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Master's Thesis Cultural Geography: Tourism Geography and Planning

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Islands and Sustainable Tourism Policies: a Global Exploration

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Abstract

Developing sustainable tourism, particularly in the context of overtourism, is a complex process that has no single approach to ensure success. Not only do the terms elude precise definitions, but they vary in their focus and contexts, such as whether sustainability is pursued in terms of environmental protection or in terms of cultural protection. In the case of islands that have a large tourism sector, sustainability is yet more complex as they need to carefully balance economic benefits with environmental and social factors. To approach this broad topic, a correspondingly broad range of research locations was used. Nine islands from five continents, including Ambergris Caye, Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, the Faroe Islands, the Galapagos Islands, the Gili Islands, Isle of Skye, Kauai, and the Seychelles, participated in this research. Interviews explored what types of approaches to sustainability are used, what challenges and opportunities exist for small islands in terms of sustainable tourism and how tourist behavior contributes to overtourism. Interviews were conducted in two Delphi rounds, the first interview being individual and the second being in a group setting to reflect on different policies together. Overall, it was found that despite vastly different contexts, islands across the globe face similar challenges and have similar approaches to sustainability. These general approaches were classified into four general policy categories, which include direct and quantifiable strategies, strategies that change tourist types and behaviors, strategies that integrate the local community, and indirect mechanisms that influence sustainability. This research concludes that collaboration between policymakers is necessary for optimization of sustainable tourism policies and presents the different ways in which policies discussed during the interviews are effective.

Key Concepts: Overtourism, environmental, social, economic sustainability, policymaking, planning, island economies.

1. Introduction

1.1 Background and context

In the myth of Icarus and Daedalus, the father-son duo attempt to escape from Crete by constructing wings out of wax and feathers, which promptly melt as they approach the sun. Greek mythology presents the myth of Icarus as a moral warning: Be careful of striving too far, for your own ambition may result in your downfall. Research and news reports on overtourism paint an equally dramatic picture as a warning that tourist destinations can become the victims of their own success when growth propels skywards in an uncontrolled manner. The classic examples of Barcelona and Venice show how mass tourism can lead to local protests (Milano, 2018), but overtourism does not only manifest in the form of overcrowding in large cities. One colloquial news article from Ambergris Caye, an island off the coast of Belize, reports local dissatisfaction concerning the construction of large-scale hotels, which is obstructing the charm of the town San Pedro, and in turn deceasing the appeal of small-scale lodges on the island (The San Pedro Sun, 2019). Such limits to growth are starkly visible on small islands like Ambergris Caye, where a small surface area imposes a natural physical barrier to the expansion of tourist infrastructure. Further increasing potential tourism pressures is that small islands frequently rely on a single niche sector to maximize economic output (Armstrong et al., 2014), and tourism often fills this niche. Dependence on tourism is therefore generally higher than on mainland destinations, which have a larger workforce and more natural resources. The topic of tourism management is thus particularly relevant and challenging in the context of small islands. This research addresses these specific factors, among others, by focusing on what policy strategies on islands are introduced, how they are implemented, and to what extent they are effective.

As the above examples show, mass tourism is frequently scrutinized through wary eyes, but a factor that is sometimes overlooked in the tourism discourse is that it can be the saving grace in places that need swift economic recovery. In Aruba, for example, the closure of the island's oil refinery in 1985 led to economic downturns and an unemployment rate of around 35% (Aruba Destination Development Plan, 2018). To recover the fragile market, tourism was introduced. Nowadays the tourism industry indirectly contributes to about 90% of Aruba's economic activities and is a major destination for luxury, cruise, and honeymoon tourists. Despite this recovery, limits to growth on the island have recently been identified, and management strategies to promote sustainable tourism, instead of continued growth, are underway. Shifting away from overtourism is relatively new in the tourism debate (Bauer et al., 2020), and in many cases is even newer in the

policy debate. Many places still insist on an all-growth mindset, such as Lombok in Indonesia, Mauritius, and Saint Kitts and Nevis, to name just three island destinations (Niland, 2018; Republic of Mauritius, 2017). Indonesia aims at having "ten more Balis," for example, despite Balinese inhabitants feeling that tourism on the island is oversaturated (Invest Indonesia, 2017; Westoby et al., 2021). Such examples show that weighing the pros and cons of tourism development to achieve a balance between different tourism threats and benefits is needed to achieve a sustainable tourism model. However, without the possibility of comparison, it can be difficult to weigh the effectiveness of policies and decide on possible courses of action. If destinations are to implement new and sustainable tourism policies, collaboration between each other is a key factor to success. This research compares sustainable tourism policies from nine islands around the globe to provide different contexts to the same phenomenon and to find similarities in challenges and successes even among the diversity of places interviewed.

According to Dredge and Jamal (2015), policymaking is the number one mechanism that places need to use to create sustainable tourism. However, once a tourist destination has matured, adverse impacts do not only affect the tourism industry itself and are also not solely generated by visitors. Destinations can be perceived as laden with opportunities for job seekers, which can further increase pressure on the local infrastructure and economy, illustrating one aspect of how tourism cannot be defined in terms of cause and effect but is interlaced with indirect influencing factors that can interact and multiply, making policymaking from a tourism agency's perspective a daunting task. Dredge and Jamal (2015), define policy as simply what governments decide what to do or what not to do. While this may be a simplification, policies are a crucial mechanism that destinations employ to curb overtourism and develop sustainable tourism. Governments do not need to act retroactively to introduce overtourism mitigation strategies but can also do so in anticipation of potential threats. Taking these policy perspectives, this research explores how overtourism is on the one hand context dependent yet is commonly experienced in island destinations that face similar challenges. It narrows down the parameters of overtourism while simultaneously exploring new, under-researched angles of the phenomenon, and explores overtourism mitigation strategies, which by default promote more sustainable tourism. In the context of this research the term overtourism is therefore tantamount to sustainable tourism in the sense that mitigating the former contributes to the latter. Both terms will be discussed extensively in this in depth in this research paper in both a theoretical and practical context.

1.2 Research aims and relevance

This research project focuses on policy approaches to overtourism and sustainable tourism on nine different islands: Ambergris Caye, Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, the Faroe Islands, the Galapagos Islands, the Gili Islands, Isle of Skye, Kauai, and Seychelles. Examples of general approaches include the spatial redistribution of tourists, educating tourists on culturally and environmentally sustainable practices, introducing fees to sites, and marketing towards different types of tourists. These nine islands, from a total of five continents, sometimes adopt completely contrasting policies, but more frequently adopt similar tourism policies despite their different contexts.

Discussing overtourism may initially seem irrelevant, or at least poorly timed, in the context of Covid-19. However, this is decidedly not the case, as the current lull in tourism allows for reflection of practices and gives destinations time to reconsider policy approaches—a rare opportunity in places with non-stop tourism inflows. Furthermore, the literature analysis found that research is lacking in providing concrete examples and overviews of what approaches can be used to mitigate overtourism, and often focuses on general approaches to sustainability without going into concrete examples or specific policy ideas. Furthermore, policies are frequently developed on a national scale or at most on a regional scale and conducting research from a global perspective provides more well-rounded overview and can help policymakers delve into new paradigms that might not have been considered otherwise.

Two in-depth interviews, one of which was individual and the second of which was in a group setting, were conducted with one policymaker or expert on the topic per island to discuss sustainable tourism policies. The results from each individual interview were exchanged among the participants in the second round of interviews so that participants could reflect on what policies were implemented in other locations, and whether they were applicable—or perhaps even preferable—in their own location. On an academic level, there is surprisingly little focus on overtourism in terms of specific policy comparisons. This research helps shed light on the processes behind mitigating overtourism impacts and discusses how effective these are in terms of achieving sustainability on environmental, social, and economic levels. In terms societal contributions, this research brought together a diverse range of policy options and conducted group interviews with the primary goal of having policymakers learn from each other to reflect on potential options on their respective islands. Furthermore, adding to the research on sustainable tourism and overtourism provides additional resources to kickstart changes within the tourism

industry, which many destinations now regard as necessary to maintain their viability, which in turn also helps sustain livelihoods of people living at a destination.

The four main questions that this research will answer are the following:

1. What are the different types of policies and mechanisms that policymakers introduce to develop sustainable tourism, and to what purpose are they employed?

2. How does tourist behavior fit into the overall concept of overtourism?

3. How do islands in particular face challenges and opportunities concerning sustainable tourism development?

4. What are the factors that contribute to overtourism and sustainability?

2. Theoretical framework

Islands exhibit peripherality: like border regions, islands are usually far away from economic centers, country capitals, and are geographically remote (Sijtsma et al., 2015; Spilanis et al., 2012). Far distances to mainland centers of production also mean that islands face significant hurdles in supplying both locals and visitors with basic needs such as infrastructure and goods, as these frequently need to be imported from the mainland. Although at first glance these factors seem to present burdens alone, this peripherality is sometimes a blessing in disguise. On the Dutch Wadden Islands, for example, the share of employment related to tourism was nearly four times higher than the corresponding figure on the mainland Dutch coast in 2007 (Sijtsma et al., 2015), and the unemployment rate in 2019 was nearly one percentage point lower than the regional average (Frisian Social Planning Office, 2020). However, it should be noted that the Covid-19 pandemic unveiled the islands' overreliance on tourism: the Frisian Islands became the first to experience plummeting employment levels in the region (Frisian Social Planning Office, 2020). Thus, sustainable tourism should not only be analyzed in terms of environmental or social measures, but in terms of economic resilience too. Despite—or due to—their peripherality, tourists flock to islands, indicating that islands have an intrinsic appeal, perhaps for feeling more remote and exciting (Cheng et al., 2013), and having unique and endemic natural characteristics (Sufrauj, 2011). Furthermore, the effects of peripherality are decreasing in today's globalizing world, with cheap access to remote regions no longer an unattainable dream for middle-income earners worldwide. Aruba and New Zealand, to name two examples, received 130,000 and 380,000 tourists in 1975 and now receive around 2 million and 3.5 million tourists per year, respectively (Vanega & Croes, 2003; "International Visitor Arrivals to New Zealand," 2020). Despite presenting economic advantages such as global economic integration, this increased accessibility has the downside of creating even more tourism pressures on small islands due to their small populations and correspondingly small workforces. In Aruba, over half of employees at hotels are foreigners because the tourism demand exceeds the local workforce capacity. On the Isle of Skye, local businesses similarly cite difficulties in hiring local staff because visitor numbers exceed local workforce capacities. (Isle of Skye and Isle of Raasay Tourism Economic Impact, 2020). Small islands therefore have unique tourism characteristics that require targeted focus to mitigate adverse effects of tourism. To achieve this, long-term solutions that promote sustainable tourism need to be included in policymaking.

As Peterson & Dipietro (2021) state, tourism in small island communities remains largely void of empirical investigation, and yet are some of the most tourism dependent places on earth, in part

because the limited availability of land to generate export earnings is often compensated through tourism (Croes, 2006; Armstrong et al., 2014). Tourism management therefore requires diligent planning so that economic benefits are still reaped from tourism while simultaneously being sustainable so that the industry can maintain its viability. In the context of our globalizing world and the small workforces on small islands, collaboration in creating planning policies to achieve sustainability can help. As Arnold and Wade (2015) state, global interdependencies are increasing, and new ways of learning need to be recognized through a "common language and framework for sharing our specialized knowledge." Taking a global perspective on how to create sustainable tourism means that new knowledge pathways can be forged to optimize policies. Confirming this stance, Gowreesunkar et al. (2018) point out that many islands offer similar tourist experiences and therefore tend to copy successful policy approaches from fellow small island economies. Tourism policies corroborate this tendency. For example, the tourism policies of both the Seychelles and Mauritius state each other as primary competitors due to their geographic proximity and for offering similar tourism experiences (Government of Seychelles, 2016; Republic of Mauritius, 2017). In terms of academic research, focus is often placed on a single island or region, and even when a global approach is taken there is rarely reflection between participants on how to optimize policies. The global approach used in this research helps overcome this gap, especially considering that all participants in this research stated that they only cooperate with other destinations on a regional level.

The angle from which challenges are addressed depends on the aims of the destination, specifically whether economic, social, and environmental sustainability is the main aim; even though managing overtourism requires consideration of all three forms of sustainability. In terms of economic development, tourism growth is frequently cited as the defining contribution and valuable component of the tourism industry in a destination, and despite ostensible claims to adopt sustainable tourism policies, pro-growth measures still dominate in many destinations (Gossling et al., 2015; Peterson & DiPietro, 2021; Hampton & Jeyacheya, 2020). In "Doughnut Economics," Raworth (2017) opposes one-sided views of sustainability by introducing the "doughnut" model as a new way to measure economic success, instead of focusing solely on GDP and growth-oriented success measures. This donut comprises a balance between the environmental ceiling and the social foundations that humanity relies on, such as a supply of food and water, which needs to be found to have a prosperous economy that can thrive well into the future, including the tourism industry. Raworth's donut model has rarely been transferred and replicated to address tourism-specific issues, and research that does include it is only now emerging but are alluded to in the idea

that tourism development requires balanced approaches. Combating overtourism through improved management, and applying truly balanced and sustainable methods, are of paramount importance to ensure that tourism can continue to be the pillar that many small island economies lean upon.

2.1 Overtourism and environmental sustainability

Literature on island nations and territories often focuses on the physical limitations that small islands exhibit, such as a lacking potential to diversify economically and the limitations on tourism arrivals due to their small size (e.g., Scheyvens & Momsen 2008, Blanco-Romero et al., 2019; Croes, 2006). In line with this idea, policy papers and literature frequently approach the term 'overtourism' in relation to a maximum threshold of visitors. For example, the Seychelles established carrying capacities on the islands of La Digue and Mahé, which determined a maximum total number of tourist accommodation beds allowed on each island (Government of Seychelles, 2016). Quantifiable approaches like carrying capacities come hand in hand with conventional views on overtourism and sustainability. Yet overtourism itself does not have a uniform, established definition, and the concept plunges into more disarray when used interchangeably with terms like mass tourism, saturation, and tourism pressures (Milano, 2018). Further complicating its definition is that overtourism is not just about arrival numbers but can occur even when there are no large influxes of tourists (Milano, 2018). Nonetheless, definitions that try to provide the exact parameters of the term exist. Bauer et al. (2020) define overtourism as "destinations where hosts or guests, locals or visitors, feel that there are too many visitors and that the quality of life in the area or the quality of the experience has deteriorated unacceptably," presenting a perspective on overtourism related to social factors and overcrowding. Milano et al. (2019) define overtourism as "the excessive growth of visitors leading to overcrowding in areas where residents suffer the consequences of temporary and seasonal tourism peaks, which have caused permanent changes to their lifestyles, denied access to amenities and damaged their general well-being," similarly implying that the number of tourists in a given area is the main indicator of overtourism and drives local dissatisfaction. One paper published the by European Parliament provides a more rounded definition, stating that overtourism is "the situation in which the impact of tourism, at certain times and in certain locations, exceeds physical, ecological, social, economic, psychological, and/or political capacity thresholds" (Peeters et al., 2018). This research focuses on the final definition as it provides more nuanced understanding of the concept, rather than applying simplistic views that equate overtourism to overcrowding, for example. As one of Belize's policy reports summarizes,

overtourism is a subjective experience that eludes conclusive definitions, which "explains the appeal of setting quantifiable limits to tourism, such as carrying capacities, maximum bed counts, and maximum cruise ship passengers" since subjective, intangible aspects have few concrete solutions (Denman, 2017). This subjectivity helps explain why comparisons between overtourism and overcrowding are frequently made, when overcrowding is in fact only one of many steppingstones to understanding the term.

Quantifiable solutions that aim to achieve sustainable tourism can also consist of strategies such as zoning natural areas, whereby one area is closed off or has limited access so that tourists concentrate in designated recreational areas. Zoning is sometimes criticized in research for being a simplistic and unintegrated approach, for example because "human activities and nature are not functionally distinct" (Heslinga et al., 2019). This ties in with the notion that carrying capacities relate to social capacities, whereby implementing visitor limits that ensure environmental protection may still surpass social capacities (Heslinga et al., 2019). Gowreesunkar et al. (2018) further expand on conventional frameworks of carrying capacities by referring to multiple dimensions of the term: the physical, geographical, social, cultural, and economic thresholds, which are usually converted to the maximum number of tourists a place can hold without damaging these thresholds. Although carrying capacity studies employed by nations such as the Seychelles can alleviate pressures on the system in a more immediate and targeted way, "people-related" policies are difficult to measure and do not require a single solution, but a "series of best-fit or optimal solutions" (Plummer & Fennell, 2009). This makes policymaking, particularly when it comes to altering tourist movements and behaviors, a daunting task with no one-size-fits-all solution. Optimization and integration of various policy approaches is therefore needed to balance social, economic, and environmental sustainability (e.g., Gossling et al., 2015; Walsh, 2018; Heslinga et al., 2019; Rogerson, 2015), which together form the trifecta of sustainable tourism. An alternative approach to zoning and carrying capacities can, for example, consist of spatially redistributing of tourists to disperse environmental impacts. However, environmental impacts stagnate as visitor frequency increases (Wolf et al., 2019), meaning that a complete spatial distribution may result in the highest total impact on the environment even if it is not perceived as such by visitors. An environmentalist's view on overtourism may consider a widespread, albeit small, degradation of the environment too high of an impact. A social scientist may be more inclined to approve of the enhanced visitor and local satisfaction associated with a more geographically dispersed tourist load. This tug-of-war between potential solutions and potential drawbacks demonstrates the need to find an optimal balance between the pros and cons of different strategies to mitigate overtourism.

Aligning the fine balance between economic, social, and environmental concerns require a multitude of considerations. In a semantic analysis on how tourism and growth are portrayed in reports, Torkinton et al. (2020) criticize how policymakers and international organizations alike falsely equate growth in total tourist arrivals with progress, development, and successful policymaking. Places that have suffered from overtourism are testimony to the uncertainty that economic growth will fulfill local needs. In the Canary Islands, for example, tourism contributes to 35% of the regional GDP, and the islands received over 14 million tourists in 2017 (IMPACTUR, 2017), equalizing Mallorca (Pereda, 2002). Nonetheless, the region is among the poorest in Spain (OECD, 2018; Calvo Gonzalez et al., 2011). In a similar vein, Bertram (1992) argues that the tenet that economic self-reliance equates to sustainability is not applicable to small islands because self-reliance can deplete resources due to spatial limitations. More recently, Dredge and Jamal (2015) criticize how Western political thought champions self-determination and autonomy as the main indicator of progress. In recent years however, the rhetoric in policy reports has shifted from a purely growth-based approach to one that champions sustainability (see Dredge & Jamal, 2015; Peterson & DiPietro, 2021). In relation to small island economies, Bertram (1992) highlights how sustainability, like overtourism, is a subjective term, but nonetheless provides an indication of sustainability that focuses on social and environmental considerations: "Small island development achievements are sustainable so long as the indigenous people wherever they reside, retain a set of entitlements sufficient to support material welfare standards over the foreseeable future, while preserving or enhancing their collective identity and the natural environment of their home territory." Since any human interaction with their surroundings will always induce change, however minute, sustainability in the context of tourism does not refer to a system where zero changes occur, but a system where the acceptable limits to change are maintained (Peterson & DiPietro, 2021). Sustainability in this context covers three branches: economic, environmental, and social sustainability, which are used throughout this paper when referring to the concept.

2.2 Tourism behavior and social sustainability

The subjective perception of overtourism means that targeting specific sustainable tourism goals can be challenging. In Palau, for example, policies aim to educate tourists on how to behave sustainably through "strengthened visitor communication" and the "Palau Pledge," which is a document that visitors are required to sign upon entry stating that they will engage in sustainable practices throughout their stay. The country also focuses on attracting luxury tourists to avoid

"low-end package travelers" that have "cluttered the market and degraded Palau's pristine brand" (Government of Palau, 2016), but encouraging luxury tourism has its downsides despite its appeal for high-value and low-volume tourism. For example, foreigners can dominate the tourism-related job market in high-end forms of tourism (Sharpley & Ussi, 2012), meaning that few benefits percolate to the local economy. Similar results were found in Uganda, where high-cost tourism to national parks did not contribute to increased local benefits or revenue because most luxury tourism establishments or tours were owned by non-locals (Sandbrook, 2010). The Canary Islands, which were discussed previously, follow a similar trend despite catering to middle-income mass tourism. This phenomenon is also termed as leakage, whereby some tourist revenues "leak" and are not retained in the local economy (e.g., Garrigos et al., 2015; Jonsson, 2015), which contributes to economically unsustainable tourism, aside from preventing locals from gaining the benefits of tourism and thereby potentially rejecting the industry as a whole (e.g., Sandbrook 2010; Hampton & Jeyacheya, 2020).

Changing tourist behaviors to ensure sustainable practices is a complex and under-researched topic with contested results and effectiveness. In an investigation of the relationship between tourist behavior and on-site education, Orams (1997) shows that challenges arise when trying to educate tourists, which include having a diverse target audience, their short exposure to the topic, and that many tourists are unwilling to engage in educational activities while on vacation. Despite these challenges, tourists who had been exposed to environmental education were significantly more environmentally aware and involved than the control group (Orams, 1997). In other cases, more stringent guidelines such as the requirement of a tour guide in natural areas to ensure appropriate behavior is implemented. Compulsory tours also allow the guide to choose the least damaging routes or sites and steer tourists accordingly (Wolf et al., 2019). On the other hand, some islands are now recognizing new types of tourists that want to explore "uncharted" territories and are unwilling to participate in set tours. Redirecting tourist behavior can take many forms and does not have to involve strict rules. In some cases, more subtle types of tourist education are preferred, such as "nudging" tourists to certain areas through signage, for example (e.g., Benner, 2020; Bauer et al., 2020).

Another subtle indicator of responsible tourist behavior is the presence of repeat tourists. This sub-group has been shown to have more of an emotional and social connection to a destination (Joo et al., 2019), which in turn drives environmentally aware behavior among tourists (Cheng et al., 2013; Su & Swanson, 2017). Furthermore, repeat tourists generally spend more money, more nights at the destination, and are less likely to participate in all-inclusive vacation packages

(Rosenbaum & Spears, 2005), all of which are factors that help mitigate overtourism from both a policy and research perspective. The same study by Rosenbaum and Spears (2005) also indicated that repeat visitors were less interested in engaging in cultural shows and shopping since they had already done so in previous visits. However, this also indicates a type of visitor who participates in everyday activities rather than commercialized, tourist-oriented activities, and is consequently more integrated into local life.

2.3 Policymaking in the fragmented tourism industry

Briefly touching upon how behavior and psychology are involved in tourism is an indication of how complex the industry is and underlines how there is no single solution in creating a sustainable tourism destination. This fragmentation of concepts extends to fragmentation in institutional and social entities. At its base, tourism is an industry that has no single "headquarters" or production base but depends on visitors from various source markets to satisfy "production." Consequently, tourism is a fragmented industry where no single entity has authority over the entire industry. For example, plastic consumption impedes achieving sustainable tourism goals, but plastic bans cannot usually be implemented by tourism authorities themselves. Furthermore, the characteristic of lacking "headquarters" inherently means that the tourism industry is embedded within sub-sectors of the economy, which may include the restaurant industry, entertainment, and real estate. As Wolf et al. (2019) state, identifying the effects of tourism in nature areas is "complicated by difficulties in determining whether one is looking at the effects of tourism or some other correlated factor." Further complicating policymaking are the institutional restrictions in place, whether this is due to laws impeding implementation, or frequent changes of political parties that do not share the same tourism vision as the tourism department, for example. Governments however need to play a role to "control the various negative externalities caused by tourist activities" (Croes, 2006), as they can be enablers that bridge fragmented stakeholders in the tourism industry, such as farmers and restaurants.

Further increasing the challenges of regulating tourism is the limited capacity of government to control external factors (Rotmans et al., 2001) which in the context of tourism includes global economic fluctuations and decision-making autonomy. All tourism destinations are influenced by large-scale and global influences, whether this is Covid-19, the economic recession of 2008, a hurricane, or even a volcanic eruption. In order to assuage government policymaking limitations, Loorbach (2010) suggests that "dealing with persistent societal problems in the long term will

require approaches that give special attention to learning, interaction, integration, and experimentation on the level of society instead of policy alone." This can be achieved by integrating organizations with similar interests, such as NGOs and local businesses, as well as by integrating community and "insider" participation into the planning process (see Loorbach, 2010; Plummer & Fennell, 2009; Williams & Stewart, 1998; Quinn, 2006).

Fragmentation also means that cross-sectoral or regional cooperation can be difficult in the tourism industry. Institutional asymmetry describes how organizational tasks are allocated differently across various institutional levels depending on the region or country (see Stoffelen et al., 2017; Williams, et al., 2014; Milne & Ateljevic, 2001). For example, in places like Belize, tourism policy frameworks are published on a national level, whereas in Hawaii frameworks are developed on each of the islands separately, such as the Kauai Destination Management Action Plan. To state a more philosophical dimension to tourism fragmentation, Dredge and Jamal (2015) note how the "world is messy and complex" and that "knowledge that is accumulated can be punctuated by gaps." Similarly, tourism policy is overlapping and intersecting, and there is a need to understand complex influences of overtourism. This research intends to overcome some of these obstacles by acting as a bridge between different islands in order to promote cooperation and provide learning opportunities for all of the participants through interactive discussion sessions.

3. Study areas

A total of nine islands participated in this research project, with five continents represented. Since over thirty islands were contacted to inquire about potential participation, the selection process was partly a self-selection process.

4.1 Selection Criteria

Prior to selection, policy research on different island economies was conducted. Policies that aimed at tourism growth purely in terms of number of arrivals were eliminated from the pool of potential research locations. Policies that specifically mentioned 'mass tourism', 'overtourism' (although this was on rare occasion; overtourism is still a relatively new term in policymaking) and aims to achieve sustainability were targeted. Nine islands across five continents were ultimately chosen for this investigation. While potential countries in Africa were reviewed, only one of the island states was found to be actively mitigating overtourism, as tourism is still an emerging market on the continent as a whole—according to the UNWTO, the entire continent accounted for less than 5% of international tourist arrivals worldwide in 2018 (UNWTO, 2018). Mauritius, for example, aims at doubling its tourist arrivals by 2030, and aims to target Chinese and Saudi Arabian tourists in particular as they have high potential to rapidly increase tourism numbers (Republic of Mauritius, 2017). Multiple islands in Asia and Europe were contacted, but only resulted in one response and two responses, respectively. The partial self-selection of the participants meant that distribution of participants ultimately happened to concentrate around the North and South American continents.

Despite being a qualitative research project, the islands were chosen based on certain criteria to allow for effective policy comparisons for this comparative case study. Furthermore, quantitative selection criteria were used, which are preferable when using the Delphi method (Huge et al., 2015). This did present challenges however, as "consistent conceptualizations or measurement of smallness does not exist" (Croes, 2006). Criteria for "small island" selection were therefore selected based on general consensus on what the characteristics "small" islands have, such as having a small GDP, population, area, or all the above (Croes, 2006). The following eligibility criteria were considered for this paper:

I. The country introduced policies that specifically relate to combating overtourism and/or promoting sustainable tourism.

II. The island has fewer than 100,000 inhabitants or is classified as a SIDS.

III. The island has adopted unique approaches to sustainable tourism compared to all the other islands in this research.

IV. The island either has experienced overtourism or is actively trying to avoid overtourism in the future.

Table 1. *Participating islands and basic information*

	Island	Pop.	Location, political status	Area in km²	Yearly visitor arrivals	Visitors/km²	Visitors/ Pop.	Main types of tourism
1	Ambergris Caye	16,000	Island in Belize	~150	~1 million	6,667	62.5	Marine, beach
2	Antigua and Barbuda	97,000	Independent country	440	1.1 million (2018)	2400	11.3	Beach
3	Aruba	120,000	Autonomous territory of The Netherlands	180	2 million (2018)	11,111	16.7	Beach, resort, cruise
4	Faroe Islands	52,000	Autonomous territory of Denmark	1400	110,000 (2018)	78.6	2.2	Hiking, adventure
5	Galapagos Islands	25,000	Province of Ecuador	7900	276,000 (2018)	34.9	11	Nature
6	Gili Islands	4500	Island in Indonesia	15	approx. 2 million	133,300	444.4	Diving, beach
7	Isle of Skye	12,000	Island in Scotland, UK	1656	approx. 700,000	422.7	58,3	Hiking, nature
8	Kauai	72,000	Part of the state of Hawaii in the U.S.A.	1430	1.4 million (2019)	979	19.4	Hiking, adventure, beach
9	Seychelles	98,000	Independent country	460	362,000 (2018)	787	3.7	Beach, marine

All the islands have a population of around 100,000 or less and have a saturated or rapidly growing tourism sector, barring current Covid-19 tourism trends. The selection criterion number three was a purposive sampling technique which aimed at finding islands with different approaches to overtourism to stimulate a discussion (Hay, 2016). If all islands had similar approaches, conducting multiple rounds of interviews using the Delphi method would be rendered obsolete, as little disagreement or opportunity for reflection between participants would emerge. Further eligibility

criteria involved the island representatives participating in the interviews, who all had at least 3 years' experience in the tourism industry and government policymaking, except for the Gili Islands participant, who was a researcher and not a policymaker. The participant was nonetheless included in this research as an expert representative, which is the primary criterion when using the Delphi method. This participant was however omitted from the Delphi round, since the second round specifically involved discussing policy improvements for policymakers.

Based on the selection criteria, this study focuses on nine small islands: Aruba, Ambergris Caye, Antigua and Barbuda, Faroe Islands, the Galapagos Islands, the Gili Islands, Isle of Skye, Kauai, and Seychelles. Each of these islands is either actively pursuing strategies to prevent overtourism preemptively or have already struggled with overtourism and are now developing ways to mitigate the adverse effects of tourism. The locations of the participating islands are displayed below in Figure 1.

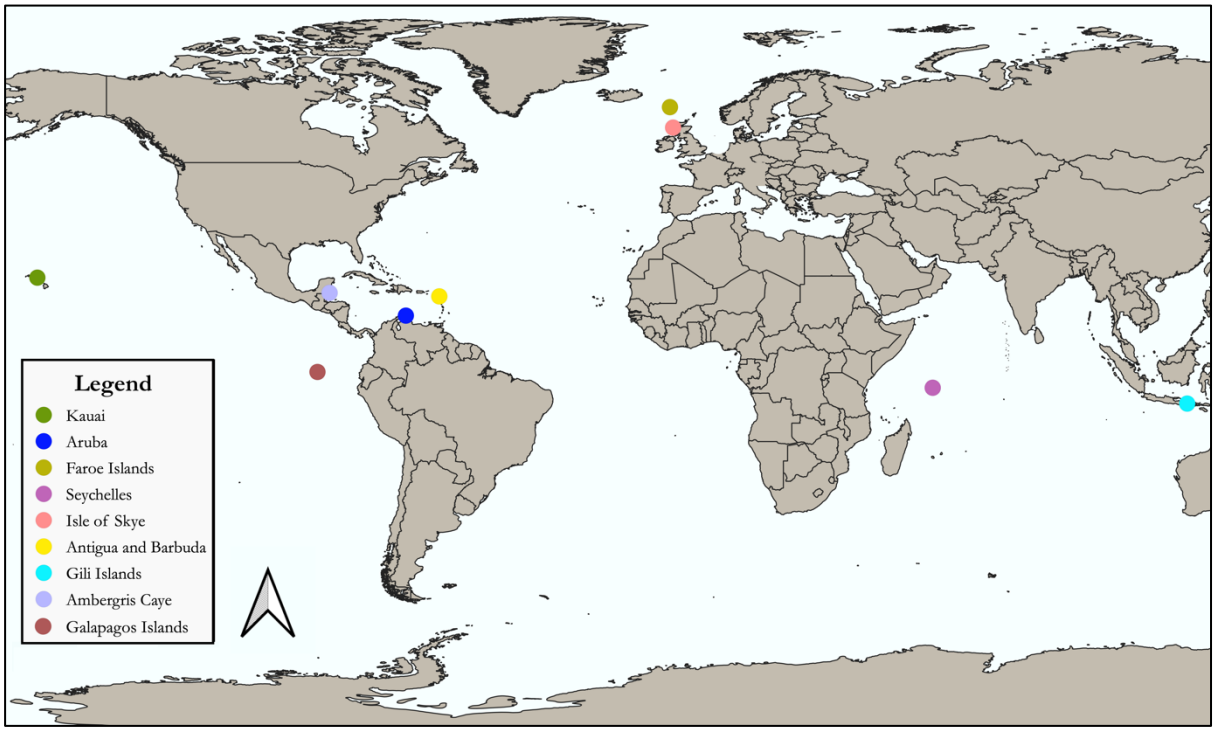

Figure 1. *Locations of participating islands*

Kauai is part of the US state of Hawaii, with a population of around 70,000, of which 38% are employed by tourism (Zachary, 2018). Tourism numbers have not increased significantly since the 1990s, hovering around 1.2 million visitors per year from 1990-2019 (Government of Hawaii, 2020). Nonetheless, the tourism ministry explicitly mentions the threat of overtourism in the 2019-2021 strategic plan. For example, environmental and social degradation is now occurring as a result of changing tourist behaviors—while past visitors traveled in tour buses with a 'set itinerary',

current arrivals aim at finding undiscovered places and following their own schedule, leading to a greater perceived impact of tourism by locals (Zachary, 2018). Examples of Kauai aims include hotspot management to decrease concentrated tourism impacts, decreasing car usage, and educating tourists on Hawaiian culture.

Seychelles is an independent nation consisting of 115 islands approximately 1000 kilometers north of Madagascar. In 2013, the government banned the construction of further hotels on La Digue island as it was becoming too crowded, and new hotels on all islands are subject to a limit on the number of beds each developer can provide. In general, the country aims at maintaining carrying capacities for both visitors and hotels, and at increasing expenditure per tourist to extract maximum value. The island does not explicitly suffer from overtourism overall but has taken a proactive approach in mitigating overtourism. As it is a collection of islands, tourism impacts have also been spread unevenly, and islands such as La Digue have experienced heavier impacts from tourism whereas others have been safeguarded from tourism's negative impacts.

The Faroe Islands are a collection of islands located between Norway and Iceland in the North Atlantic Ocean. Overtourism is not yet a concern in terms of visitation numbers, but prior to Covid-19 yearly growth in the tourism sector was around 10%, which made management a pressing issue and, in some cases, tested local tolerance of the industry. Sustainable tourism strategies are actively pursued, which include promoting voluntourism (volunteer tourism), closing the island to allow ecosystem recovery, attracting MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences and Exhibitions) tourists, all under the concept of encouraging the "preservolution" of the archipelago.

The Gili Islands consist of three islands: Trawangan, Meno and Air, which are all accessible by a 20-minute ferry ride from Lombok, Indonesia. In terms of population to tourist ratios, the islands experience the most overtourism of all participants in this research, receiving over 2 million visitors a year compared to a population of around 4500. The Gili Islands face significant challenges in managing overtourism, since the Lombok government has a growth-oriented stance with little support in mitigating overtourism despite the islands' capacities being saturated. Community approaches to achieve sustainability have been therefore major approach, which includes a locally developed trash collection scheme, a local business association that works together to regulate prices, and a local environmental group that organizes events for both tourists and locals such as beach clean-ups.

Isle of Skye is a large island located in Scotland that has received fame for its raw nature formations such as the Fairy Pools and the Old Man of Storr. High concentrations of tourists that flock to

these iconic sites are therefore major issues. Management approaches include improving transport and roads in order to avoid high concentrations of visitors and developing online applications that show live visitor densities so that tourists are incentivized to go somewhere else.

Aruba is one of the most tourism-dependent places in the world, with nearly 90% of its economic activity relating directly or indirectly to tourism. Nearly half of its visitors are cruise tourists, and the other half consists largely of wealthy visitors who stay in large hotels. Approaches to tourism management have been varied and include examples like education about the environment, ensuring that locals are employed by implementing local employee quotas in the accommodation and service sector, and banning single-use plastics.

The Galapagos Islands are primarily a nature tourism destination, and 97% of the land is legally protected, as well as having Natural World Heritage status since 1978. Approaches to achieve sustainable tourism include requiring tour guides to visit sites, limiting cruise size capacities, and having an entrance fee to the islands. Although travel and entrance to the island is quite expensive, income levels and types of tourists are varied as Ecuadorian nationals and select countries in the region have cheaper entrance fees.

Ambergris Caye is the most popular destination in Belize, and the tourist composition largely consists of loyal, American visitors. Key challenges include institutional barriers, as Ambergris Caye itself does not create tourism guidelines, but is managed by the national Belize Tourism Board. Approaches to sustainable tourism include creating linkages between farmers and restaurants to encourage local consumption of goods and limiting the construction of hotels in the town center.

Antigua and Barbuda is an independent Caribbean nation that is highly dependent on tourism, and has been ever since its independence in 1981. Like its Caribbean neighbor Aruba, a large portion of tourists are wealthy tourists from the United States, Canada, and Europe. Approaches to sustainable tourism include establishing "green zones" in densely built hotel areas, upcycling hotel waste for local craftsmen to use, and encouraging community-based tourism as a bottom-up approach to management.

4. Methodology

This research used the Delphi Method, an iterative, qualitative, or quantitative research approach that interviews experts of a specific topic through various rounds of interviews and feedback (Hay, 2016). For this research, two rounds of in-depth interviews and qualitative data were used. The Delphi method is frequently used to reach one conclusion or consensus amongst different viewpoints (Fletcher & Marchildon, 2014), but in this case it was used to have policymakers from each respective case study reflect on other policies, since the method can be used to explore best practices (such as in policymaking) or identifying a main concept (Fletcher & Marchildon, 2014), in this case overtourism and sustainable tourism. Furthermore, insisting on consensus during Delphi rounds is criticized for being too linear and forcing results (Fletcher & Marchildon, 2014), and this paper therefore merely had participants consider other policies and strategies employed in other places to reflect on whether they might be applicable to their own island context.

The Delphi method is a diverse technique and has been divided into various sub-categories, including traditional consensus Delphi, where the aim is to reach a single agreement between participants (Seker, 2015); policy Delphi, which is focused on debate and identifying potential best practices (Seker, 2015; Huge et al., 2015; Fletcher & Marchildon, 2014); argument Delphi, and real-time Delphi, among others (Fletcher & Marchildon, 2014). Due to the wide array of approaches for this technique, this research focuses on policy Delphi, which, as mentioned, is not meant to achieve consensus but to debate potential solutions and to identify best practices. Specifically, this research is based upon the classifications and descriptions of Delphi methods as proposed by Huge et al., 2017, as seen in Figure 2. Policy Delphi as seen here is at the crossroads of decision Delphi, argument Delphi and scenario Delphi, which together aim at exploring options, finding solutions, evaluating policies, and lastly designing (or reconsidering) policies (Huge et al., 2015). Delphi studies usually have two rounds of interviews (Fletcher & Marchildon, 2014) and generally all participants are involved in the group interviews at the same time. As this was not possible due to conflicting schedules and the vastly different time zones of the nine participating islands, this research also implemented methods used in the Nominal Group Technique (NGT), which similarly interviews multiple people, but involves interviewing interviewees individually rather than in a group setting (Huge & Mukherjee, 2018). It has the additional benefit of having participants rank or comment on strategies from other participants to stimulate discussion, which complements the policy Delphi technique. NGT and Delphi are frequently combined for optimal results (Huge et al., 2015), in this case the merging of Delphi elements (expert interviews, multiple rounds of interviews) with NGT elements (ranking policies and individual interviews). To ensure

that participants who only participated in one individual interview (the Gili Islands, Seychelles and Galapagos), also commented on policies from other places, a reflection section in all individual interviews was added which had participants reflect on a hypothetical scenario on their island and choose the most appropriate option(s) out of the three provided. The three provided solutions/policy possibilities were based on policies from other places, and so each place implicitly reflected on policies from other places participating in this research. This also helped eliminate potential expert interview bias as they were made to reflect on policies from other places without being influenced by factors such as knowing where the policy was from and who introduced it. Along with the qualitative data, quantitative statistics and reports were integrated into this research by comparing qualitative interview results with external data, country reports on tourism, and statistics, to compare with the interviews.

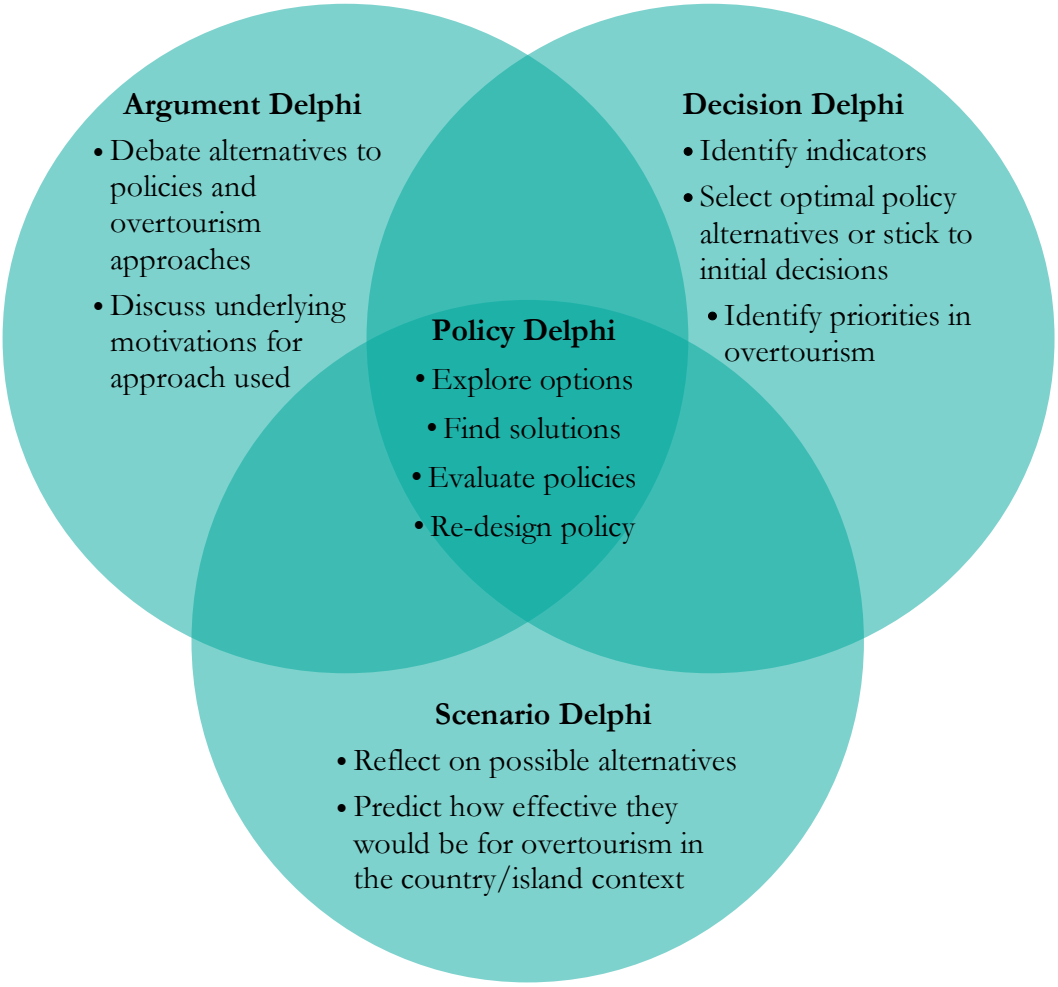

Figure 2. *Types of Delphi and overlaps*. Adapted from Huge et al. (2015)

4.2 Data Collection

Interviews were used as the main form of data collection in this research project. Interviews are useful to "fill a gap in knowledge that other methods, such as observation or the use of census data, are unable to bridge efficaciously and to investigate complex motivations" (Hay, 2016), which is particularly relevant in the complex and fragmented tourism industry. Data was collected by using an interview guide in a semi-structured format, which included a general list of questions and themes to be addressed during the interview (Hay, 2016), and was preferable to an open interview format was chosen to steer the informant away from potentially boasting about their policies, for example. Questions included, for example, discussing approaches to sustainable tourism that were unsuccessful, and what they would change next time.

Policies and gray literature were analyzed before conducting the interviews to gain an understanding of the approaches and to enter the interview well prepared. This also helped to make the interviews more concise (Huge et al., 2015, Ferraz de Oliveira, 2020), as participants did not have to be asked general background information about the country or their policies. Background research was also necessary to ensure cultural sensitivity and an understanding of the local context, which included, but was not limited to, the political context, geography, topography, history, and local culture of each island. The contents of the first interview were analyzed and used for the second round of interviews in the group setting (Fletcher & Marchildon, 2014).

There are quite a few benefits of conducting the first interview on an individual basis. As Huge and Mukherjee (2018) discuss, interviewing individually avoids "production-blocking," whereby group discussions inherently only allow one person at a time to speak, meaning that all other ideas are "blocked" in that moment and may not develop independently. Furthermore, individual interviews ensure that "the data collected truly reflect the group as opposed to the few who speak loudest" (Fuller et al., 2003), which in turn allows individual participants to engage more. On the other hand, conducting group interviews during the second round was beneficial to reflect on policy ideas and delve deeper into the topic.

In relation to the Covid-19 pandemic, group settings were restricted to online meetings, which can be more difficult to moderate, where visual cues are lacking, and a flowing discussion is hindered. Nonetheless, the Covid-19 pandemic did not negatively impact the research since it would not have been feasible to personally visit all nine islands in the scope of this research. Online interviews are also beneficial as they help avoid high attrition rates that are common when conducting

multiple rounds of interviews (Huge et al., 2015; Schmalz et al., 2021). Further methods to avoid high attrition rates were included, such as making interviews concise and not excessively lengthy, and conducting the two rounds in a relatively short time span so that participants would still remember the topic at hand and would not have to be introduced to it again (Huge et al., 2015). The online meetings were especially useful for the group interviews, where participants could not have traveled to see each other in person. The first group interview consisted of representatives of Ambergris Caye, Aruba, and Kauai, while the second group interview consisted of representatives of the Antigua and Barbuda, the Faroe Islands, and Isle of Skye.

4.4 Data Analysis

Interview codes were based on five different codes derived from both literature and aims of this research paper. Three codes for the primary coding round were created prior to the interviews in the form of holistic codes (Saldana, 2016). Since this qualitative research paper does not attempt to interpret values from the interviews, codes were simply used to condense and interpret data in detail, and to allow the possibility of quantification and comparison of results between interviews, for example when creating the policy table and dividing policies into categories.

The first three codes, which were environment, social, and economic, were based on the definitions of overtourism, as well as the categorizations of the three pillars of sustainability. This allowed for an understanding and analysis of which aspects are most important for each place, and to see how and whether policy approaches differ for these each type of sustainability. Results, which will be discussed in later sections, show that there are differences in policy approaches depending on which pillar of sustainability is pursued most ardently. On the Galapagos islands, for example, environmental sustainability is the primary focus, whereas in other locations more social aspects of sustainability were relevant. This is not to say that this is exclusively the case but identifying which type of sustainability is most desired helps policymakers to filter policy approaches depending on their needs. The code "challenge" was used in the primary coding round to identify challenges in a policymaking or sustainable tourism context, which was a key part of the interview guide and therefore a key part of the results section of this research paper. Identifying challenges is important to learn for the future and for islands to identify which approaches might not be as effective, which was also part of the aim of this paper.

The second round of coding used In Vivo codes, which are derived from the data and are based on what the interviewees themselves say (Saldana, 2016). These were necessary after the first round of coding to identify types of policies that can be applied and to identify where gaps in policymaking exist. The first code in the second round consisted in finding commonalities and differences across the islands, which was an important consideration to avoid the aforementioned "place-blind" approaches while also identifying areas of overlap even on islands that cater to different types of tourism markets and have different offerings. The codes derived from the second round and ensuing rounds of coding resulted in the creation of four main categories of policies: Direct and quantifiable, tourist behavior and types, local integration, and indirect mechanisms, which will be discussed in detail in section 5.

4.5 Research Ethics and Positionality

The confidentiality of respondents was ensured throughout the interview. While the policies in each place are generally publicly accessible reports, the individual policymakers, and more detailed accounts of why the policies were introduced, are not public. Anonymity was an important consideration when interviewing experts specifically, where merely stating their job title could give away who they are. As this anonymity could not be fully ensured despite the use of pseudonyms, an informed consent document was sent to all participants beforehand to confirm that anonymity might not be possible, as well as detailing how long interviews would take and what the aim of the research was. Participants were sent a letter of consent to sign before the interview date which made clear what the research project was and what the aims were to avoid any possible deceptions and related ethical issues (Hay, 2016). Data was not uploaded, but was be stored on a single, password secured computer.

As a researcher doing expert interviews with policymakers, there was a clear asymmetrical power relation (Hay, 2016). First, it was challenging to persuade potential participants to conduct two interviews. As a researcher, it was important to convey to participants that reflecting on multiple policies from other islands that they may not have considered before may lead to their own benefit and was the only form of "compensation" that they received. The interviews were conducted in English or Spanish to ensure fewer misunderstandings or linguistic barriers with participants who did not feel comfortable speaking English (Hay, 2016). Potential interviewees were obtained through direct contact from publicly accessible contact details or through gatekeepers, which involved the help of university staff to relay the information further.

As an "outsider" in this research project who does not come from, nor has resided, in any of the islands in this project, there was little incentive to portray one type of policy approach in a more favorable manner. Nonetheless, implicit biases were avoided through constant reflection on potential assumptions, and the discussion was based on the qualitative data from the interviews as well as and statistical data from research instead of opinions.

5. Results and Analysis

5.1 Research Questions

Question 1. What are the different types of policies and mechanisms that policymakers introduce to create sustainable tourism, and to what purpose are they employed?

The interviews with participants substantiated research from previous authors relating to the fragmentation of the tourism industry: tourism management reaches further than the boundaries of the industry itself because it influences so many levels of society and can range from micro-strategies like upcycling hotel trash by using it in local crafts, to large-scale strategies such as introducing a tourist tax. Generally, these large-scale efforts involve top-down, quantifiable approaches that are legally or institutionally backed. These include examples such as introducing a maximum building height for hotel establishments, or an entrance fee to the entire island, which was introduced at a differential rate for tourists and locals on the Galapagos Islands, for example. Whereas foreign tourists pay approximately 100 dollars per person to enter the islands, Ecuadorian nationals pay around 6 dollars. Debate as to the acceptability of such policies exists (e.g., Apollo, 2014), and some research even suggests that taking away fees entirely increases satisfaction and reduces pressure on specific sites (Cheng et al., 2014). Differential pricing systems do nonetheless allow more nationals to see parts of their country while also increasing revenue from foreign tourism; as the Galapagos representative stated, there is a diverse range of tourists on the islands, many of which are Ecuadorian and regional nationals. These types of policies, which are classified in this research as the direct and/or quantifiable policy types because they are directly related to the tourism sector and are usually quantifiable, were the most common policy type across islands. Further examples include certifying hotels with eco-labels based on specific criteria and limiting the proportion of foreign hotel staff. Generally, this policy type requires legal it can be quantified, and it frequently has more immediate effects on sustainable tourism than more subtle strategies.

The second policy type identified, which aims at altering tourist behaviors and types, was surprisingly common among participants. It was also one aspect of sustainable tourism that participants disagreed most on, particularly in the case of which tourists to attract. While a few islands preferred focusing on high income tourists to enhance sustainability, others considered a diverse range of tourist types to be preferrable. In terms of policymaking that influences tourist behaviors, all places had devised different techniques to do so. A strategy that the Isle of Skye plans on implementing involves the development of a website that tourists can access to view live updates of congestion at a popular site. In doing so, they hope to incentivize tourists to divert

away from congested sites and visit lesser-visited areas of the island. On Gili Islands, community efforts to change the islands from a drug and party destination to a more laid-back backpacker and hotel destination were largely successful.

The interviews revealed that eight out of nine participants felt that strategies such as designating World Heritage status to improve tourist behaviors, motivations and respect for their surroundings would not be effective. However, it appears that the amalgamation of strategies that implicitly and explicitly change tourist behaviors can lead to enhanced environmental awareness, as seen in the Galapagos Islands, which have managed to maintain their biodiversity levels despite increasing tourism. A key difference to other islands in this study is that the environment is of highest concern, whereas in other islands social aspects of sustainability are the primary focus, for example because they aim at having more people appreciate cultural values of the area due to a "loss of culture" that stems from high levels of tourism, which was a frequently cited concern. On Antigua and Barbuda, for example, a key aspect of the sustainable tourism strategy is to integrate often marginalized communities into the tourism repository. Integrating locals was a key strategy on many islands, on the one hand to avoid this threat of loss of culture, but also to increase social acceptance of the industry, spread economic benefits to disadvantaged communities, and encourage social cohesion. As every participant highlighted different ways that local integration was necessary for a sustainable tourism model, this was designated the third own category of policy type: local integration.

Lastly, the final policy categorization identified was that of indirect mechanisms that help curb overtourism and achieve sustainability. Confirming research on the complexity of tourism, the interviews showed that tourism policymakers do not have the power alone to designate policies that affect the very industry that they are trying to manage. Identifying where these management gaps exist is therefore important to know where cooperation with other entities is necessary. For example, road congestion was a major issue on many islands, and although many tourism policymakers would like to see improved alternative and sustainable transport options, they do not stand in the forefront of such decisions. Indirect mechanisms do not only involve strategies where policymakers lack authority. On the Gili Islands, for example, weekly beach cleanups organized by the local environmental group, Gili Islands Eco Trust, indirectly improve sustainable tourism. On the one hand, they encourage tourists to engage in these clean-ups, thereby promoting awareness and responsible behavior, which also has the overall effect of improving quality of life on the islands. Nonetheless, this approach does not directly involve tourists or tourist organizations and

therefore cannot fall under any policy categories that exclusively target the tourism industry or are directly involved with tourism management authorities.

Overall, the in-depth interviews revealed multiple strategies to achieve similar goals, showing both the similarities in challenges that diverse islands face, the possibility to learn from one another, while also potentially revealing the contextual differences that would inhibit the effectiveness of certain strategies in certain places. Overlaps between the four policy types a exist. For example, the requirement of a tourist guide to natural sites is both a direct, legal requirement, but also "forces" changes in tourist behavior by monitoring their activity. The following table outlines major approaches that the islands participating in this research have implemented or plan on implementing. In places where the plan has not been implemented yet, examples from islands that have already implemented a similar policy but did not take part in this research are given.

Table 2. *Overview of policies to achieve sustainable tourism categorized into identified policy types.*

Policies Overview						
Policy type				**Policy approach**	**Example(s)**	**Aim**	**Potential threat(s)**
1: Direct and/or quantifiable tourism management							
1				Zoning Plan of designated activities	Galapagos	Preserve specific areas, zone tourists	Concentration of tourists, increase in housing prices
1				Maximum stay on the island	Easter Island (max 30 days)	Reduce total numbers of tourists	High visitor turnover
1				Maximum bed growth per year per hotel	Aruba	Quell extreme yearly tourism growth rates	New hotels can still open
1				Entrance fee to natural sites	Kauai: 5 dollars for tourists entering Haena	Reduce crowding	Tourist backlash
1				Limits to foreign hotel staff	Aruba: max 40%	Local employment, revenue retention	Small workforce on small islands
1				Maximum cruise size	Galapagos	Reduce day visitors	Powerful cruise lobbies
1				Entrance fee to entire island	Galapagos: 100 Dollars	Increase revenue, funds for protection	Excludes certain visitors
1				Maximum height of hotel establishments	Seychelles: max 50 meters	Reduce visual pollution	Loopholes: e.g., building underground

1				Visitor Satisfaction Surveys	Ambergris Caye	Seeing where quality improvements can be made, quantify overtourism factors	Can be costly, tedious
1				Regional integration participation	Caribbean Regional Sustainable Tourism Development Programme (CRSTDP)	Enhance effectiveness of policies	Places have different contexts
1				Carrying capacity of visitors to natural sites	Haena State Park in Kauai: Maximum of 900 visitors per day	Limit stress on ecosystems, improve visitor experience	Tourist complaints,
1				Pooling system in maximum bed capacity	Seychelles: Bed limitations are traded like carbon credits	Setting parameters to growth of hotels, limits creation of mega-hotels	Presence of large-hotels still possible if all credits are bought
1				Eco-certification of hotels	Seychelles: SSTL (Seychelles Sustainable Tourism Label)	Eco-friendly accommodation	Frequent checking needed; hotels may not participate
1				Cease destination marketing	Isle of Skye: VisitScotland stopped marketing Isle of Skye	Reduce exposure of destination	Maintaining balance: still need to attract some tourists
1				Required Airbnb/TVR (Transient Vacation Rental) registration	Kauai	Keep track of all listings, reduce rapid growth of tourist accommodation	Locals lose direct revenue source
1				Maximum number of cars on island	Seychelles: max. 50 cars on La Digue	Reduce emissions, congestion	Locals also affected by rule
1				Closing the island	Faroe Islands: yearly closure	Ecosystem recovery; spread awareness	Loss of revenue in this period
1				Sustainable tourism zone	Antigua and Barbuda: Green Corridor	Promote sustainable practices	Exclusion of hotels not located in the zone
1				Zoning hotel types together	Antigua and Barbuda	Cluster amenities, facilitate management	Uneven land use development
1				Shuttle buses to main sites	Kauai	Reduce car numbers	Spatially concentrates tourists
1				Differential pricing system	Galapagos: $100 for foreigners, $6 for Ecuadorians	Attract domestic tourism, economic sustainability	Tourists resent high pricing

1				Change entrance prices at sites at different times of day	Isle of Skye	Distribute peak hours	High visitations numbers not avoided, only distributed
1				Maximum number of rooms per owner at establishments	Seychelles: 5 or 24 rooms per owner depending on the island	Avoid monopoly, avoid mega-hotels	Less foreign investment
1				Ban cruise ship tour providers on land	Faroe Islands: tours/services on the Islands must be by Faroese providers, not the cruise company	Reduce leakage, avoid inflationary prices	Increases dependence on tourism
1				Maximum amount of growth of total beds per year per establishment	Aruba: max. 1% growth	Avoid rapid growth	Still increased growth
Policy Type 2: Management of tourist behavior and types							
	2			Pledging responsible behavior	Palau: Palau Pledge upon entering the nation	Educating tourists, establishing accountability	Changes in behavior not guaranteed
	2			Aim for longer tourist stays	Palau	Increase spending, less turnover	Difficult to put in practice
	2			Attracting luxury tourism	Palau	High value, low volume	High emissions, leakage
	2			Attracting diverse range of tourist types/income levels	Kauai, Galapagos	Diversify economy, reduce seasonality	Need for a variety of different establishments /tourist offerings
	2			Promote agrotourism	Antigua and Barbuda	Connect locals and tourists, sustainability	May increase dependence
	2			Attracting repeat tourists	Barbados: Smile Campaign	Target tourists who respect environment and culture	Intangible: difficult to distil what exact factors make tourists return
	2			Market "truthfully"	Faroe Islands: market stormy weather	Even out seasonality; attract tourists in the winter season	Tourists may want to avoid "truthful" marketing e.g., fear of bad weather
	2			Informative signs to educate tourists	Aruba	Educating tourists	Visual pollution; lack

							of tourist interest
	2			Storytelling	Kauai: Storytellers at park entrance	Engaging tourists in cultural history and encourage appreciation	Bias towards tourists that are already interested in culture
	2			Develop niche tourism sector	Aruba; St. Lucia: honeymoon tourism	Differentiate sector, attract desired (sustainable) tourist	Low resilience: less economic sustainability
	2			Integrating ICT in Tourism	Isle of Skye: Live updates of tourist site congestion	Provide real-time congestion data	IT illiteracy, favors younger demographic
	2			Raffles for education activities	Aruba: Raffle used to attract tourists to learn about environment	Attract tourists to learn voluntarily	Not applicable to all tourist types
	2			Attract MICE tourists (Meetings, incentives, conferences, exhibitions)	Faroe Islands	High expenditure, contribute knowledge to society	Less cultural integration, short stays, concentration in main city
	2			Festivals, cultural events outside high season	Faroe Islands	Distribute seasonality	Concentrates tourists in one area
	2			Tourist education at establishment	Kauai: Airbnb providers need to educate tourists upon arrival	Educate tourists about local culture and customs	Difficult to monitor/ ensure
	2			Voluntourism (voluntary tourism, e.g., in conservation)	Faroe Islands	Change type of tourism; low season tourism, maintain natural sites	Less expenditure per tourist
	2			Attract domestic tourists	Gili Islands	Improve resilience	Less expenditure per tourist
Policy type 3: Integration of local needs							
		3		Encouraging community participation	Antigua and Barbuda: community tourism program/platform	Social sustainability: local approval and support	More fragmentation of the industry
		3		Community management of visitor sites	Antigua and Barbuda: Wallings Nature Reserve is run by locals	Include community needs, local knowledge	Increasing fragmentation of tourism, increase in dependence
		3		Upcycling hotel trash	Antigua and Barbuda: Waste to Craft project	Reduce and manage hotel waste	Not all trash can be upcycled
		3		Resident surveys	Faroe Islands	Identify local concerns, hotspots	Can be costly, tedious

		3		Create local business association	Gili Islands: GIDA (Gili Island Diver's Association)	Price fixing, community and economic resilience	Marginalizatio n of businesses that do not participate
		3		Provide tours for locals	Galapagos: cruise tours for locals	Improve social sustainability by engaging locals	Can increase impact and visitor flows on a service, e.g. boating
		3		Improve local hospitality/attitude towards tourists	Aruba	Avoid social conflicts e.g. locals vs. tourists	Risks attracting more tourists
		3		Local trash collection association	Gili Islands	Reduce trash, especially generated by tourist businesses	Informal, no institutional protection
		3		Local tourism products and companies	Faroe Islands: avoiding large chains	Authentic experiences, social sustainability	Financing could be more difficult
Policy type 4: Indirect contributions to sustainable tourism							
			4	Increase number of trail routes	Kauai	Spread tourists	More areas are impacted by tourists
			4	Stop construction/ maintain current building density	Ambergris Caye: Maintain density of San Pedro town	Maintain cultural integrity/atmosphere	Can halt development and adaptation
			4	Reduce speculation e.g., of hotel investors	Ambergris Caye	Stop housing/general inflation	Difficult to target
			4	Certification from external organizations	Galapagos: UNESCO certification	Increase appreciation and respect for natural or cultural sites	Disputed increased appreciation; lack of funding
			4	Bilingual signage	Isle of Skye: Gaelic and English signs	Maintain local culture, spread awareness	-
			4	Ban single-use plastics	Aruba, Belize, Kauai	Forcefully change local and tourist consumer behaviors	Businesses need to adapt supply, sudden changes
			4	Ban non-local home ownership	Aland Islands, Finland	Reduce speculation, summer homes	Backlash, legal backing required
			4	Increase tax on secondary homes	Kauai	Deter second-home buying	Local vs. wealthy tourist disparities
			4	Weekly beach cleanup	Gili Islands	Involve tourists in sustainability and education, clean area	Tourists may not want to get involved
			4	Improve road conditions/expand roads	Isle of Skye	Spread out tourists; increase capacity at a	Possible induced demand effects

						site; reduce congestion	
			4	Promote alternative transport	Isle of Skye: promote biking	Reduce emissions, congestion	Slower transition to car-free transport, voluntary
			4	Ban incoming cars onto island	Schiermonikoog	Reduce emissions; avoid congestion	Slower transport, locals also affected
			4	Promote local primary production	Antigua and Barbuda	Encourage tourist accommodations to purchase locally, diversify economy.	More competition for space, difficulty in producing on small islands, higher prices
			4	Fairs, e.g., Art Fairs	Aruba: Ban Serio campaign	Integrate locals and tourists	Not ongoing (fairs are periodical)

Question 2. How do islands in particular face challenges and opportunities concerning sustainable tourism development?

Research tends to highlight challenges that small economies face, including in terms of tourism management. While small islands undoubtedly face very specific challenges that are not present in other areas, such as the competition for development space on the small island of La Digue in the Seychelles, they also have unique opportunities that they can build upon when developing sustainable tourism. For example, due to their clear land boundaries, carrying capacities may be more relevant here than in other places. An entire island or island group can effectively have a carrying capacity in itself, as is the case in Galapagos Islands, since 97% of the area is dedicated to national park status. Similarly, the geography of small islands can, in some cases, more easily limit the numbers of arrivals. For example, this may be done by limiting cruise ship sizes, as is done on the Galapagos Islands, or by limiting flights and limiting access to the island which may be done by introducing bridge tolls, or only providing ferries. Schiermonikoog and Vlieland, two islands on the Wadden Sea, limit arrivals by only providing car-free ferry access to visitors. As a result, the entire island has no visitor cars and there is a clear overview of arrivals to the island, which can be managed by changing ferry times, for example. On Kauai, locals and the tourism authority successfully fought the expansion of the airport runways which would allow larger, more frequent airplane arrivals. These are forms of "red tape," or de facto limitations on arrivals. Without having

to risk backlash through outright entry bans to visitors, making the island more difficult to access is an opportunity to ease overtourism on islands. Small surface areas also provide benefits in terms of monitoring tourist movements and behaviors. In Aruba, closing off roads or encouraging visitors to go down a single road is made easier by the simple fact that "one road leads to a specific area" rather than in larger destinations where dozens of roads that lead to a single site need to be monitored.

In terms of less quantifiable strategic options, small islands face challenges concerning governance. All participants expressed challenges pertaining to community participation or autonomy of decision-making. This highlights a related challenge in small islands with very small populations, namely that top-down approaches are sometimes inevitable due to a small workforce and low funds. Ambergris Caye, for example, does not currently have the labor capacity to create its own tourism policy, and instead the Belize National Tourism Board is responsible for creating policy guidelines. In the context of tourism, this challenge is exacerbated by the lacking legal authority of local management entities coupled with lacking resources to implement policies suggested by the central government. As one representative of the Belize Tourism Board stated, "the [Ambergris Caye] town council, they are limited in resources to do some of the implementation of that master plan because they just don't have the technical capacity to do it." Very small populations do nonetheless exhibit some key advantages. The Gili Islands, with a population of just 4500, have developed strong community approaches to sustainable tourism in a context where the larger government entity is pushing for even more tourism. For example, scuba diving businesses collaborate through the GIDA (Gili Islands Dive Association) to fix prices so that each dive shop is equally competitive, and helping lending equipment to each other, among other benefits. Local waste management systems were also introduced by the local community through the Gili Eco Trust, which charges hotels a fee to take away their trash and organizes the previously mentioned weekly beach clean-ups. As one participant from another island stated, "being such a small society I think everybody are [is] engaged in everything," meaning that different viewpoints are more easily acknowledged and heard in places with small, tight-knit communities. However, the presence of local initiatives and strong community ties does not exclude the possibility of extensive collaboration between the local town council and the larger tourism authority. These points circle back to the notion that different types of governance structures *can* achieve the same goal of sustainable tourism, but top-down structures may obfuscate goals of sustainability in favor of profit if not managed correctly. Since local satisfaction is necessary for social sustainability, they are necessary in the planning process to ensure positive outcomes. As Heslinga et al. (2019) state,

"benefits arising from tourism should be distributed across a wide range of stakeholders, [and] achieving sustainability goals requires organizational structures that are more decentralized than central governments," which is the case in island destinations too.

Relating to these governance challenges, small islands are frequently geographically isolated, which can lead to political marginalization in another form: when local government policymaking that aims at sustainability is present but is constrained by national government structures on the mainland. On Kauai, for example, the local government does not have the authority to limit flights or ban housing sales for non-Hawaiians due to United States law. Because the central government is often geographically distant in small islands that are part of a larger territory or nation, the island's local interests may not be represented, partly due to the aforementioned factors of peripherality. On the Isle of Skye, there are challenges concerning public funding due to the island's small population: In Scotland, funds are allocated based on the number of registered inhabitants, which does not include the tourist population. Since the average stay of each visitor is three days, and the island receives approximately 700,000 tourists a year, this means there is an average daily population surplus of 5700 inhabitants on the island, but these are not accounted for in public funding. Peripherality affects a multitude of issues concerning sustainable tourism. As discussed, islands generally face higher dependence on tourism, and therefore may have more difficulties creating a more diverse economy. Multiple participants, such as the Seychelles, stated that locals prefer to rent out properties for short term vacation rentals rather than renting out to locals for the higher earning possibilities. This contributes increased visitor capacities and is one of the many reasons that dependence on tourism can hinder sustainable tourism development.

The following table outlines sustainable tourism specific challenges mentioned by participants.

Table 3. *Identified challenges or rejected policy ideas from discussion rounds.*

Policy/challenge /rejected policy suggestion	Explanation	Location	Result
Fast track accommodation approval system	Following the marketing campaign "Affordable Seychelles," a fast-track system for approving small scale accommodation was introduced, for example so that homeowners could register to switch from residential to tourist accommodation.	Seychelles	Long term change in types of accommodation which are no longer necessarily the desired types. Too many houses became tourist accommodations.

Limiting Flights	Most incoming visitors travel by commercial plane, and limiting flights was considered as it would simply cut down absolute arrival numbers.	Kauai	Unsuccessful campaign. American citizens, who make up the bulk of Kauai's incoming visitors, have a "right to travel" as per United States law. Limiting travel rights is therefore constitutionally banned.
In-flight tourism education videos	Since most incoming visitors enter by commercial plane, the local government considered incorporating in-flight educational videos to ensure all visitors understood the basics of exhibiting respectful behaviors.	Kauai	In-flight videos proved to be too expensive and complicated a policy to implement.
Educational pamphlets	Aim is to increase education. Many participants agreed that this was an undesirable option for educating tourists due to increased waste production.	Aruba	Pamphlets may increase social and environmental awareness of tourists, but just produce more trash.
Banning housing sales for non-locals	Considered as an approach to combat the housing crisis associated with seasonal, summer houses for wealthy investors.	Kauai	While this has been implemented on some places such as Malta and the Finnish Aland Islands, United States law does not permit excluding United States citizens from buying property in their own country.
Poorly integrated local governance structures	As mentioned, Belize's policy guidelines are developed by the national tourism board, not the destinations themselves.	Belize, Gili Islands	Implementation of guidelines can be difficult
Littering fines	Preference for educating tourists over implementing fines because of the impracticality and expense of hiring patrols required to catch people littering.	Faroe Islands	Tourist education preferred.
Encouraging local farming	Hotels prefer non-local produce because delivery is more reliable. Local production is encouraged but a major challenge in connecting them to consumers.	Isle of Skye	Connecting farmers to consumers is still being attempted.
Increase entrance fee to island	Entrance fees for foreigners (about $100) have been the same since the 1990s. Two ideas are to increase fees for those who do not stay on	Galápagos	Entrance fees are still being debated. Fragmentation and institutional barriers are

	mainland Ecuador or to increase fees overall for all visitors.		the main culprits of inaction.
Entrance fee to local sites	Locals who own the land where tourists enter want to set their own prices. The authorities want to set a general price and collect the revenue and redistribute it.	Faroe Islands	Still in debate. Locals afraid they will not retain any revenue from tourism.

Question 3: How does tourist behavior fit into the overall concept of overtourism?

Due to their vastly different geographies and contexts, the islands in this research showed different foci in terms of sustainability goals, but tourism behavior as a contributor to overtourism was a common thread across islands. On the Gili Islands, problems arose due to the presence of party and drug tourism, which the local community steered away from by hiring security on the island and promoting a different type of tourism. Attempts to shift tourist behavior have become more difficult with the emergence of social media. As the representative of the Isle of Skye stated, "people post on Facebook, Instagram, what have you, and then everyone wants to be in the same picture." On Kauai, social media was mentioned as causing a shift in tourist behaviors, and the influence of social media was noted in Aruba too. Social media cannot be regulated the way that hotel bed limits or flight limits can, and thus more implicit strategies such as nudging tourists towards other areas can be more useful in the long term. Strategies to do so vary. On the Faroe Islands, "truthful" marketing, where the island is advertised with its stormy and colder weather rather than the few mild summer months, aims at dispersing the tourist load throughout different seasons. On a more site-specific level, strategies such as diverting tourists away from overcrowded sites through signage or educating them on proper behavior help diminish impacts. Educating tourists, particularly in the context of local customs of cultural awareness, is an important mechanism to ease tourism impacts. Aruba tries to employ "tangible" opportunities for tourists to learn about the environment and culture by setting up raffles where participation requires some education about the local culture and is also planning on setting up a sand sculpture exhibition that displays local corals and seashells to teach tourists not to take precious resources back to their home countries.

A common thread regarding tourist behavior was also the likening of tourist behavior with income. Frequently, high-income tourists are regarded as preferable as they bring in more revenue per capita and fewer total tourists. On the Seychelles, the "fast track approval system" was a failure in

part because it led to changes in the "profile of accommodation and the profile of tourists," which were a less desirable tourist type. Another participant stated that the aim was to focus on a specific household income and group, such as boomers with families, while millennials were not a target group, despite stating previously that millennials have "a tendency to be more proactive in nature conservation."

Overall, tourist education was shown to be one of the key strategies to improve behaviors to become more environmentally and culturally sensitive, but they do not always have to consist of subtle strategies such as nudging. More strict strategies such as requiring tour guides or requiring tourist education at hotel establishments were also noted as essential, especially in the context of the "laissez faire" attitude of people on vacation and the fact that "you can't force people to be interested" in learning about the local culture or attitude, although implementing more strict policies that *do* force tourist involvement in learning would negate this claim. Differences between types of tourists and tourist behavior were also stated. For example, although backpackers are frequently not the main target group that a destination aims to attract, they were noted by multiple participants to be more willing to engage in cultural tours and be more environmentally aware. Even cruise tourism, which is frequently condemned as an undesirable type of tourism, can fit into various molds of tourist types. On Isle of Skye, strategies do not aim at banning cruise ships, but rather at banning a *type* of cruise ship—large-scale cruises that do not stay for long and offer tours that only take tourists to saturated hotspots. Small cruise ships that offer more diverse tour offerings to lesser visited sites would not pose a threat to the island. Overall, keeping an overview of the type of tourist and their associated behavior was regarded as key to sustainable tourism.

Question 4: What are the factors that contribute to overtourism and sustainability?

Overtourism is often a magnification of problems that already exist in a place. For example, excess trash and plastic use is a global problem whether a place has tourism or not, but visitors simply augment this problem. Managing overtourism to achieve sustainable tourism therefore frequently requires policies that go much farther than the reach of tourism authorities. In small island tourist destinations such as the Gili Islands, waste management is a pressing issue because landfills are an inefficient use of space, but the issue of lacking space is simply deepened by the presence of tourists and would still require management without them. Similarly, a scarce local housing market is a core issue that popular destinations face, particularly when large proportions of visitors are from a wealthier demographic. Problems that ensue can include unaffordable housing for locals and

houses that sit empty for most of the year because they are only used on vacation. Although these issues are the direct result of tourism, their solutions do not lie within the hands of the tourism authorities. In Aruba, for example, housing prices are expensive due to foreign investment and tourist accommodations, but social housing laws mean that these problems are not as severe as in Kauai, where housing is also a major issue.

Further complicating the goal of determining the factors of overtourism is that it can occur in pockets even when the destination as a whole is regarded as sustainable. The island of Mykines on the Faroe Islands, colloquially known as the Puffin Island, is one such example of how overtourism concentrates in pockets, as stated in the individual interview:

> "At certain points in a small island where only 9 people live [Mykines Island], they receive thousands of visitors every year, there you could say there's an overcrowding issue, or overtourism issue."

These high concentrations of tourism at specific sites were cited in most interviews and appear to contribute most to the perceptions of overtourism. On Isle of Skye, the south side of the island receives only a trickle of visitation numbers compared to the north side. Similarly uneven distributions are seen in Aruba, Antigua and Barbuda, and Kauai and the Seychelles, indicating that policies that aim to redistribute tourists are vital. Redistribution of tourists is closely related to infrastructural capacities of islands. On Isle of Skye, poor road conditions lead to higher concentrations of tourists in popular sites, which the island aims to mitigate by expanding road capacities. On Ambergris Caye, water supply systems are strained during the high season but could be avoided by expanding the system. As mentioned by multiple participants, overtourism pressures can be relieved by infrastructure improvement and planning rather than reducing visitation numbers. However, this may work in contrast to sustainable tourism goals since expanding infrastructure means that more resources need to be used to supply a seasonal population, for example.

This ties in with the heterogeneity of overtourism as a concept. For example, although increasing direct employment to increase livability and decrease negative perceptions of tourism among locals can be beneficial, they can lead to an over-reliance on tourism in small island economies. The second round of group interviews revealed further views on overtourism and sustainable tourism that were sometimes contrasting and subjective. Managing tourism to integrate the community was seen as crucial from a social perspective, which also included getting local communities on

board and in agreement with tourism goals. Encouraging local involvement and teaching them about the importance of tourism to the island was mentioned in Antigua and Barbuda, Isle of Skye, and Aruba, to name a few examples. In Aruba, hesitancy towards tourism and concerns about overtourism were subdued once initiatives to involve them more and educate locals about how to educate tourists on proper behavior were introduced. On the Isle of Skye, they are trialing a marketing video to the locals to show how tourism benefits the island and why it should not be shunned as an industry. However, when interviewing the Gili Islands, a counter point was made: if too many people are integrated into the tourism industry, more facilities to accommodate tourists will increase, leading to an increased dependence on tourism as well as an increasing tourism load. Once again, a balance of avoiding local distaste for tourism while also ensuring that not all inhabitants are involved in the industry is essential, particularly from a social sustainability point of view. From a tourist's perspective, overtourism is equally subjective. On Ambergris Caye, the participants stated that although there were a lot of "problems associated with mass tourism […], I wouldn't say that there's overtourism at this point because […] tourists still want to go there."

Economic dependence on tourism is not a direct indicator of overtourism as per definitions, but it does impede diversification and economic resilience, which Marchese et al. (2018) argue is a key component of sustainability. The second Delphi round discussion reflected on how economic diversification is bridged with social sustainability. As one participant stated, "if we're going to keep having a good tourism economy, we've got to diversify because a diversified economy will actually result in a much better experience" because in a purely tourism dependent economy, "things have been put on [acted] for us because we are visitors, and it's a bit hollow." Furthermore, dependence on tourism can indirectly cause overtourism by decreasing political willingness to oppose potentially detrimental tourism investments for fear of repercussions, which could include loss of revenue, employment, or investment on the island. As one participant confirmed, rejecting large foreign hotel chains from investing on the island is difficult: "we are dependent on tourism, we are a small island state, we also need the foreign direct investment in the country." On the other hand, in places like the Faroe Islands, tourism is only used as a third pillar of economic development rather than as a main driver and is therefore not dependent on tourism. Local satisfaction with tourism suffers in this case because locals sometimes reject the industry as they experience no direct benefits from the industry themselves. In this sense, overtourism can occur when tourism experiences abrupt growth rates and is not perceived as relevant to local livelihoods.

Conversely, having a lot of tourism can mean that some stakeholders still want more. When Kauai introduced a carrying capacity of 900 visitors at Haena State Park, "people fought us like mad […] but it's working so that's what we want to implement all over." Businesses that rely on high visitor flows because they are near park entrances or popular trails, for example, do not experience the direct benefits from overtourism management that other locals might. On the Gili Islands, the large proportion of hotels owned by non-locals means that they generally care less about overtourism and are more concerned with economic benefits, and so are less likely to engage in local conservation or overtourism mitigation. But this can prove to be a short-term win, as locally owned establishments can improve economic sustainability. On Gili Trawangan, for example, many large, non-local businesses fired their staff immediately following Covid-19 lockdown restrictions, whereas locally owned businesses tried to keep employees for as long as possible. Employment is more sustainable if the community is embedded into tourism management. As expected, Peeters et al. (2018) provide an overtourism definition that embodies these contrasting examples: overtourism is subjective and affects different people on different levels, which heavily influences the parameters of overtourism, but these different aspects of overtourism and sustainability cover subjective social perceptions, economic viability, and environmental conservation. As the Seychelles representative stated, "there needs to be a balance of the economic, the social and the environmental aspects […] for us the issue is to make sure that we have this balance in place."

5.2. Synthesis: towards best practices

Identifying commonalities and discussing policy options on vastly different islands shows how places can be compared to benefit each other. To use two examples with different contexts, Kauai and Isle of Skye are both dealing with hotspot management that aims to disperse tourists around the island more evenly, for example through a ticketing system, where "if someone is trying to make a trip and there's already a ton of people here and they see that they can't get into Haena, then that will trigger them to make them go, ok let's move our dates to some other time" and instead go to another site on that day. Isle of Skye aims to introduce online features that will provide live updates of visitation numbers at sites so that tourists can see which sites are emptier. A further similarity with these two islands is that they aim at reducing congestion by using shuttle buses to popular destinations to decrease car usage levels. Road, transport, or infrastructure problems were voiced in all interviews, with congestion and unsustainable transport being major issues. This was particularly the case on islands where tourists generally rent cars as a mode of

transport. Mitigating this has consisted of a variety of approaches, including introducing shuttle buses, paving new bike lanes, and setting a maximum number of cars permitted on an island. These comparisons show how similar approaches can be tweaked and applied to various destinations that have similar challenges. On the other hand, there are certain limitations that are place-specific, such as the absence or presence of seasons, natural phenomena, and funding capabilities.

The Delphi rounds provided new insights and nuances that had not been discussed in the individual interviews. In the second interview round that included Ambergris Caye, Aruba, and Kauai, there were different approaches to banning single-use plastics, leading to varying outcomes. In Aruba, the first single-use plastic ban was unsuccessful because the law changed too suddenly, and businesses and consumers alike were not adequately prepared, whereas in Belize (Ambergris Caye), plastics were banned nation-wide but in a step-by-step phase, which included an import ban at the beginning and ended with a total ban on the sale of plastic over the course of a few months. The latter approach was more successful and is still in place today. Nuances in policy approaches show how even small tweaks to similar strategies lead to different outcomes. The Delphi round also provided insights as to how to develop sustainability from an agricultural production point of view. For example, both Kauai and Ambergris Caye aim at linking local farmers with the tourism industry but have done so in slightly different ways. On Kauai, initiatives were developed from the buyer's perspective: local restaurants and hotel chefs were invited to visit local farms and learn about local cuisine so that they could incorporate it into their hotel cooking. On Ambergris Caye, the approach has been more from a root level: local farmers are being connected directly with restaurant owners so that the middleman is eliminated, and fixed pricing does not inflate food prices artificially for establishments.

Figure 3, as seen below, was developed based on the different types of policy approaches outlined in the policy table and results and is based on the cheese model as developed by James Reason. Although frequently used in health care, the approach is equally applicable tourism management. According to the original model, "human errors" are inevitable, and a layering of defenses to combat a disease are necessary to ensure the best outcome (Reason, 2000; Perneger, 2005). In the example of a disease, defense "layers" can include vaccines, using masks, and washing hands, which incrementally work together to delay the spread of a disease. The more layers of defense each person incorporates into their daily lives, the more a disease can be stopped. In the case of tourism, the "human error" is that the negative impacts of tourism are difficult to avoid entirely, and some "losses" will always seep through the "holes" in each cheese layer; but by adopting a multi-layered,

integrative approach, a maximum number of adverse impacts can be avoided if policymaking implements as many overtourism defense layers as possible. The "losses" that occur due to the holes in the cheese relate back to the concepts of complexity and fragmentation in the tourism industry: there are no single approaches that fix overtourism because it is a complex concept with non-linear influences that is affected by external and internal changes. Implementing multiple approaches from different layers, with each layer representing a type of approach, creates a more resilient and sustainable destination.

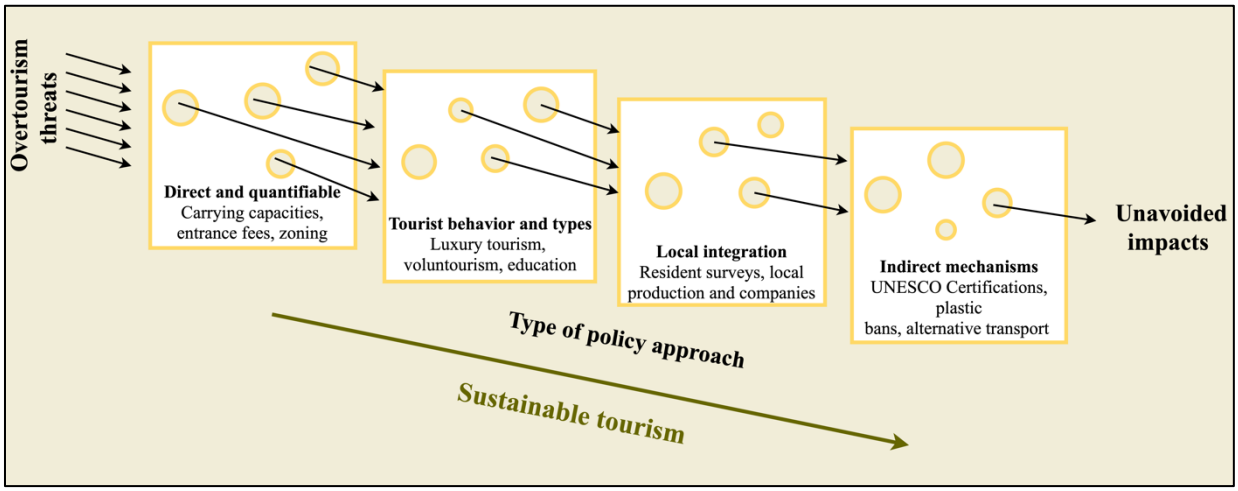

Figure 3. *The tourism "cheese" model: each layer has different approaches and overall prevents "losses" in the form of overtourism.*

The first layer, that of direct and quantifiable approaches, includes legal and frequently top-down approaches that help develop sustainable tourism. These include, for example, cruise limits, and Airbnb restrictions. The second layer is that of tourist behaviors and types. This category of approaches can generally be implemented more easily but are not legally required and thus may not lead to immediate changes. Nonetheless, they require less authority or approval from government entities, are easier to implement by tourism policymakers and can lead to long term changes. Behavioral changes include education and targeting specific types of tourists such as voluntourists. Such approaches do not have a direct cause and effect and it may take longer to see results in the short term.

Community and local integration were shown to be of critical importance in island destinations. To reflect this, local integration strategies were included as a separate category. Antigua and Barbuda, for example, has specifically introduced community-based tourism initiatives to ensure that the community not only receives economic benefits from tourism but can decide in what

direction they would like to develop it. Lastly, the layer of "indirect mechanisms" involves approaches that lack concrete policy approaches or do not directly involve tourism even though they influence the industry heavily. They also generally require cooperation with other entities because tourism authorities alone usually cannot implement these approaches. These include approaches like expanding road networks, obtaining UNESCO certification, or improving public transport.

Since tourism will always present some forms of adverse impacts, there will always be unavoidable impacts in the end even if optimal policy combinations that suit the context of the place are chosen. Including layers that lead to sustainable tourism and acknowledging the unavoidable impacts that will occur regardless of policy intervention is crucial to the understanding of what sustainable tourism entails. The term is frequently described as a discrete entity that either is sustainable or is not sustainable. Rather, even the most "sustainable" tourism will always have negative impacts that are unavoidable, but these can be mitigated to a large extent through metaphorical policy layering, as shown in the cheese model.

6. Discussion

As mentioned, problems that arise from the tourism industry are frequently a magnification of problems that may already exist, thereby making management an even more challenging affair since problems go beyond the sector itself. Related to this idea, tourism is sometimes used as a "scapegoat" in other industries to blame a failing sector, such as the housing sector. One participant stated that Airbnb is not the core issue causing housing problems on the island, but the government's failure to build social housing in the past decade. Instead of facing these issues, Airbnb and the tourism industry are blamed for crowding out locals. Determining whether, and to what extent, tourism is the perpetrator of certain issues is therefore difficult. Another example is the issue of litter—whereas it may be assumed that tourists are the main cause of litter in natural areas, many participants stated the locals, not the tourists, were usually to blame for littering despite perceptions being otherwise.

Issues like seasonality do not paint a clear picture of policy options either. Despite research emphasizing the negative aspects of seasonality such as unsustainable employment levels, overdependence on tourism, and "degradation of other sectors" (Peeters et al., 2018; Vanegas & Croes, 2003), evidence from the Isle of Skye however shows that degradation of other sectors can occur when there is *less* seasonality, not more. For example, local fishers would previously complement their income during the peak tourist season by providing tours on their fishing boats, whereas today many of these boats traditionally used for fishing have been replaced by year-round boating tours that cater solely to the tourism industry. As a result, local fishing practices have faded, and dependence on tourism has arguably increased upon the steadily extending tourist season. Further issues with seasonality are that they can be out of the control of management. In Sweden, research by Gossling et al. (2015) shows that visitors are unwilling to visit the country in the winter, potentially due to large temperature differences between the seasons. Islands located in the more extreme latitudes may therefore only have limited success in evening out seasonality, as attracting tourists outside warmer months is inherently more difficult. Strategies such as marketing cold weather are possibilities to attract tourists during the colder months. Furthermore, a diversified set of tourists may be necessary in places with strong seasonal fluctuations that aim to even out this seasonality because "different nationalities come at different times," as one participant stated. Targeting various source markets can be more economically sustainable rather than relying on a single source market.

6.1 Culture and ambiguity in creating sustainable tourism

Cultural influences derived from tourism are some of the most challenging management issues for policymakers. Not only are they intangible in the sense that they cannot be quantified or directly targeted, but they are a delicate subject that need to be approached with care. For example, on one island, foreign hotel staff are at once necessary to sustain the tourism economy, but on the other hand this increases pressures on local facilities such as schools and hospitals. On another island, a difference between cultures of incoming tourists from different places, and correspondingly, different behaviors of these incoming tourists, was noted as a problem. Some cultures may be more environmentally aware and are more willing to engage with tours, for example, but others feel that it is their right to roam natural sites freely, which can make sustainable tourism management more difficult. Challenges can also arise when the culture of incoming tourists and the culture of the locals is vastly different because they may be insensitive to local culture or unaware about it (Pearce & Wu, 2016). This highlights how tourist education about local culture and customs is of importance, particularly if there is a stark contrast between visitors and locals. Local culture at the destination also influences how the impacts of tourism are perceived. On one island in this research, locals were described as more willing to accept and engage with tourists, which can change the level of overtourism simply because it is perceived differently, whereas on another island tourism is met with more skepticism and unwillingness to accept the industry.

Many participants stated that there was a threat of loss of culture due to tourism, such as the presence of party tourists on the Gili Islands or the loss of Gaelic language and culture on Isle of Skye. This was an unsurprising result as many policy reports analyzed before the interviews mentioned the threat of loss of culture due to tourism. Cozumel, an island in Mexico, stated in its policy report that the greatest negative impacts by tourism are the cultural impacts, and Belize's National Tourism Policy states the "loss of character from cruise tourism" as a threat. Determining what exactly defines local "character" is nonetheless a difficult task. One of the ways of targeting these intangible components of tourism impacts is through quantifiable approaches such as the proposal of maintaining the building density of the town of San Pedro on Ambergris Caye or making sure that all signs on the island are in Gaelic as well as English on Isle of Skye. Nonetheless, policies like these do not holistically target what it means to maintain the character of a place, and it is possible that they never will.

In contrast to these concerns about loss of culture, some places use local culture to their advantage when developing sustainable tourism. For example, the participants from Hawaii and Belize stated

that environmental protection is rooted into their culture, so policy ideas such as designating "sacrifice" areas where mass tourism can occur in a concentrated area would never be considered. On the Faroe Islands, rather than seeing a loss of culture, they have seen a "flourishment" of local culture, since tourists have been interested in learning about it, which has made locals reconnect with old cultural practices. Delving deeper into using local culture to develop sustainability, quite a few places mentioned a "reversal" of policymaking by looking from present to past. In Belize, tourism management asked themselves "how the Mayas actually used to get water, and they used to practice sustainable harvesting as well, and so we, we have tried to bring back those same practices and knowledge," which echo approaches to sustainability discussed with participants from Kauai and the Galapagos Islands. In Kauai, an ancient system known as the Ahupua'a system of resource and community management is being re-discovered in the context of tourism to create more place-based, community tourism. Sustainable tourism, in the different ways that it is managed, can involve going back to cultural roots and re-discovering "old" ways, while coupling these with modern monitoring systems and regulations.

Relating to tourist behavior, polarized opinions on the hypothetical prospect of targeting repeat tourists were of particular note. The Faroe Islands representative stated that "targeting repeat tourists is not feasible…once they have seen it, they will want to go to another place next." A similar sentiment was expressed by the Seychelles representative, who attributed low levels of repeat tourism to the low diversity of tourism products in the country, which are primarily beach vacations. Ambergris Caye and Aruba, on the other hand, had an opposite perspective and stated that repeat visitors were part of their core tourist market, despite competing with a similar tourism product market within the Caribbean. As the Ambergris Caye representative stated, visitor satisfaction to the island is extremely high, meaning that a high proportion repeat tourists "just happens naturally." Repeat tourists are an important target sector when aiming at sustainable tourism development due to their generally higher awareness about social and environmental issues and willingness to respect local preferences. Furthermore, repeat tourists create more economically sustainable and resilient destinations, an important factor in the vulnerable tourism industry that is at the mercy of global economic fluctuations, such as the 2008 crisis and the Covid-19 pandemic. As the Ambergris Caye representative stated, having repeat tourists has helped their tourism economy recover because "when corona restrictions were lifted, our first to come back were the ones who were loyal," and Kauai's representative stated that "once they come, if they come back, they get it [cultural and environmental awareness] right," indicating their contribution to social and environmental sustainability as well. A common factor between the places that placed

high value on repeat tourists was conducting visitor surveys, which may help to identify areas that can be qualitatively improved upon to ensure that more respectful repeat tourists are a core market. Furthermore, they may help identify in which ways sustainable tourism strategies could be improved upon. The tourists who are themselves creating overtourism can therefore conversely be used to create a more sustainable tourism strategy.

6.2 Politics, infrastructure, and priorities

Semi-autonomous islands present different challenges from independent or completely autonomous island nations. In Kauai, institutional restraints prevent the implementation of desired policies such as limits on air travel to the island. This is deemed unconstitutional by the United States because every citizen has a "right to travel" throughout their own country, meaning that Kauai legally cannot impede American citizens, which make up the bulk of their tourists, from entering. On the other hand, being part of a larger, mainland economy can be helpful. As a territory of The Netherlands, Aruba receives a budget allocation in times of crisis like Covid-19. The Faroe Islands contrast these two examples as they have nearly complete autonomy despite being a Danish territory, and therefore have complete control over their own policy and decision-making. Nonetheless, completely autonomous, and independent island states present their own challenges. As discussed, small island economies frequently have a more challenging path towards development due to small workforces, low levels of natural resources, and geographic isolation. Independent islands also frequently need to depend on their own small economies and the industry that they frequently need to rely on is tourism. These factors are exacerbated in small independent nations where there is no "fallback" to a mainland economy and may decrease the capability and willingness of diverting away from overtourism because it is a lucrative sector.

Political changes can also impact tourism policies, specifically where there is significant debate or required approval from above. In Ecuador, debates on changing entrance fees to the islands never came to fruition because there was so much disagreement, and in Aruba carrying capacities were difficult to implement because of an unexpected government resignation. These differences also highlight funding inequalities between islands. Projects that are feasible for wealthier islands such as the Faroe Islands might not be feasible on islands that are less wealthy. Conducting carrying capacity studies, for example, were mentioned by all participants as desirable goals but were also noted for being expensive and are not always feasible. Nonetheless, diminishing funding capabilities to levels of sustainability dismisses how differing policy priorities and sustainability

goals determine where money is allocated. In the Galapagos Islands, which has a lower average income than most of the islands in this research, nature preservation is at the top of the sustainable tourism hierarchy. Strict monitoring of environmental conditions, tourist behaviors and tourist movements are an expensive route to ensure sustainability, but one that the Galapagos Islands is willing to take. In Kauai, where tourist impacts also threaten the natural environment, strict monitoring was deemed unnecessary with littering fines, for example, which have high associated costs with relatively little reward, since implementing littering fines requires hiring people to patrol the area, as well as having to catch visitors while in the act of littering, and difficulty proving the delinquency later. Many islands in this research stated similar points and have opted for more subtle behavioral nudges such as tourist education.

The institutional barriers in Ambergris Caye and other participating islands imply that top-down structures are rarely successful. Literature in the tourism field largely backs this, (e.g., Heslinga et al., 2019; Dredge & Jamal, 2015; Keyim, 2018), but top-down structures may not always be undesirable, particularly in small islands. The Galapagos Islands have a largely top-down structure that imposes strict rules for both tourists and residents alike, especially regarding nature visitation. Environmental sustainability, which is the primary goal at Galapagos, may not be as successful if not for highly structured tourism activities. Authors like Heslinga et al. (2019) criticize such strict approaches, since "tourism and human activities and nature are not functionally distinct." Although in an ideal world, humans would integrate seamlessly into nature, this is frequently not possible in the case of mass tourism. Approaches that set "arbitrary" arrival limits such as visitation limits to popular natural sites, are still frequently an effective method to allow rapid ecosystem recovery. Governance structures are an important consideration, but do not necessarily need to follow stringent guidelines that are the same across small islands.

One of the most cited issues for all islands was poor infrastructure or transport options. Isle of Skye, for example, faces the challenging combination of volume tourism coupled with poor infrastructure. According to the representative on the island, sites are sustainable if they are either very inaccessible, which reduces tourist numbers, or, if they are very accessible, then the infrastructure needs to be able to support large influxes of tourists. On the Isle of Skye, 66% of the roads are single track and frequently poorly maintained, including roads to popular sites such as The Storr or the Fairy Pools. This means that they are theoretically accessible, but the undeveloped infrastructure amplifies tourism problems such as congestion. These poor conditions are reflected in local surveys, where the top three main challenges associated with an increase in

tourism were congestion on the roads, road conditions, and too many tourists in the peak season (Isle of Skye and Isle of Raasay Tourism Economic Impact 2020). While improving road conditions would improve local satisfaction and therefore contribute to one aspect of sustainable tourism, expanding roads on the Isle of Skye may only be a short-term solution because of induced demand, otherwise known as the rebound effect (Hymel et al., 2008). For example, when roads are expanded, demand for these very roads increases due to factors such as newly accessible locations as well as perceived reduced congestion (Hymel et al., 2008). In the long term, congestion therefore returns to original levels (Naess, et al., 2012; van der Loop et al., 2016). Kauai similarly faces problems with road conditions, as most tourists tend to rent cars during their stay on the island. Instead of road expansion, promoting alternative modes of transport to replace cars is a policy being explored, which may be a preferable policy solution. These concepts of induced demand may transfer to different aspects of the overtourism policy debate. For example, as overtourism does not occur indiscriminately on an island, but rather on a site-specific basis, such as the Mykines Island on the Faroe Islands, policies that distribute tourists spatially may be more effective. Policies like limiting flights could have only a small impact on hotspot areas of an island destination, since tourists tend to concentrate in specific areas regardless.

6.3 Luxury tourism and local competition

Luxury tourists, high-income tourists, or high-value tourists are targets that are mentioned across tourism policies on islands. Whichever way they are labeled, the aim is to increase revenue while easing tourist quantities. Considering that luxury services reduce demand while increasing profits, which is particularly in the island context of a small workforce and resource base, luxury tourism provides clear benefits. However, Aruba's tourism representative noted that while the island has no hostels and is almost exclusively geared towards tourists that pay up to 1000 US Dollars per night, they have been experiencing overtourism and do not wish to go back to pre-pandemic visitation numbers. Similarly, Sylt is a luxury tourism destination in the Wadden Sea home to only 21,000 people, but it hosted an average of 620,000 visitors per year from 2017-2019 (Sylt Tourism Service, 2020). Focusing on luxury tourism to avoid overtourism may therefore only be a short-term win that may only delay, or cover up, problems in the tourism sector without directly addressing them. As discussed in the theoretical framework, luxury tourism also has the disadvantage that it can lead to economic leakages whereby revenue is not retained in the place (Sandbrook, 2010; Sharpley & Ussi, 2012). In the Seychelles, a high level of leakage due to the large amount of chain hotels was identified. Developing niche markets are a similar goal that was

mentioned by participants. This can help attract a desired tourist type and help economic performance by offering highly specialized and differentiated tourist offerings (Armstrong et al., 2014). However, economic sustainability may decrease with increasing niche specialization if there is no other type of tourism to fall back on.

Further complicating the debate on whether to attract high-income tourists is the emergence of a tourism economy that competes with the local economy. Although it manifests in different forms, this "local versus tourist" phenomenon is an issue for most islands in this research, particularly ones with high proportions of high-income tourists. In the Seychelles, "the impact [of tourism] is that locals basically compete for the same infrastructure, for the same productive systems as the visitors," and on the Isle of Skye, locals are crowded out of everyday activities such as eating out at restaurants because they cater to a high-end tourist market. On Ambergris Caye, displacement of locals due to tourism investments near their homes, or even on their property, was also identified as an issue. The emergence of what might be dubbed as a "parallel economy," whereby a local economy functions simultaneously but separately to a tourist economy, is an externality of primarily high-income tourist markets that may be undesirable. As one participant stated, a "mini economy" that sells goods and services to tourism establishments has created a divide between the local industry and the tourism sector. The actors supplying this so-called mini economy are controlled by "middlemen" who act as a linkage between local farmers and hotel restaurants. Strategies that take out these middlemen are now being explored at the destination so that direct linkages between producers and suppliers are established to replace the current circuitous supply chain. However, previously discussed island-specific challenges can make mitigating problems like these challenging, particularly if they are geographically isolated. As mentioned by the representative from Aruba, targeting an economically diverse tourist source market is inherently difficult simply because getting to the island in the first place is an expensive undertaking, as increased remoteness is correlated with an increased cost of arriving at the destination (Sufrauj, 2011).

7. Conclusion

7.1 Main findings

This exploratory research has provided a more nuanced understanding of how specific policy approaches in curbing overtourism are effective. Overtourism is a relatively new term that already has a host of literature surrounding the topic, but this paper has provided new insights by taking a global viewpoint while also going into depth about specific policies. Furthermore, the focus on island economies is particularly relevant as they receive a large proportion of the world's tourists despite having only a fraction of the total world's landmass. Keeping a watchful eye out for overtourism is therefore of particular importance in these places, whether to preemptively avoid overtourism or as a reaction to existing problems. Furthermore, the Covid-19 pandemic has provided the opportunity to "reset" tourism goals, which this research helped propel through the interactive discussion sessions with the participants. It is hoped that participants were exposed to new ideas throughout the research process that might not have been considered otherwise. As Kauai's representative stated, "we are always looking for anything we can get," and this paper has created a small contribution to this endeavor.

Overall, this research has shown a global overview of tourism policies in selected island economies. This research has expanded existing literature by providing a global overview of tourism policies on island economies, whereas focus is usually placed on specific regions. Results were surprising in that similar challenges were faced across these different contexts, showing that global comparisons are useful when exploring how to manage sustainable tourism from a policy perspective. Problems associated with unsustainable tourism mainly included challenges with tourist behavior, transport and congestion, concerns about local resentment towards tourism, and saturated tourist sites at specific locations. A further concern was that of loss of culture, although some places felt that tourism had the potential to reignite fading cultural practices. Whichever the case, all participants agreed that to maintain or recultivate local culture, community-based strategies are necessary to have a sustainable destination. Not only so that locals approve of tourism, but also so that they have an active role in decision-making and feel that their livelihoods are not compromised by outside influences. Conversely to making locals accept tourism more, teaching locals to be more defiant when encountering poorly behaved tourists can help locals feel more empowered and feel that they have a voice. Community-based tourism can therefore take many forms, from co-management of entire natural parks as is done in the Wallings Nature Reserve in

Antigua and Barbuda, or simply providing a community platform where citizens can voice their concerns.

This research also found that tourism policies need to be aware of sudden developments in global, as well as local contexts in order to adapt. For example, in places like Hawaii that receive considerable amounts of social media fame, more attention may need to be shifted towards policies that aim at changing tourist behaviors rather than limiting the demand of tourism, since its social media fame will not ebb demand. In this way, subtle strategies like educating tourists may be just as effective as hardline strategies at curbing overtourism.

Future research needs to place more emphasis on the complex network of sustainable tourism, which does not only include environmental sustainability, but social and economic sustainability in the tourism context. The example of the Faroe Islands reflects how even "sustainable tourism" involves compromises, especially from a social perspective. Although the entire population of an island will never be able to reach a consensus about what the ideal level of tourism is, strategies that help maximize economic, social, and environmental sustainability are nonetheless possible. The model presented in chapter 5 reflects this notion. Policies can be layered to maximize sustainability, but unavoided impacts will always be present despite best efforts to mitigate them. Whenever a policy is being considered, policymakers need to acknowledge that for every benefit a policy may provide, there will always be some associated drawbacks too. Sustainability, as mentioned, is not a discrete term, and policies needs to be applied with flexibility and fluctuations in mind that are constantly being improved upon.

7.2 Reflection and limitations

Despite providing fruitful grounds for discussion and learning, this research paper has various limitations. First and foremost is that more research is needed to compile an exhaustive database of policy options for small island economies. Although extensive research was conducted, and policy reports from around the globe were analyzed—including islands not participating in this research—not all potential policies could be listed or discussed in this paper. Contributing to this limitation were time constraints and the scope of this thesis, which was smaller than the potential scope of this topic. Furthermore, policy reports are not always publicly available, meaning that many reports, such as Aruba's carrying capacity report, were simply not available for analysis due to confidential content.

One drawback that emerged near the end this research was the relatively uneven geographic distribution of participants. While the intention was to interview roughly equal proportions of islands across all continents, the reply rate was highest around the Caribbean and Pacific regions, which ended up including Aruba, Ambergris Caye, Antigua and Barbuda, the Galapagos Islands, and Kauai. An equal proportion of islands in Oceania were contacted, but unfortunately without success. In future research with a larger time scope, it would have been desirable to ensure exact distribution of islands to have a better overview of the global context and include more perspectives. Regarding the relatively uneven geographic representation of islands on the African continent, there were geographic constraints, which are simply that there are fewer small island tourism economies compared to Oceania and North America, for example.

A further challenge during this research was anonymity, which was provided but difficult to guarantee due to the types of participants, which were eight government or tourism management representatives, and one research expert in the field. Consent forms were used as a method to mitigate problems arising from this, and most participants stated their consent to using their names in this research despite a later decision not to reveal any names whatsoever. Pseudonyms were used in all interviews. Interviewing policymakers also revealed potential biases, since these were frequently the very people who created reports and policies, and as such may have been hesitant to criticize approaches or admit to failures. In one interview for example, when asking about whether the island had overtourism, the participant stated said that it was not the case despite local reports and newspapers stating otherwise. On the other hand, this reveals the subjective nature of the term: when overtourism exists, it is not a universally applicable term to everyone in that particular place, and these varying opinions are all valid. Applying the Delphi method in this research was also challenging due to time zones, unwillingness to participate in a second round, or unavailability at the proposed second interview dates. Nonetheless, this was expected and accounted for prior to research, and was partly avoided by having a relatively large pool of nine participants and by making it clear from initial contact that participation consisted of two rounds of interviews. Two successful Delphi rounds were still achieved, and six out of nine participants took part in total. Despite limitations, this research successfully explored novel approaches to sustainability and fostered interesting debates in both rounds of interviews.

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Appendix: Interview Guide

Generic Interview Guide		
General Question/Topic **> Subquestion/prompt**	**Context from Policy Plan/Additional Notes**	**Additional notes**
Collect main background: > What are the local attitudes towards tourism? > Seasonal flows? > Context of island		
What are the main **institutions** in place? > (Is it more top down or bottom up?) > How are policies decided on and implemented? > DMOs? Who is the major influencer in policymaking?	Get overview of institutional setup Postma, 2018 UNWTO Report: "Measures cannot focus only on tourist numbers & behavior – they should also focus on local stakeholders."	

Which **overtourism definition** do you agree with? > Is there anything you would add to these definitions?	1. The situation when too many people visit a place on holiday, so that the place is spoiled and life is made difficult for the people who live there (Cambridge Dictionary, 2021) 2. The impact of tourism on a destination, or parts thereof, that excessively influences perceived quality of life of citizens and/or quality of visitor experiences in a negative way" (UNWTO, 2021) 3. The excessive growth of visitors leading to overcrowding in areas where residents suffer the consequences of temporary and seasonal tourism peaks, which have caused permanent changes to their lifestyles, denied access to amenities and damaged their general well-being (Milano et al., 2019) 4. The situation in which the impact of tourism, at certain times and in certain locations, exceeds physical, ecological, social, economic, psychological, and/or political capacity thresholds" (Peeter et al., 2018)	
Prior to Covid-19, tourism was increasing rapidly on your island. Was **overtourism becoming a threat?** > what does **sustainable tourism** mean to you? Social sustainability? economic, environmental?	Some places do so to avoid emissions, some to preserve local employment and satisfaction, to maintain a diverse economy. Depending on the concerns, overtourism has different impacts.	

What are the main **approaches** to **sustainable tourism/overtourism** that have been implemented? > What was successful? > What worked?		
Have changes in **tourist compositions and types** affected on your island? > Have you seen changes in tourist behavior? > Do you **target a specific type of tourist**, why?	Various policies identify changes in tourist behaviors and types as drivers of overtourism	
What was one policy introduced that **was not successful?** > Was it changed? Why?		
What is a major challenge that remains in creating a sustainable tourism destination?		
Interactive Reflection Section **Based on recurring themes in policies and solutions proposed in policies**		
Hypothetical scenarios on island	**3 Possibilities**	
Increasing concentration of tourists in one area	1. Promote activities to spread tourists and impacts around the islands 2. Zone off areas to sacrifice one area for the benefit of untouched areas 3. Establishing a carrying capacity of daily tourists, first come first serve.	
Policy plan is to adapt/market towards specific types of tourist.	1. Market luxury tourism so there is more revenue created from fewer tourists 2. Market towards low-budget tourists who have less extravagant lifestyles and are more willing to engage with locals 3. Promote all types of tourists regardless of income for a variety	

Mass construction to cater for tourists is negatively impacting the area.	1. Only small scale hotels and lodges are allowed 2. Construction of large hotels is allowed, but they must fulfill a local employee quota and eco-certification 3. A maximum number of large hotels per designated area is introduced	
Increasing litter on beaches/trail routes/tourist areas	1. Ban littering and implement heavy fines 2. Educate tourists and have signs around about how litter affects the ocean and animals 3. Ban tourists entirely from certain beaches to let the area recover	
The local tourism board realizes that tourists don't care about the environment or about local culture, which is increasing the impact of tourism.	1. Target repeat tourists, as these have been shown to care more about locals in the area and the environment 2. Apply for certification from an international organization to show the pristine nature and cultural heritage of the area (e.g. MAB; World Heritage Site) 3. Actively develop and promote cultural experiences and tours; nature tours to integrate and educate tourists; opening museums	
Conclusion		
Has **Covid-19 made you consider new approache**s in tourism? > Has it made the tourism sector realize something new/uncovered something?		

What is a main challenge for your island in general?	Open question. Does not have to/preferably does not relate to tourism.	
Do you **cooperate** with other islands in addressing policy/for other reasons?	Explore the extent of current collaboration between small island economies.	
Is there anything else you would like to add?	Optional open question	