and e-image of destinations. *Current Issues in Tourism*, 1-12.

Lee, H. R., Mckercher, B. & Kim, S. (2009) The relationship between convention hosts and professional conference organizers. *International Journal of Hospitality Management*, 28, 556-562.

Li, X. & Pan, B. (2009) The Effect of Online Information Search on Image Development. *Journal of Travel Research*, 48 (1), 45-57.

Light, D. (2000) An Unwanted Past: contemporary tourism and the heritage of communism in Romania. *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 6 (2), 145-160.

Light, D. (2000) Gazing on communism: heritage tourism and post-communist identities in Germany, Hungary and Romania. *Tourism Geographies* 2 (2), 2000, 157-176.

Matos, N., Mendes, J. & Pinto, P. (2012) Revisiting the destination image construct through a conceptual model. *Dos Algarves: A Multidisciplinary e-Journal*, 102 - 124.

Matos, N., Mendes, J. & Pinto, P. (2015) The role of imagery and experiences in the construction of a tourism destination image. *Journal of Spatial and Organizational Dynamics* 3 (2), 135-154.

Meethan, K. (2001) *Tourism in Global Society: Place, Culture, Consumption*, UK, Red Globe Press.

Mieriņa, I. (2014) Is Communism to Blame for Political Disenchantment in Post-Communist Countries? Cohort Analysis of Adults' Political Attitudes. *Europe-Asia Studies* 66, 1031-1061.

Nuryanti, W. (1996) Heritage and postmodern tourism. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 23 (2), 249-260.

Ramseook-Munhurrun, P., Seebaluck, N. V. & Naidoo, P. (2015) Examining the Structural Relationships of Destination Image, Perceived Value, Tourist Satisfaction, and Loyalty: Case of Mauritius. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 175, 252 – 259.

Ratkai, S. (2004) *Destination Image and the Influence of Different Forms of Information*. Unpublished Master dissertation. University of Waterloo.

Remoaldo, P.C., Vareiro, L., Santos, J. F. & Ribeiro, J. C. (2014) Tourists' perceptions of world heritage destinations: The case of Guimaraes (Portugal). *Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 1-13.

- Rodriguez-Molina, M.A., Frías-Jamilena, J.A. & Castañeda, G. (2015) The contribution of website design to the generation of tourist destination image: The moderating effect of involvement. *Tourism Management*, 47, 303-317.
- Sadurski, W. (2006) *Legal and political responses in Central and Eastern Europe*, European University Institute, 31-35.
- Sameer, H., Yuksel, E. & Muzaffer, U. (2007) Destination image and destination personality. *International Journal of Culture, Tourism and Hospitality Research*, 1, 62-81.
- Smith, M. & Puczko, L. (2009) Health and Wellness Tourism. *Open Journal of Ecology*, 6 (10), 214-223.
- Stanislav, I. (2009) Opportunities for developing communist heritage tourism in Bulgaria. *Tourism Review* 57, 177-192.
- Stepchenkova, S. & Morrison, A. M. (2008) Russia's destination image among American pleasure travelers: Revisiting Echtner and Ritchie. *Tourism Management*, 29, 548-560.
- Stylidis, D., Shahi, A. & Belhassen, Y. (2017) Testing an integrated destination image model across residents and tourists. *Tourism Management* 58, 184-195.
- Tasci, A. D. A. & Gartner, W. C. (2007) Destination Image and Its Functional Relationships. *Sage Journals*, 76-88.
- Urry, J. (1990) The tourist gaze: Leisure and travel in contemporary societies, *Sage Publications*, 102-141.
- Wandycz, P. S., Kondracki, J. A., Jasiewicz, K. & Dawson H. (2019) Poland. Available at: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Poland>, (accessed: 01.02.2019)

Yilmaz, K. (2013) Comparison of Quantitative and Qualitative Research Traditions: epistemological, theoretical, and methodological differences. *European Journal of Education*, 48 (2), 311-325.

APPENDIX A: PRE-QUESTIONNAIRE

*identical for Bulgaria

Dear Sir/Madam,

This inquiry aims to identify the image of Poland as a tourism destination, and the holiday experiences' you have lived during your visit. This research is part of an MSc dissertation being made at the University of the Algarve. It will take you only a few minutes to complete the following questionnaire. Your responses are completely confidential and will only be used for research purposes.

Thank you very much in advance for your participation!

Section I. Respondents Characterization

1. What is your age? (short answer text)

2. What is your gender? Male Female

3. What level of education do you obtain?

Primary

Secondary

Postgraduate

Undergraduate

PhD

4. What is your nationality? (short answer text)

Section II. Image of destination – Poland

1.1 What images or characteristics come to your mind when you think of Poland as a travel destination? (Please enter up to 3)

1.2 How would you describe the atmosphere or mood that you would expect to experience while visiting Poland? (Please enter up to 3)

1.3 Please list up to 3 distinctive or unique tourism attractions that you can think of Poland.

Section III. DI attributes

2.1 The following statements relate to Poland image tourism destinations. Please choose one of the countries mentioned. Indicate to what extent do you agree or disagree with the statements. Place an X on one answer per statement:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Good weather					
Attractive scenery/natural landscape					
Good gastronomy					
Good accommodation					
Good value for money					
Good access					
Interesting cultural attractions					
Good shopping opportunities					
Good entertainment					
Good sporting facilities					
Good nightlife					
Clean destination					
Safe destination					
Relaxing destination					
Friendly residents					
Well-preserved communist attractions					
Pride of the communist past					

2.2 How would you describe Poland's overall image as a tourism destination?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Unpleasant Pleasant

2.3 How would you describe Poland's overall image as a tourism destination?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Boring

Exciting

2.4 How would you describe Poland's overall image as a tourism destination (tick)?

Strongly negative	Negative	Neither negative nor positive	Positive	Strongly positive

Section IV - Previous Experience

Including this visit, how many times have you visit Poland?

First time

Other (short answer text)

APPENDIX B: MAIN QUESTIONNAIRE

*identical for Bulgaria

Dear Sir/Madam,

This inquiry aims to identify the image of Poland as a tourism destination, and the holiday experiences' you have lived during your visit. This research is part of an MSc dissertation being made at the University of the Algarve. It will take you only a few minutes to complete the following questionnaire. Your responses are completely confidential and will only be used for research purposes.

Thank you very much in advance for your participation!

Section I. Respondents Characterization

1. What is your age? (short answer text)

2. What is your gender? Male Female

3. What level of education do you obtain?

Primary

Secondary

Postgraduate

Undergraduate

PhD

4. What is your nationality? (short answer text)

Section II. DI attributes

2.1 The following statements relate to Poland image tourism destinations. Please choose one of the countries mentioned. Indicate to what extent do you agree or disagree with the statements. Place an X on one answer per statement:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Good weather					
Attractive scenery/natural landscape					

Good gastronomy					
Good accommodation					
Good value for money					
Good access					
Interesting cultural attractions					
Good shopping opportunities					
Good entertainment					
Good sporting facilities					
Good nightlife					
Clean destination					
Safe destination					
Relaxing destination					
Friendly residents					
Well-preserved communist attractions					
Pride of the communist past					

2.2 How would you describe Poland's overall image as a tourism destination?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
 Unpleasant Pleasant

2.3 How would you describe Poland's overall image as a tourism destination?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
 Boring Exciting

2.4 How would you describe Poland's overall image as a tourism destination (tick)?

Strongly negative	Negative	Neither negative nor positive	Positive	Strongly positive

Section IV - Previous Experience

Including this visit, how many times have you visit Poland?

First time

Other (short answer text)