university of groningen

The impact of online platforms & COVID-19 on overtourism

Master Thesis Economic Geography

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Preface

Abstract

The debate of overtourism has become increasingly about the unbalance between tourists' and inhabitants' needs on the one hand and the natural and social impacts on the other. Spreading tourism over place and time can result in more sustainable destinations. Based on the theoretical background and empirical analysis, it is expected that alternative destinations are likely to attract more tourists if online platforms are used in the right way. Questionnaire data collected from tourists is analyzed to determine the potentials of digital platforms and COVID-19 in changing tourists' behavior and therefore decreasing overtourism. A relationship between the online accessibility of destinations and overtourism is found. As online platforms and especially social media will make alternative destinations more accessible, the number of alternative tourists is expected to increase, and overtourism will decrease. Tourists are restricted in their destination choices because of COVID-19. It is likely that once tourists can travel again, they will try to minimize the risk of traveling by avoiding crowded destinations and make more use of innovative solutions such as time-regulated ticketing.

By giving the smaller destinations a bigger online platform, their competitive position will be better, which will lead to a better spreading of tourists, less overcrowded spaces in overtouristic places, and better-balanced tourism industry. Innovative solutions to spread tourism will be embraced. COVID-19 is expected to be an amplifier of this process. Future research should focus on making the transition to a sustainable tourism industry economically sustainable for established tourism workers.

Keywords: Overtourism, Sustainable tourism, Online platforms, Online accessibility, COVID-19

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1. Introduction

1.1 Growth of tourism

Tourism is an economical, social, and cultural phenomenon that entails people's movement to countries, regions, and places outside their everyday lives. Tourists travel for personal or business/professional purposes (UNWTO, 2020). It is a fast-growing industry, and it has steadily expanded for more than six decades (OECD, 2020). Between 1960 and 2017, the world population rose by 148% (World Bank, 2018) but within almost the same time (1950-2017), the number of tourists rose from 25 million to 1323 million, which is a perceptual growth of 5192% (UNWTO, 2018b). The UNWTO expected in 2011 that in 2030 tourism would be doubled, but looking at data of recent years, this number of tourists is increasing even faster (Rli, 2019) (OECD, 2020).

The share of tourism in the world economy has also grown since 2010 (Rli, 2019). In 2017 tourism became the third-largest export product. It grew faster than sectors like finance and business services, public services, and production, and only fuel and chemical products had a bigger stock (UNWTO, 2017) (CBS, 2017). This growth is mainly caused by Asia and other upcoming countries, such as Argentina and Egypt (Rli, 2019) (OECD, 2020). Europe attracts half of the tourists worldwide, but in the future, this share is expected to decline as Europe will probably have a relatively low growth percentage compared to other upcoming continents like Asia and Africa (UNWTO, 2018a). Tourism directly contributes 4,4% of the GDP in OECD countries, with an average of 6,9% of the employment rate (OECD, 2020). The development of tourism in the near future is uncertain considering COVID-19, but it is expected to continue to grow over the long term. Therefore, exploring the multidimensional implication of new trends is vital to inform policy and shape tourism's future (OECD, 2020).

1.2 Leisuring landscapes

Tourism is both a process and a product of Globalisation (Cantillon, 2019). Looking at tourism as a process, it enables people with different backgrounds, ethnicities, expectations, and desires to other places in the world relatively easily at a relatively low price. These tourists have an impact on tourist destinations and their cultures. Global changes and technological advances shape tourism as a product of globalization. (Cantillon, 2019). Tourist destinations attract tourists, but they also attract multinational hotel chains, fast-food restaurants, and other multinational attractions. The spatial development of places designed to foster touristic, recreational, and residential demands is defined as leisuring (Hartman, 2016b). Leisuring is an ongoing process and is expected to continue in the future (UNWTO, 2011). A significant difference with traditional markets, such as agriculture, is that planning should consider the increasingly important natural and built environment and the authenticity and uniqueness of places, instead of just focusing on efficiency and quantitative growth (Hartman, 2016b). Leisuring landscapes have great potential, but the process can also negatively impact the landscape. As we have seen in the past few years, Cities like Amsterdam and Barcelona have to deal with large amounts of tourists, which influence those cities' liveability. Leisuring processes are incompatible with nature and heritage when causing deterioration. However, this also applies to cities that experience deterioration of liveability.

Many holiday destinations are witnessing development processes to foster recreational and touristic demands (Bunce, 2008). These demands are increasing because of increased welfare, more free time, shifts in governance and policy, changing demographics, altering lifestyles and cultures, and innovations in technology, transportation, mobility, and communication (Hartman, 2016a). New tourism products are developed continuously, which leads to a wide variety of destinations and experiences (Butler, 2011). These new products are likely to affect individuals, households, communities, and regions, and it is essential to study how this is happening and how to protect these groups (Hartman, 2016a).

1.3 Overtourism

The growth of tourism raises important questions about managing this growth to benefit people, places, and businesses (OECD, 2020). Doxey (1975) already proposed an irritation continuum in which the interaction between the locals and tourists was getting worse as the community moved from a discovery stage towards full tourism development. According to Milano et al. (2018), overtourism is the excessive growth of visitors, leading to overcrowding in areas where locals suffer the consequences of temporary and seasonal tourism peaks, resulting in permanent changes to their lifestyles and negatively impacted available amenities and overall well-being of locals. However, not only locals can experience overtourism. Apart from residents' well-being, the tourists' experience should be considered, the liveability of one place, and the extent to which stakeholders directly or indirectly invest in tourism. The aim of tourism development should be to retain a high level of satisfaction for tourists while increasing their consciousness of sustainability issues and promoting sustainable tourism practices under them (Štreimikienė et al., 2020).

Overtourism is a challenging phenomenon, and debates are becoming more active (Perkumienė & Pranskūnienė, 2019). The development of tourism in European destinations such as Barcelona, Amsterdam, and Venice has become problematic, with the rise of, amongst others, cruise tourism, online platforms such as Airbnb, and social media (Benner, 2020). The debate of overtourism has become increasingly about the contradiction between tourists' and inhabitants' needs and interests and the natural and social impacts. Séraphin et al. (2020) state that a destination is sustainable if actions are taken to ensure the tourism industry does not negatively impact the environment, locals, and the interactions between locals and tourists. But to what extent is it possible to avoid those negative impacts?

1.4 Research problem

The high growth rates of tourism in Europe result from increased aviation connections, affordable traveling, and the new forms of tourism primarily influenced by digital platforms (UNWTOa, 2018). Society is getting more responsible in terms of consumption, but sustainable tourism selection remains relatively low (Wooliscroft and Ganglmair-Wooliscroft, 2017). The tourism industry must adapt to cope with the transition of the tourists. The problem is that the tourism industry is very much oriented in the short term, focussing on efficiency, profit, and growth. The use of several technologies such as location-based services, virtual reality, and artificial intelligence has resulted in a more attractive, efficient, and inclusive tourism offer (UNWTOa, 2019). However, according to Štreimikienė et al. (2020), tourists who are open to sustainable and responsible tourism usually do not choose sustainable tourism services because of a lack of trust in the Destination Marketing Organizations (DMO's) providing them. The small selection of sustainable tourism options combined with the lack of confidence in sustainable products of DMO's creates a sort of monopoly for the non-sustainable tourism destination provided by the traditional (online) travel agencies.

Traditional online travel agencies such as Booking.com and Tui have a significant influence on tourists' travel destinations. However, many countries are trying to improve the monitoring of tourism impact and encourage new technologies and funding instruments to promote eco-tourism and green tourism (Turcov & Nabolsi, 2018). Tourism growth is expected to continue, and improved connectivity, technological innovations, and more awareness for sustainable and inclusive development might change tourism's face in the future (OECD, 2020). This changing face of tourism will lead to new opportunities and challenges for destinations. To effectively respond to the changing needs and demands of generations, continuous research on each generation is needed (Robinson & Schänzel, 2019).

The perceived experience of a destination is considered important for its competitiveness (Jensen et al., 2015), but the generated information's experience might also affect a destination's competitiveness. The challenge is to create a new search engine or online platform for tourists that support a sustainable tourism industry and integrates sustainable destinations with a suitable market product for future generations. The qualities of the destinations should be made clear, and at the same time, the search engine should meet the users' demands (VROM, 2006). This kind of product can be shaped by alliances between governments, producers, and developers and by using current trends and events such as digitalizing and COVID-19. When creating a search engine that is both competitive and sustainable, it might be possible to increase the competition between the established touristy destinations and new, or alternative, destinations by giving them more prominent online platforms. As a result, cities like Barcelona and Amsterdam could experience less overtourism.

1.5 Objectives of the thesis and research questions

The thesis's objective is to determine the potentials of digital platforms and COVID-19 in changing tourists' behavior and decreasing overtourism. This thesis aims to find a way to reduce the information gap between established and new, more sustainable destinations in the tourism industry and, therefore, hopefully, overtourism. The main research question of the thesis is:

- To what extent can tourists' travel behavior be influenced to decrease overtourism?

The following research questions are defined to answer the main research question:

- To what extent is a balance possible between the needs of locals/tourists and the tourism industry?
- To what extent can digital platforms be used to change tourist's behavior and decrease overtourism?
- To what extent has Covid-19 an effect on overtourism, and how can digital platforms be used to cope with this?

The thesis is mainly focussing on younger generations and less attention to tourists aged 65 years and older, considering most tourists in this group will travel in the shoulder season (March to June & September to November). Other age groups tend to travel during the summer season (July to August), which is the peak season and creates the most overtourism (Eurostat, 2018). The older consumer market has also become more heterogeneous than younger tourists regarding preferences, motives, and spending power (Ahmad, 2002) (Sellick, 2004). Tourists aged 65 years and older have more time flexibility and tend to spend on average more nights on a destination and stay in non-rented accommodations, allowing them to spend more money at the destination, which results in better-balanced tourism (Eurostat, 2018) (Jang et al., 2009). Finally, people in this age group are often not very active on digital platforms, making it harder to influence this group's travel behavior using digital platforms. Younger generations, especially Generation Z, are expected to be influenced by online platforms, resulting in a change in travel behavior.

1.6 Thesis structure

The thesis is structured the traditional way. The conceptual framework of the thesis follows the introduction. The conceptual framework tries to answer research question one by digging into the literature to find what causes the unbalance between locals/tourists and the tourism industry and search for mechanisms to create a more sustainable tourism industry. In Chapter three and chapter four, the thesis becomes more concrete by focussing on online platforms and COVID-19. These two chapters will be used to formulate a hypothesis for research questions 2 and 3.

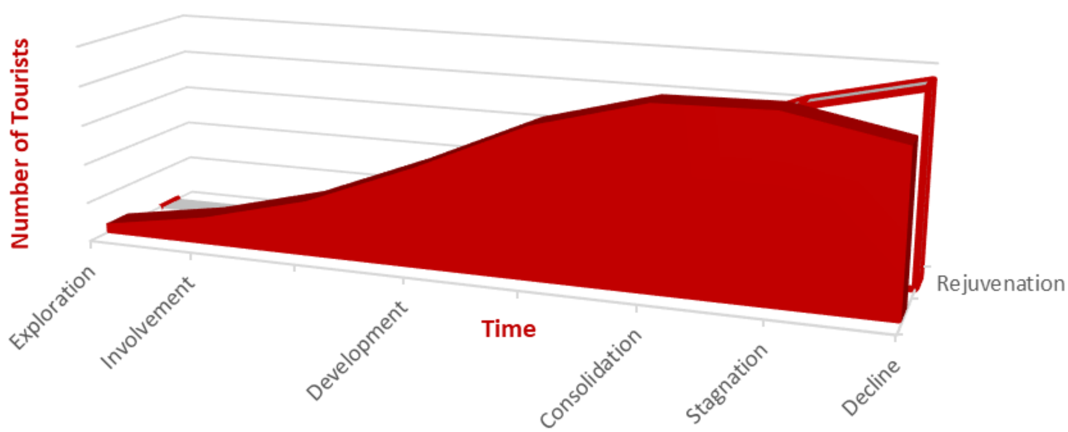
The empirical part of the thesis will follow the theoretical framework. A description of the methods used will be followed by empirical analysis & results. Finally, the discussion and conclusion will provide the main findings of the thesis's empirical part, an evaluation of the whole thesis process will be given, as well as suggestions for further research.

2. Conceptual framework

2.1 The Tourism Area Life Cycle

There seems to be a general pattern in the development of tourist areas (Butler, 2006). Of course, the number of tourists, rates of growth, and rate of change may vary, but there is a similar pattern for almost all destinations. The model (figure 1) created by Butler, the Tourism Area Life Cycle model, or TALC model, is based upon the product cycle effect. Firstly, a small number of tourists will visit a new destination that is hard to access, has few facilities, and there is little information about the place; this is called the exploration phase. The number of visitors will increase once the facilities are expanded and upgraded, and the destination becomes more known. With increasing investments in facilities, spreading of information, and marketing, the destination will grow into the second phase, Involvement, which is characterized by facilities primarily or exclusively for tourists and remaining high contact with visitors.

Figure 1: The Tourist Area Life Cycle model – Butler (1980)



Local involvement and development control will decline rapidly as external commercial organizations will take over in the development stage. It is expected that there will be significant physical changes at the destinations, which are not always welcomed or approved by local communities. The rate of increase will decline in the consolidation stage, but the number of visitors will still be growing. Tourism contains a large part of the destination’s economy. However, at the same time, there will be an arouse of opposition towards the tourism industry, especially from locals not involved in tourism. In the stagnation phase, the capacity levels at the destination have been reached or even exceeded, and environmental, social, and economic problems will occur. Many facilities will no longer be authentic, and the destinations will become divorced from their geographical environment.

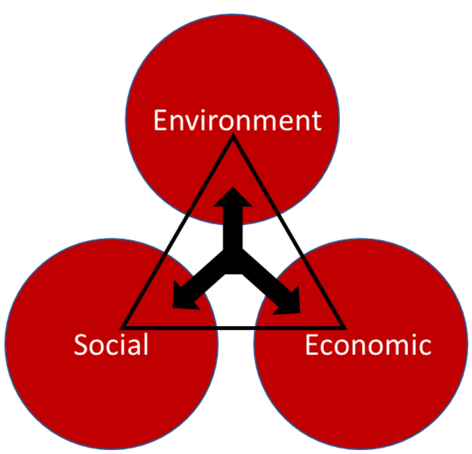
The destination's competitiveness will decline during the decline stage compared to other destinations with newer and more attractive or authentic attractions. The market share will decrease, and the destination will no longer appeal to tourists. Tourist facilities will be replaced by other non-tourist facilities such as retirement homes, external commercial organizations will disappear, and local involvement will increase as the prices of facilities will decline significantly. Eventually, a destination becomes a touristic slum, it will lose its touristic function completely, or rejuvenation will occur. To Rejuvenate, a significant change in tourist attractions must take place. According to Butler (2006), this can be done either by creating human-made attractions or by taking advantage of untapped natural resources. Though these new attractions might be economically feasible, this will also affect the living environment of the locals. As the negative impacts become more extensive than the positive impacts, locals become increasingly irritated, as described by Doxey.

Doxey's irridex of "Irritation" describes four stages for locals (Doxey, 1975). The first stage is Euphoria, wherein locals are curious and excited about incoming tourists. As the number of tourists increases, the relationship with tourists becomes more formal and enters the stage of apathy. Further increase in tourists results in concerns about price rises, violation of cultural rules, and decreased liveability. These factors combined make locals experience the third stage, irritation. The final stage is antagonism, wherein the irritations are becoming so high that the situation becomes complex and challenging to manage.
To effectively manage the irritation of locals and create a more sustainable tourist destination, further insight into the impacts is needed.

2.2 Impacts on tourist destinations

Any development that meets the present's needs without compromising future generations' ability to meet their own needs can be defined as sustainable (Séraphin and Nolan 2019). When thinking about sustainability nowadays, we link this often to climate change. Organizations within the tourism industry will think about sustainability in terms of profit margins. However, there is a third area concerned in this dogma which had a lack of attention on tourist hotspots in the past years: social sustainability.

Figure 2: People, Planet, Profit (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987)



Besides the fact that tourism expansions affect the natural environment, the locals' quality of life is negatively affected by the large flows of tourists (Štreimikienė et al., 2020). The rapid growth of tourism creates a big challenge for sustainable tourism, but now there is a lack of sustainable solutions. The presence of tourists might affect the local population positively and negatively, resulting in an increase or decrease in local well-being and urban quality of life (Figini & Vici, 2012). According to Ratz & Puczkó (2002), there are five domains of critical impacts which might concern the locals, all including both positive and negative impacts:

1. Population impacts
2. Transformation of the labor market
3. Changes in community characteristics and structure
4. Impacts at individual and family level
5. Impacts on natural and cultural resources

2.2.1 Population impacts

The first positive population impact that comes to mind when thinking about increased tourism is the population's growth (Ratz & Puczkó, 2002). According to Deery et al. (2012), tourism has great potential to provide new jobs in local communities. As employment is an important reason to migrate (Boyle, Halfacree, & Robinson, 1998), tourism might attract in-migrants (Niedomysl, 2005). These in-migrants might also be seasonal workers, which can be positive if it satisfies the need for labor but can also be harmful if it takes work away from the locals (Ratz & Puczkó, 2002). The presence of holiday homeowners also affects the population, leading to negative impacts such as housing shortages and a driving up of the house prices (Gallent, 2007). However, as the holiday homeowners take part in the community, the impacts would not be all negative (Ratz & Puczkó, 2002). Other population impacts mentioned are changes in age, gender, racial or ethnic composition, and household growth due to immigration and gentrification (Ratz & Puczkó, 2002) (Lopez-Gay et al., 2020). As a result of the gentrification, a decrease in the number of people living in each household is possible. This development, in combination with a decline in vacant dwellings, could lead to a population decline in the city center (Jover & Díaz-Parra, 2019) (Lopez-Gay et al., 2020) (Ford & Champion, 2000).

2.2.2 Transformation of the labor market

Tourism leads to a generation of jobs and an increase in seasonal employment (Ratz & Puczkó, 2002) (Deery et al., 2012), but tourism also generates new occupational opportunities. As tourism itself changes through recent trends, new occupations with new skills and job requirements are evolving (Stanciulescu & Bulin, 2012). New occupations might be beneficial for the locals but will negatively impact if the locals are not qualified for the jobs (Ratz & Puczkó, 2002). Tourism might lead to the development of underdeveloped regions and gentrification within urban areas. Gentrification hints at the displacement of low-income populations such as the elderly and those involved in manual labor (Lopez-Gay et al., 2020). Young adults will replace them with higher levels of education and income. As the increase of labor in tourism can lead to a lack of labor in the traditional sectors (Ratz & Puczkó, 2002), the influence of tourism on traditional workers might be considered more negative than positive. Simultaneously, the required skillful and educated workforce will experience a more positive transformation of the labor market (Bamford, 2012) (Sadik, 2017).

2.2.3 Changes in community characteristics and structure

Many factors influence community characteristics and structure. Some of these factors overlap with other domains of critical impacts. For instance, the increase in real estate value correlates with the gentrification of regions (Lopez-Gay et al., 2020). According to Ratz & Puczkó (2002), the balance between infrastructure development, congestion, and traffic problems and the balance between increasing shopping opportunities and rising prices and inflation are influencing the community characteristics. These kinds of community characteristics again have an impact on the housing market. This shows that the impact of tourism on property values is more complicated than increased house prices due to increased demand and that different impacts influence each other (Biagi et al., 2016). Other positive impacts on the community characteristics and structure can be the increased importance of the service sector, improvement of the destination's image, increased community's pride and a decrease in prejudice, disappearance of stereotypes, and tolerance growth (Ratz & Puczkó, 2002). Other negative impacts can be the weakening of moral standards, conflicts related to religion, and overdependence on tourism.

2.2.4 Impacts at individual and family level

Changes in community characteristics and structure can have a positive impact on the individual and family levels. Examples are high education standards and health standards (Slavov, 2015). Because of the need to communicate with foreign tourists, the locals will learn new languages, improve their work attitude, and improve social etiquette (Ratz & Puczkó, 2002). However, not all impacts are positive. For example, poorly planned tourism can negatively impact local people's traditions and cultural practices (Slavov, 2015). Social networks might be disrupted, and the rhythm of life for the people who start to work in the tourism industry. Ratz & Puczkó (2002) mentioned that tourism leads to increasing xenophobia among locals and the development of deviant behavior such as alcoholism, prostitution, gambling, drug abuse, and vandalism. Other impacts on individual and family level are not specifically positive or negative changes in family structure, change in consumption patterns, and change in housing conditions.

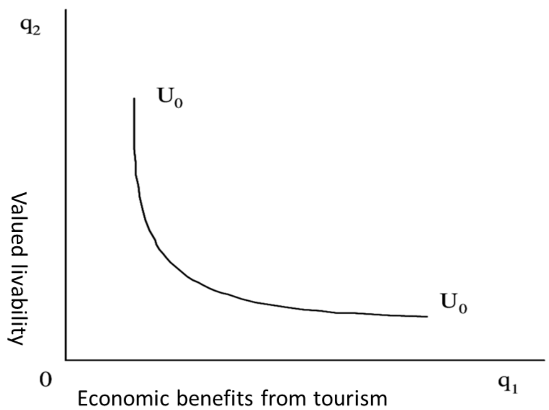
2.2.5 Impacts on natural and cultural resources

According to Ratz & Puczkó (2002), one possible negative impact of tourism is the disappearance of local customs and traditions. This is striking since authenticity is a vital aspect of attracting tourists, with tourists seeking authentic local customs and traditions (Zhu, 2015). Examples of such customs and traditions described as authentic or inauthentic are works of art, festivals, cuisine, and housing (Wang, 1999). Authentic places are unique, and as cultures are getting commercialized (Ratz & Puczkó, 2002), the destination might lose its own local culture and tourists looking for an authentic experience (Cantillon, 2019). Luckily, tourism can also work the other way around as there can be a revitalization of local arts, crafts, cultural activities, and traditional architecture (Ratz & Puczkó, 2002). Finally, increased tourism might lead to governments and the tourism industry's realization that they must protect the areas with outstanding natural or cultural beauty from pollution and littering.

2.2.6 The indifference curve of tourism on local communities

The local population of tourist destinations tries to maximize their utility to gain the highest level of happiness. Their happiness can be affected by both positive and negative impacts of tourism. There is a positive relationship between total income and happiness. Though, Clark (2003) states that this link is weak because of the individual income with variables that reduce happiness, such as commuting time. There is a non-linear relationship between income and happiness with diminishing marginal returns, meaning that income appears to have a higher impact on lower-income groups' happiness. The marginal effect of income on happiness decreases as the income increases (Inglehart & Klingemann, 2000). Destinations that already have a relatively big economy would, according to this argument, be less willing to host tourists in their city considering the negative impacts they have on the liveability of the destination. It is essential to keep the positive and negative impacts of the locals in balance. The indifference curve is used to clarify this matter. All combinations of valued liveability and economic benefits above the curve are preferable to combinations along or below the curve. The level of utility is indifferent between all combinations of the curve. The valued liveability for locals should be in balance with the economic benefits from tourism.

Figure 3: The indifference curve of tourism on local communities



2.3 The balance between tourism and liveability

Tourism is a sum between phenomena and relationships that arise from interactions between tourists, entrepreneurs, host governments, and host communities (Helsinga, 2018). The impact of tourism on host governments and residents has been a growing research area (Willams and Lawson, 2001). As the positive impacts should balance out the negative impacts on future touristic destinations, it is important to understand what causes the imbalance. We first need to understand the barriers for sustainable tourism destinations to determine to what extent a balance is possible between the needs of locals/tourists and the tourism industry. Hartman & Sijtsma (2018) describe four barriers to the sustainable development of mass tourism destinations:

- Economic short-term thinking dominates social and environmental concerns, which are needed for the longer term.
- The complexity of managing the commons.
- Marketing for visitors instead of quality.
- Non- integrated multi-level governance.

In the next section, these four barriers will be discussed, and solutions to overcome these barriers will be given.

2.3.1 Economic short-term thinking

There has been much discussion about making tourism more sustainable, but this has not resulted in much progress in the worldwide tourism industry so far (Buckley, 2012). It has become widely recognized that planners and entrepreneurs must consider the host community if the industry wants to be sustainable in the long term. The tourism industry is only focussing on making as much revenue as possible (Kernel, 2005). However, there is a highly competitive level in modern economies such as the tourism industry (UNWTO, 2017). Businesses in the tourism industry must increase business efficiency and implement the most advanced technologies to find competitive advantages of products and services (Štreimikienė et al., 2020). In this economic climate, there is little room for investment in a sustainable future. On top of that, it cannot be expected from governments and tourism organizations that they will continuously intervene in the tourism industry. Without any interventions, locals will experience an imbalance between tourism and liveability and will get irritated.

Figure 4: The linear revenue model versus the curve revenue model

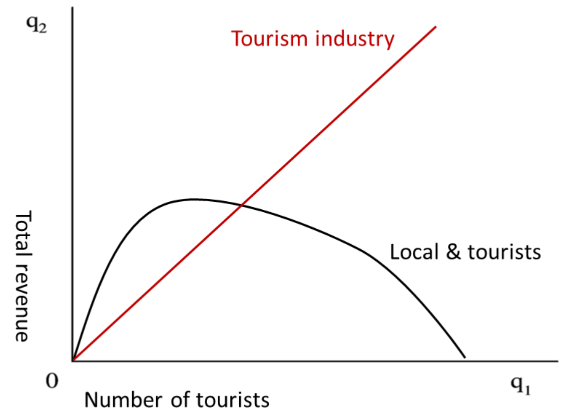


Figure 4 shows the tourism industry's linear revenue model and the local communities and tourists' curve revenue model. Many enterprises in the tourism industry, such as hotels, are likely to expand at locations based on occupancy rates without realizing that tourists are not visiting the hotel (Sorrels, 2019). By blind investing in more rooms, they might ruin the main product their guests are coming to see. Hotels (and other forms of accommodation) differ by contextual factors such as location, culture, transportation connections, and accommodations/destinations that need to focus on these contextual factors (Kaldis & Kaldis, 2008).

These contextual factors are influenced by the economic activity of the tourism industry. As shown in the graphic, the revenue for local communities and tourists will increase at first. However, as the number of tourists increases, local services will be replaced by (inter)national tourist organizations, and locals lose control of the tourism development and local engagement increases (Szromek, 2019). Too many tourists mean relatively less economic benefits for the local communities and a decreased liveability. The contextual factors will be negatively affected by the blind investments of enterprises in the tourism industry, which will negatively affect tourists' perceived value and make a destination less sustainable or even lead to depletion, as described by the tragedy of the commons.

2.3.2 Complexity of managing the commons

The tragedy of the commons is a theory that applies to numerous environmental, economic, and social phenomena (Hartman & Sijtsma, 2018). The problem is that individuals try to maximize their benefit in the short term without having an eye for the common good and therefore overuse the resources, in our case, the destinations. Without regulations and restrictions for the use of common goods, overuse of resources can deplete the source. Society should be careful with their resource use to prevent destinations from overexploiting their resources beyond a point of no return. Only recognizing this problem is not enough. It can be hard to encourage investments to enhance the quality of the destinations as many non-investors would also benefit from these investments, and an investment incentive problem would occur (Healy, 1994).

Some organizations focus on sustainable tourism, but according to von der Weppen & Cochrane (2012), these organizations are mainly concentrating on relieving poverty and environmental stresses. Social stresses such as overtourism have gotten a lack of attention, which is crucial when creating a sustainable tourism destination. There should be a balance between environmental, social, and financial aims within the tourism industry (von der Weppen and Cochrane, 2012). According to Hartman & Sijtsma (2018), the investment incentive problem can also relate to setting up tourism when there is none. Besides the fact that new destinations should be attractive to tourists, there should be local consensus for tourism development and investors willing to invest in new, more sustainable destinations.

When creating new tourism destinations or new social and environmental regulations for established destinations, existing firms may struggle to change (Hitchcock, 2009). For the whole industry to become more sustainable, the current market leaders must become more sustainable. Large firms may initiate social benefit types of projects if they want to reduce the company's overall impact on society (De Lange & Dodds, 2017). The problem here is that those large companies are guided by traditional entrepreneurs, aiming to benefit themselves instead of society (Lepoutre et al., 2013). The main challenge is to find a way to generate more social improvements without threatening the economic sustainability of investing companies.

One of the opportunities to achieve this is generating new social entrepreneurship (De Lange & Dodds, 2017). Social entrepreneurship differs from traditional entrepreneurship in terms of intentions and overall objectives of the innovator or enterprise (Lepoutre et al., 2013). Social entrepreneurs are trying to solve social issues in a larger context or encourage further activity to create a sustainable solution (Mair and Marti, 2006). According to Prieto et al. (2012), there are three main intentions for social entrepreneurs: create awareness of particular social problems; develop an innovative, pattern-breaking, and sustainable idea; and build/work in an infrastructure needed for social entrepreneurial work. Social enterprises are driven by a social mission, generate positive externalities, and achieve competitiveness in markets through effective planning and management (Grassl, 2012). Innovative social entrepreneurship increases the competitive pressure on existing firms. In the past, tourists have chosen mass tourism to switch to the new sustainable offerings, and the industry may become more competitive and sustainable. This competitiveness might be not so much based on a monetary basis but rather on sustainable offerings. By continuing to invest in sustainable solutions and raise awareness amongst tourists, it might be possible to manage the common goods in tourism.

2.3.3 Marketing for visitors instead of quality

The tourism industry has been focussing rather on the number of tourists than maximizing profit **(**Dodds & Butler, 2010). The growth of tourism alone is not an adequate measure of tourism performance. Instead, the net benefits a destination accrues over visitors should be measured (Dwyer & Forsyth, 1997). The overall net gain from additional expenditures on destinations is likely to be less than the total expenditure because of externalities. The main objective should be to achieve a bove-average revenue for tourism development with the lowest production expenses and protection of natural resources & cultural heritage (Dodds & butler, 2010) (Budinoski, 2011). The gaps and deficiencies should be discovered and fixed To achieve this objective.

According to Yakov & Jacob (1979), stakeholders and owners of large tourism enterprises are primarily interested in profitability. However, those enterprises' managers are more concerned with revenue growth and prestige, which is more about expanding their business than profit. The local tourism industry has many of the characteristics of a competitive market (Dwyer & Forsyth, 1997):

- The market is easy to enter, as there are few barriers to entry.
- It concerns a global market with few unnatural barriers.
- There is a large number of firms.
- Prices are set based on market expectations.

In a competitive market, the tourism firms that choose a revenue strategy will serve more tourists than the firms chosen a profit strategy (Yang et al., 2008). As a result, the firms that have chosen the revenue strategy will have higher profits and market shares. Large enterprises in the industry will maximize their revenues and reduce market prices through competition. Though the extra income gained from maximizing their revenue could not make up for the losses made by small firms with a profit strategy, the entire tourism sectors' surplus will decrease. If all firms choose the same strategy, the revenue strategy would be more profitable for all firms.

According to Dwyer & Forsyth (1993), the tourism industry's profit, also known as tourism yield, can be measured as the benefits minus the costs of tourism. This yield quickly falls back to accounting profit for individual firms, but governments, or societies, should strive for a broader perspective by taking environmental and social impacts into account. When the large tourism enterprises try to maximize their revenue through growth, the negative ecological and social impacts will increase as well as the total surplus of the industry. Also, from an economic perspective, maximizing the occupation to maximize the revenue is working hard, not smart (Gregorash, 2016). The 'losses' made by allowing fewer tourists are covered by the extra spending of people who do not want to wait outside a restaurant or roam over an overcrowded square.

According to Sorrels (2019), the problem of overtourism might not be so much the total number of tourists, but rather the unbalance of tourists in place and time. When too many tourists are coming to one destination simultaneously, the negative impacts will affect the liveability too much, making it impossible for locals to maximize their utility, which creates unbalanced tourism. Spreading tourism can be a solution to overtourism if tourists are attracted by new sustainable tourism activities (Lordkipanidze et al., 2005). Those activities should ensure positive impacts for local communities and reduce negative impacts through thoughtful participation of new and existing hospitality and tourism businesses. Visitors should be supporting local businesses and be aware of the impact they have on the place they visit and the locals and their culture (Lansing and De Vries, 2007). Simultaneously, the tourism industry and destinations should be focused on increasing the overall revenue that tourists spend instead of increasing the number of tourists (De Lange & Dodds, 2017).

We are becoming more aware of tourism's negative impacts on the environment and the local communities (Séraphin et al., 2020). Hartman & Sijtsma (2018) rightly make the comparison with a classic industry, in the sense of a polluting industry with various negative impacts. As negative impacts are becoming more influential on the urban quality of life, the positive impacts will no longer outbalance the negative impacts (Biagi et al., 2020). More tourists do not equal more profit, but fewer tourists might if managed correctly.

2.3.4 Types of tourists

The number of tourists indicates how busy places are, but not how this place is experienced. The tourism experience is determined by the intensity of tourism, the density of tourism, and tourists' behavior (Rli, 2019) (UNWTO, 2018b). It is necessary to look at the different types of tourism to understand the influence of tourism better. The current general form of tourism can be seen as a human experience that helps people to relax, have fun and enrich the human mind (Rli, 2019), but tourism can also have a more cultural meaning (Welten, 2013). Cantillon (2019) states in his book that tourism is often categorized into two types, the former in line with Rli (2019) and the latter with Welten (2013):

- Mass tourism (Organized & Individual)
- alternative tourism

Mass tourism is a typical example of modern tourism (Markwell, 1997). Mass tourists typically consume standardized, predictable, and packaged forms of tourism that are often relatively inflexible (Vainikka, 2013). These holidays are often associated with the sun, sand, and sex model of tourism, which we find most of the time in resorts near beaches and with nightclubs and other attractions in the area (Cantillon, 2019). Their motivation to travel is to escape from their everyday lives and responsibilities. They try to escape from this through intensified, collective experiences of fun activities and relaxation (MacCannel, 2001). According to Cohen (1972), there can be a distinction between mass tourists. First, an organized mass tourist is sticking to tourist hubs and wants packaged deals, including guided tours and arranged transfers. Second, there is the individual mass tourist. This tourist is trying to find novelty and has less desire to escape from everyday life than the organized mass tourist but is still visiting the tourist hubs with all the multinational hotels and brands.

According to Vainikka (2013), mass tourism can be a destructive force on tourist places by threatening those places' meaning and authenticity. Their behavior is entirely different from locals, leading to more negative experiences for locals (Rli, 2019). Tourist places should instead want to attract Alternative tourism, which rejects mass tourism practices and motivations. These alternative tourists are perceived as more independent, flexible, spontaneous, and more interested in local cultures. They prefer individualized and customized holidays over standardized holidays, which can be proven by the rise of new tourism styles such as heritage tourism and backpacking. The tourism sector has become increasingly segmented with many niche tourism products and at different groups To let alternative tourists experience their desired holidays (Shaw & Williams, 2004).

2.3.5 The perceived negative impacts of different types of tourists model

Von Thünen describes in his Bid rent theory how prices of real estate change as the distance to the market center increases. In Von Thünen's model, three firms are distributed across an urban area, and each area will be occupied by the firms that make the highest rent bid (Capello, 2013). The Market land rent will be based on bid-rent curves at each distance from the center so that the area can be depicted as a set of concentric rings, each containing the firm willingness to pay the highest rent for that distance. The higher the rent, the smaller the concentric circle. An essential result of the Von Thünen model is that urban land will be allocated to activities able and willing to pay the higher rent for each distance from the center (Capello, 2013). When concerning firms and households, firms are willing to pay more, and therefore, the households are moving to suburban areas.

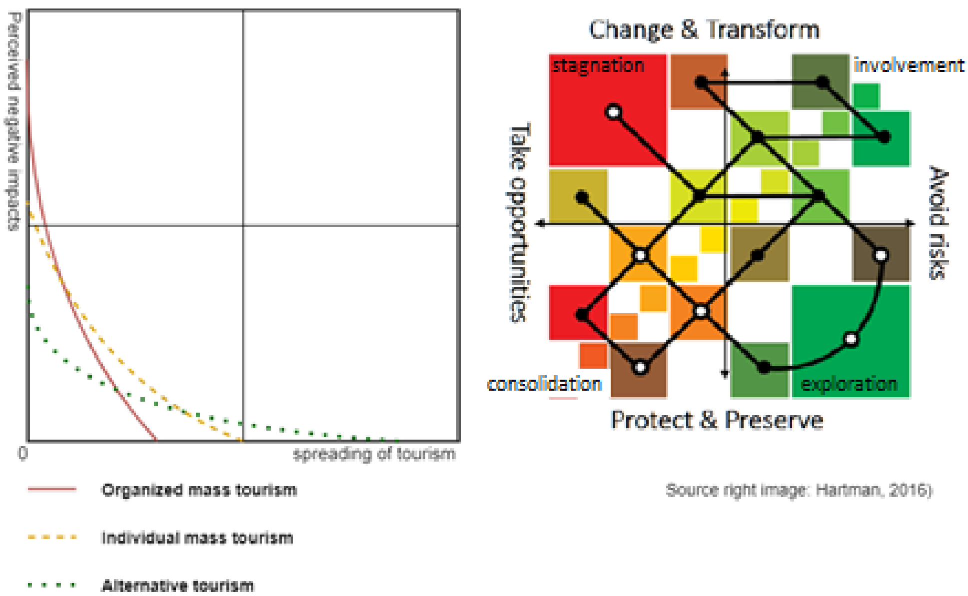
There is a difference in the bid rent curve for different kinds of markets and different kinds of tourists. It is possible to distinguish between different kinds of tourists and their willingness to pay closer to the tourists' hotspots. However, as we are more interested in balancing tourism and liveability, the bid rent will be replaced by the perceived negative impacts of the different kinds of tourists on the local communities. The three different types of tourists have different impacts on destinations, and these differences between these types of tourists can be hard to measure (Dwyer & Forsyth, 1997). Impacts can be direct and indirect. It is, for instance, likely that alternative tourists have a more direct impact on natural parks, as they are likely to visit those kinds of places more often. On the other hand, they are less likely to indirectly impact these destinations as their demand for high-impact accommodations or activities is lower.

In the left chart of figure 4, the different negative impact curves of the three types of tourists are shown. Organized mass tourism has the smallest concentric circle and, therefore, the steepest negative impact curve. These types of tourists have little spreading and are causing a lot of negative impacts for locals near the touristic hotspots. Individual mass tourists are already spreading more over the cities as they are consuming less packaged deals and are therefore more flexible to visit other parts of the city (Vainikka, 2013). Alternative tourists are spreading the most, create the least negative impacts for locals, and are therefore most preferable.

The left chart of figure 4 is divided into four boxes, just as the chart on the right. In the chart on the right, every box has been given a name based on Butlers' TALC model: Exploration, involvement, consolidation, and stagnation, and these stages can be four stages of Doxey's irridex (Euphoria, Apathy, Annoyance & Antagonism). There are also four management strategies mentioned in this chart: Avoid risks, protect & preserve, take opportunities, and change & transform. The involvement stage is the most preferred stage and, therefore, the most preferred box to be in. This stage is linked with apathy, meaning that there is a sufficient amount of economic benefits at a destination without too many perceived negative impacts.

In the exploration phase, the small number of tourists combined with the unchanged physical and social environment in the exploration phase leads to almost no perceived negative impacts for locals. Locals are euphoric about welcoming visitors. However, there is relatively less income generated from tourists. Therefore, destinations in this box should change & transform to attract more tourists while finding the right balance between taking opportunities and avoiding risks to prevent itself from unbalanced tourism.

Figure 5: The perceived negative impacts of different types of tourists model



Source right image: Hartman, 2016)

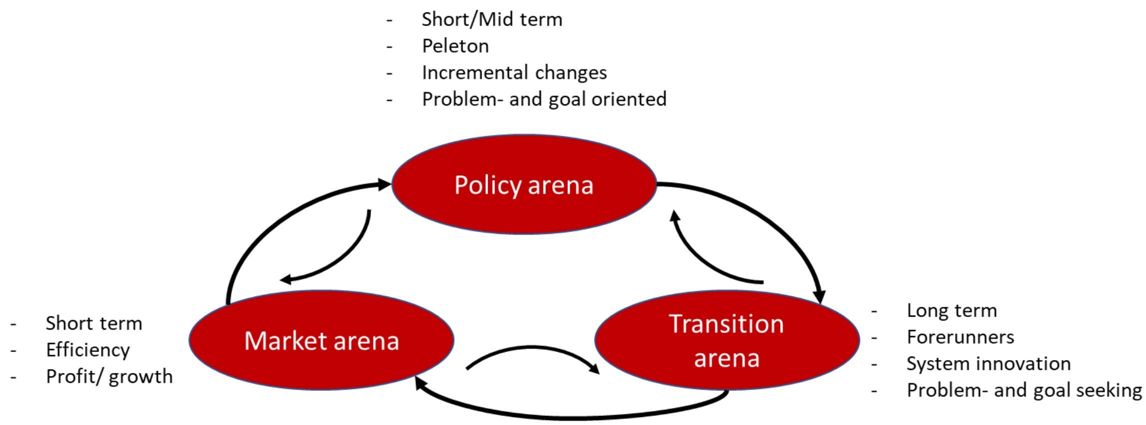
In the consolidation phase, the large number of tourists is likely to arouse opposition from annoyed locals, especially those who are not working in tourism. As in the stagnation phase, only organized mass tourists will remain. This opposition will only get bigger as locals are getting antagonistic toward locals. According to Butler (2006), this will lead to deprivation and restrictions on touristic activities. However, local governments' actions to reduce overtourism also affect local communities. Park Guëll in Barcelona, for example, decided due to the growing popularity of the park to regulate the park's access. As a result, the locals felt pushed out of the park, resulting in multiple demonstrations and petitions against the local government's regulations (Crespi-Vallbona & Gail Smith, 2020). Instead of protecting & preserve through interventions from governments, free-market forces might be a solution. These free-market forces can change & transform the market, generate a better balance between taking opportunities, avoid risks, create more tourists, and decrease perceived negative impacts. In other words, by change & transform and at the same time finding the correct balance between taking opportunities and avoiding risks, destinations in the consolidation phase and stagnation phase might shift to the involvement phase.

2.3.6 Non- integrated multi-level governance. (Transition management)

In figure 6, there are three arenas shown: The policy arena, the market arena, and the transition arena.
The main driver of change concerning sustainable tourism has been governmental regulation, not a market approach as in most industries. According to Kernel (2005), private enterprises do not feel responsible for local, sustainable development. These enterprises only focus on their concerns, which is, in most cases, making as much revenue as possible. According to Budinoski (2011), a mediator should manage the interests of all stakeholders of tourist destinations. This mediator should guide the development politics through their institutions and make it easier to generate necessary funds to form a competitive market price of tourism products and perform other developmental, promotional, and coordinated functions to achieve the highest utilization. Obstructions in this process, such as irritation by residents and over-crowding, can stagnate tourism activity and reduce the economic value of tourism in a destination (Butler, 1980).

Many local governments are trying to protect and preserve to avoid the risk of negative impacts. However, according to Dodds & butler (2010), policies from local governments often lack successful implementation. They state that higher government levels should provide legislation to manage higher professional standards for the tourism industry. The problem is that these higher governmental levels do often not acknowledge the importance of the tourism industry, which led to a general lack of recognition of tourism on political agendas. Therefore, it becomes tough to develop a multilevel government policy to stimulate sustainable tourism.

Figure 6: Transition management & limitations of traditional regimes (Rotmans, 2005).



As decisions in the policy arena are too often leading to suboptimal solutions, which generate even more complex problems in the long term, there is increasing realization that issues such as overtourism cannot be solved by policies alone (Loorbach & Rotmans, 2006). Destination management organizations should try to change and transform the tourism industry using transition management to create a sustainable tourism industry. Transitions cannot be managed in terms of command and controls, which is common in the policy arena, but instead in influencing and adjusting. These more subtle and evolutionary ways of steering can influence the direction and pace of transitions, even if not controlled directly. Transition management is a combination of creating strategic, long-term perspectives/visions on the one hand and adopting an incremental approach on the other hand (Loorbach, 2007). The former focuses on anticipating and specifying desired futures. The latter focuses on learning and re-evaluation of visions.

Once the desired future path is chosen, the challenge occurs to influence and adjust to reach this desired path. In the article by Sorrells (2019), Doug Lansky states that the easiest way to stop tourists from coming to destinations experiencing overtourism is limiting the number of people that can accommodate or transport. This simplistic solution might be effective but will also lead to implications. Governments' actions to reduce overtourism might also negatively affect the local communities (Crespi-Vallbona & Gail Smith, 2020). Instead of creating regulations that limit the number of tourists and decrease the tourism industry's supply, it might be better to search for solutions that decrease the demand side of destinations like Barcelona and Amsterdam and spread tourists over more destinations.

To spread tourists over different destinations, these tourists must be connected with the destinations that they desire. According to Hartman & Sijtsma (2018), making this connection and evaluating those tourists' influence is a challenge for the future. They state that to connect fans of natural areas with new rural destinations, developing online communities for different natural areas seems logical. This argument will probably also apply to other types of destinations. Transition management in the tourism industry is likely to enhance more effective governance processes, but choosing the right measure will be critical in this process.

2.4 Decreasing the information gap

It was already stated by Swarbroke & Horner (1999) that finding and buying the proper holiday is a problem-solving process. It requires a lot of information and knowledge of different stakeholders. Tourists are willing to act rationally using intellect (Styhre, 2004) but often lack (trustful) information about alternative holiday destinations. By filling the information gap of tourists, there might be a decrease in the established destinations' dominant position and a rebalance of the tourism industry.

2.4.1 The risk of traveling

Travel products are experience goods. Their quality and benefits can rarely be evaluated before the product is consumed (Peterson et al., 2007). Purchasing travel products is associated with insecurity (Swarbroke & Horner, 1999). The degree of risk is highly variable across tourism destinations because of tourism's intangible and experiential nature (Boksberger and Craig-Smith, 2006) (Sirakaya and Woodside, 2005). Risk begins where knowledge ends (Williams & Balaz, 2014). The risk is relatively low for the one destination because it is familiar to us due to the tacit knowledge available (Williams & Balaz, 2014) (Polanyi, 1966). Destinations without available tacit knowledge and less knowledge about the culture and institutions are less popular. Swarbroke & Horner (1999) state that finding and buying the right holiday is a problem-solving process that requires much information to reduce risk and enhance the chosen product's quality (Jun et al., 2007). Tourists tend to travel to the most famous destinations on earth because there is an overload of information about these places, reducing the risk of a bad holiday (Williams & Balaz, 2014).

If tourists are traveling abroad and have limited tacit knowledge of the regions, they face higher uncertainties. Therefore, for some market segments, it is essential to supply familiarity (Williams & Balaz, 2014). This familiarity has been the base for global tourism firms' growth, reproducing standardized services across international boundaries, and reducing consumers' risk (Dunning and McQueen, 1982). Simultaneously, firms invest in markets with similarities with their market in terms of language, culture, and business practices (Johanson and Vahlne's, 1977).

Tourists collect information from family and friends, face-to-face meetings with travel agents, and codified sources such as guidebooks. These tacit sources are called information-related strategies (Lo, Cheung & Law, 2011). Lo, Cheung, and Law (2011) also refer to travel-specific strategies, whereby valued tacit knowledge is generated through partnerships with local firms before booking a trip. This strategy has been hard to carry out for tourists because of the lack of connection between tourists and local firms. As a result, tourists depend on information-related strategies.

When deciding, tourists apply both intellect and intuition to decision-making (Styhre, 2004). They start accumulating knowledge and making rational decisions, but their knowledge is limited, and the gap of information is filled with affective knowledge and instinct. The limited knowledge gives organizations in the tourism industry much power over where tourists are going on holiday.

2.4.2 The concept of accessibility

Accessibility is a concept that has been applied to transportation studies since the 1950s by different fields such as transportation planning, urban planning, and Geography (Geurs & van Wee, 2004). This concept was defined as the ease of reaching desirable destinations. The concept of accessibility has been developed alongside the concept of mobility, which is concerned with transport systems' performance (Curtis & Scheurer, 2010). The concept of mobility traditionally focussed on the movement of people and vehicles is the concept of accessibility is more multifaceted. According to Litman (2003), there is no single way to measure transportation performance that is both convenient and comprehensive.

When thinking about accessibility, people might directly think of distance, and it is an important component, but accessibility involves much more than geometry (Yoshida & Deichmann, 2009). Farrington (2007) has developed a new concept of accessibility that is more far-reaching than transport mobility. According to him, accessibility is the degree to which something is “get-at-able.” Also, factors like land-use planning and safer streets and stations were taken into account.

The paper of Karampela et al. (2014) discussed the differences between geographical distances and accessibility potential, combining different transportation modes such as ferries and airplanes. The authors state that Islandness is about boundedness and connectedness. The habitats on islands depend on the link with the world outside (Baldacchino, 2004). In the case of ferries, the bigger islands with more tourism have faster, newer, and more frequent sailings than smaller non-touristy islands, which also have fewer connections. When thinking about the accessibility of less touristy places, they also experience connectedness compared to the established touristic places such as Barcelona and Venice.

In the tourism industry, most of the products are sold through online purchases. Differences in demand are explained by the online accessibility of a destination instead of geographical accessibility. Many remote destinations have witnessed a lack of skills and human resources to expand and refine regulation for informal tourism services such as online platforms (Turcov & Nabolsi, 2018). These destinations can also be seen as a sort of island for tourism. Though they do not have geometric boundaries with tourist places, they might experience the same kind of connectedness. Destinations dealing with overtourism, such as Barcelona, Venice, and Amsterdam, are often the first destinations to pop up at websites from travel agencies. As a result, they are easier to find and have a bigger demand circle than more remote destinations. By generating a more significant demand circle for less popular destinations, more competition between them and the popular destinations might occur, and better spreading of tourists might be possible.

As the future is uncertain, most organizations try to reduce their risk by focussing on creating efficiency, profit, and growth in the short term (Sorrels, 2019). This small-scale, short-term thinking might create a more considerable risk on a larger scale in the longer term. Social entrepreneurship may help existing organizations reach a more balanced tourism destination by helping them spreading tourism over space and time (De Lange & Dodds, 2017). By focussing on promoting new attractions instead of the established ones, spreading tourism over the city might be possible.

2.5 Answering research question one

The Tourism Area Life Cycle described by Butler (2006) shows a general pattern in the development of tourist areas. In different stages of this life cycle, there are different impacts on tourist destinations, resulting in different irritation levels as described by Doxey (1975). A balance between environmental, social, and economical must be found to keep the irritation level as low as possible. Economic short-term thinking of organizations in the tourism industry threatens the sustainable future of destinations. Destinations must come up with regulations and restrictions for using the common goods to create a balance between the needs of locals/tourists and the tourism industry.

A common mistake in the tourism industry is the focus on the number of tourists instead of maximizing profit. The focus should rather be on the quality of the tourists instead of the quantity of the tourists. On top of that, there seems to be an unbalance of tourists in place and time. Therefore, spreading more tourists over place and time will benefit the balance between the needs of locals/tourists and the tourism industry. When looking at the quality of tourists, a distinction can be made between different kinds of tourists and the negative impacts they have on locals. Established destinations that are in the consolidation or stagnation phase must change & transform and at the same time avoid risk to rejuvenate and create a more sustainable touristic environment with local involvement.

As more former organized mass tourists switch to individual mass tourism or alternative tourism, a more balanced tourism industry might be possible. The transition arena should be used to create a more sustainable tourism industry. By influencing, adjusting, and using more subtle and evolutionary ways of steering, spreading tourists over place and time might be possible if the information gap with alternative holiday destinations is decreased. Creating a bigger demand circle for remote areas will influence the number of tourists coming to a destination. But therefore, the process of choosing a holiday should be studied.

Since entrepreneurial success, both in meeting social and economic goals includes relevant market research and getting stakeholders involved (Alegre and Berbegal-Mirabent, 2016). Current market trends should be investigated to create a balanced tourism destination. Issues to focus on for alternative destinations in this process are generating more potential tourists, decreasing the distance to the market, and creating a bigger attractive force for alternative destinations. It is necessary to understand future tourists' attitudes and values to make sure the tourism industry becomes more sustainable. In this chapter, we have seen how it is possible to create a more sustainable tourism industry. The next two chapters will focus on trends that might favor social entrepreneurs to develop a sustainable tourism industry.

3. The influence of online platforms

3.1 A changing market

According to Dwyer et al. (2009), the ability to recognize and deal with change is key to a flourishing industry. They state that a wide range of factors and how they interact with each other should be considered. Looking at current trends in the tourism industry, there seem to be some factors out of balance. Uriely (2005) notes that there has been a shift from tourism's displayed objects being the determinants of experience to tourists' subjective negotiation of meaning being the determinant. Larsen (2007) suggests that places do not attract people, nor do they push them away. Studies should instead focus on individuals engaged in tourism or about to engage in tourism.

Since the beginning of the internet, the number of tourists using the internet to search and book their holiday has been growing (Xiang & Gretzel, 2010) (Ho et al., 2012). Consumers make online air-ticket bookings, search for a nice hotel using online travel agencies (OTA's) and pay beforehand for their excursions on the trip without using the traditional travel agencies (Morrison et al., 2001). When searching online, the use of search engines is prevalent. According to Cantillon (2019), the internet has made it easy for tourists to search for new destinations, plan their travel routes, and compare travel agencies. Booking our holiday has never been easier, and sharing experiences about a visited holiday destination is quickly done through reviews and social media, where stories and photos are shared. Because of these means, tourists are more independent and dare to ask for more from destinations, and as a result, destinations have to offer more to stay competitive (Buhalis, 2001). Almost half of the youngsters (46%) identify traveling as a main hobby (European Travel Commission, 2020). By addressing youngsters' desires to travel, sustainable travel organizations could have a considerable advantage as they compete for the younger generation's hearts and minds.

3.2 Generation Z

When watching trends in technology use and booking preferences, it is essential to look at the short term and the longer-term trends. In the past few years, the first group of Generation Z (also known as post-millennials, centennials, pivotal and digital natives) joined adulthood and therefore can arrange their own holidays (Robinson & Schänzel, 2019) (Corbisiero & Ruspini, 2018). According to the European Travel Commission (2020), generation Z was born between 1996 and 2012. Generation Z is considered an essential generation because it represents how broader youth markets the future market (Vukic et al., 2015). This generation is considered the first generation to be digital natives, growing up during changes occasioned by the internet, smartphones, and digital media (Tulgan,2013). Using the internet as their source of information is preferred because it is the fastest and cheapest way to do so without needing someone else's help (Lipowski, 2017). By embracing technology from a very young age, they are used to using devices all the time and worldwide, even when traveling.

Generation Z is representing the greatest share of the global population (European Travel Commission, 2020). This share is significantly smaller in aging Europe, but many new potential tourists are still rejuvenating the tourism industry markets. According to Lee (2009), age is an important factor in the new digital culture. Generation Z is seen as the most significant future marketing challenge because they are expected to be the main driver for innovation and change (Morgan, 2016). This generation will have huge spending power because they will travel a lot by themselves and at the same time influence their family holidays as their parents opt to consult them before booking their holidays (Robinson & Schänzel, 2019).

According to Wood (2013), there are four main characteristics of Generation Z. 1. They have an interest in new technologies. 2. they value ease of use very high. 3. They have the desire to feel safe and have financial security because they have never known a world without war and terrorism (Read & Truelove, 2018). 4. They desire to temporarily escape the realities they face. Generation Z feels profoundly anxious and distrustful because they developed their personalities in a socio-economic environment marked by chaos, uncertainty, and complexity (Sparks & Honey, 2014). However, Generation Z members have developed coping mechanisms and are considered creative, innovative, highly educated, and able to multitask in an increasingly changing environment.

Generation Z will influence tourism marketing from a product-specific perspective (Priporas et al., 2017). Looking at the tourism interactions of Generation Z, some shifts are emerging. According to O'dell (2007), Generation Z is going from a destination-centric model to a traveler-centric model whereby there is more focus on the experiencer. The market search and survey orientation of tourists are from a higher level and become more academic-oriented (Robinson & Schänzel, 2019). Hollinshead (2004) adds that the unilateral coverage is changing to a multi-dimensional and cross-disciplinary coverage.

An important aspect is that Generation Z sees consumption as an expression of individual identity (Francis & Hoefel, 2018) and uniqueness is valued higher (European Travel Commission, 2020). Generation Z will prefer experiences over possessions and search for open-minded and off-the-beaten-path locations (Expedia, 2017). Combined with the development of more ethical concerns, this might lead to a shift in consumption. The European Travel Commission (2020) report states that the intense use of technology combined with nervousness around issues such as climate change and Covid-19 makes Generation Z more aware of the importance of physical and mental health compared to their predecessors.

The destinations relying on mass tourism are characterized by an aging demographic, and this might, together with new tourism from Generation Z, transform tourism destinations. However, Generation Z might need a little help from new technological innovations (European Travel Commission, 2020). Destination management organizations should engage with the new generation and understand their perspectives on these issues. European destinations should try to adapt their products and marketing campaigns to this new generation and use multiple platforms.

Future travel behavior will differ between generations (Gardiner et al., 2014). To effectively respond to the changing needs and demands of generations, continuous research on each generation is needed (Robinson & Schänzel, 2019). Generation Y is likely to travel for recreation and visit places considered "cool" Generation Z seems to be more interested in new, unique experiences instead (Kearney, 2017). This transition might be in favor of sustainable tourism.

Finally, Generation Z's aspirations to improve the world around them should be used to move away from the pattern of "growth for the sake of it," which led to overtourism towards a more sustainable level. Technology adoption, especially mobile platforms, can engage in the needed dynamic dialogue between suppliers and consumers to support this transition (Law et al., 2014).

3.3 Accessibility and digital transformation

As generation Z gets older and older generations are becoming more technology-independent, organizations continue to invest in IT (Zhitomirsky-Geffet & Blau, 2016). According to Toh et al. (2011), the internet is generally considered the best source at the lowest rate. The number of people who are shopping online has increased heavily, making companies more aware of the importance of IT acceptance (Halilovic & Cicic, 2013). They see it as a precondition for achieving higher productivity, which is in line with Vrontis et al. (2016), who state that technological advancements are continuous and impact both the markets and consumer experience. These impacts will be beneficial for both parties since they can improve the consumer's real-life experience and decision making and at the same time improve the collection of information for markets, provide opportunities for the development of new products and improve the communication with consumers (Priporas et al., 2017).

Given the potential beneficial impacts of technologies for companies, much research has been conducted on Generation Z's work attitude and their work satisfaction and buying behavior, but spending free time and relaxing activities did not get that much attention until the last few years. (Negrușa & Toader, 2018). Tourism policies are becoming more focused on digital transformation opportunities. In the past few years, there has already been a shift from creative communication towards manipulating and analyzing information (Turcov & Nabolsi, 2018). According to the European Travel Commission (2020), consumers might prefer to book their holiday using a desktop because the larger screen makes it easier to compare dates, prices, and navigability. However, before consumers book their holiday, a whole process of (online) search and influences occurs (Constantinides & Fountain, 2008). Generation Z is mostly shopping online. Making much use of apps makes it very important for marketers to realize that their consumer behavior is related to smart purchases (Priporas et al., 2017). This new trend of broad online search before purchasing is a challenge for tourism professionals and requires rethinking tourism models (Haddouche and Salomone, 2018).

According to Wang et al. (2011), the number of app users is increasing, and therefore apps are becoming more influential on tourism travel decisions. Tourists are getting more independent, and consequently, they are less dependent on packaged deals (Buhalis & Law, 2008). There tends to be a shift to a more individualistic travel decision pattern. As more and more people use online platforms, apps, and social media (Wood, 2013), more people can use these measures to find alternative destinations. The information about the purchase of goods such as hotels is almost always sufficient. However, it is nearly impossible to experience a place before staying there (Jimura & Lee, 2020). To get to know the destination as best as possible, tourists will collect information, e-word of mouth, and pictures as much as possible before taking off (Jimura & Lee, 2020).

The places, activities, and attractions of a destination shown on websites and other platforms are described as the content. Tourists want to obtain more information about the destination and the services at the destination. Tourism brings tourists to the content, but the media gets the content to the tourists (VROM, 2016). Therefore, if the media would focus on more sustainable tourism products, tourists' travel behavior might favor sustainable tourism. However, many remote destinations have witnessed a lack of skills and human resources to expand and refine regulation for informal tourism services such as online platforms (Turcov & Nabolsi, 2018). This lack of skills and human resources gives them a disadvantage when competing with cities like Barcelona and Venice. Less touristy destinations are fewer times mentioned on online platforms because investments made on popular destinations must be earned back and are considered more profitable (Odunga, 2005).

Suppose the difference in connectedness between these measures and traditional OTA's is declining. In that case, Tourists are expected to choose balanced alternative destinations over unbalanced, overtouristic destinations increasingly. The force of authentic places is getting stronger among the new generations. With this, the content of apps and online platforms can play an essential role for sustainable tourism if used correctly. By employing temporary principles and practices that meet the new generation's digital practices, less technically enabled tourism destinations can benefit and reduce the difference with the established destinations (Skinner et al., 2018). A higher connectedness to online platforms will result is a higher number of Generation Z towards alternative destinations given the attractive force of the authenticity from alternative destinations.

3.4 Apps & social media

There have already been debates on how to use social media marketing in tourism research. However, social media's role in sustainable tourism marketing and communication did not get that much attention so far (Cheng et al., 2017). Our society has become more networked, and we are using our smartphones more and more in societal practices, none more so than in travel (Dickinson et al., 2014). For Generation Z, social media is not so much about Sharing but rather about consuming and connecting (Google, 2016).

Social media has started to influence users and replace traditional information sources (Jepsen, 2006)(Xiang & Gretzel, 2010). Consumers are motivated to read online hotel reviews because of their convenience and quality, risk reduction, and social reassurance (Kim & Mattila, 2011). However, direct word-of-mouth and one's own experiences are more resilient and influential when traveling to a well-known destination (Jacobsen & Munar, 2012). According to Constantinides & fountain (2008), social media might influence the buying behavior process. Online purchasing is generally more accepted when websites offer higher levels of control (Liang & Lim, 2011), and social media might give purchasers this higher level of control.

Consumers tend to rely on other travelers' experiences to decrease their uncertainty, which fits with Generation z's desire to feel safe (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005) (Fotis et al., 2012) (Wood, 2013). Cox et al. (2009) state that social media is perceived as less trustworthy than traditional information sources. This is in line with Fotis et al. (2012), who stated that advertisements on social media are perceived as less trustworthy. However, this does not mean that the photos and videos uploaded on social media do not generate interest to viewers and become a part of the viewer's travel plans (White, 2010).

Fotis et al. (2012) found that 45% of their respondents searched for ideas on where to go on holidays using social media, and 42% seek ideas and information on excursions and other leisure activities. Fotis et al. (2012) also found that most consumers made changes to their original holiday plans after getting information from other travelers, reviews, photos, videos, and other social media information. The information shared by friends and relatives is considered the best, followed by other travelers who traveled to the desired destination. As Generation Z's share is increasing, these percentages are likely to become much higher shortly (Lee, 2009). Apps and social media might be the primary driver of new ideas and innovations (Morgan, 2016).

Advanced technologies have led to more efficient travel booking mechanisms that allow booking a holiday faster and cheaper (Gardiner, Grace, & King, 2014). According to Xiang and Grezel (2010), modern tourists are influenced by social media when deciding where to go. At the same time, Generation Z consumer's behavior has evolved together with these technologies (Mignon, 2013). Therefore, Generation Z is in a continuous search for opportunities with an inclination towards last-minute decisions using as many low-cost services as possible. As a result of these trends, introducing mobile-friendly apps and engaging in partnerships with different booking platforms would be wise to do according to the European Travel Commission (2020).

The travel domain is proven to be a fertile ground for smartphone apps (Adobe Systems Incorporated, 2010). The integration of social media into the traditional distribution channels in the tourism industry is likely to increase. Online platforms such as Facebook will generate their own developed search tools, allowing companies and organizations to use it as their distribution channel (Law et al., 2014). Since referrals on social media and networking sites have a more prolonged effect than traditional advertising, engagement via social media can attract more tourists (Dubey, 2012). Therefore, if we want to change travel behavior to decrease overtourism, focussing on apps and other online platforms might be crucial to change travel behavior and decrease overtourism.

As Dwyer et al. (2009) already stated, the ability to recognize and deal with change is key to a flourishing industry. To let alternative destinations flourish, they should respond to the change in the holiday search Generation Z is making. According to Swarbroke & horner (1999) and Styhre (2004), Finding the proper holiday destination is a problem-solving process. The information gap of tourists should be filled to decrease overtourism. However, concerning Generation Z, this information gap might already be filled before they actively start to search for a holiday. As Generation Z's share of tourists is growing and informal information sources like friends and relatives, other travelers, and social media are perceived as more valuable, Social media might be a primary driver of change in tourist behavior. According to Fotis et al. (2012), Social media does not only influence users when narrowing down their holiday choice. It is an ongoing process of comparing and sharing experiences, even when there is no trip ahead.

4. The impact of COVID-19

4.1 How does COVID-19 hit the tourism industry?

Sustainable development in tourism depends on its ability to adapt to emerging trends, for example, climate change, political shifts, technological innovations, and social changes (Turcov & Nabolsi, 2018). With the Covid-19 virus, we have a new challenge for tourism to adapt to. Epidemics and pandemics are two of the most frightening events for travelers and the tourism industry. Travelers play a significant role in transferring epidemics or pandemics between locations (Hollingsworth, Ferguson, & Anderson, 2006). Therefore traveling must be decreased or adapted to minimize the effects of a virus-like COVID-19 on the tourism industry. In this part, the impact of COVID-19 will be discussed as well as the urgency for governance, tourists' travel behavior, the opportunities and the trust that is necessary to let COVID-19 have a positive effect on tourism.

COVID-19 has had a massive impact on 2020, with whole nations going into lockdown and shutting down their economies. At this point, it is not possible to estimate the economic impact of COVID-19 because the course and duration are still unknown, and predictions are hard to make (Uğur & Akbıyık, 2020) (TrekkSoft & Arival, 2020). Pandemics rarely affect all economies in the same manner (Duncan & Scott, 2005). The tourism industry may be affected differently compared to other industries, and there might also be differences between countries. After the first wave of the virus, many people have already been on vacation again. However, the tourism industry is still in the early stages of recovery, while the second wave's impact cannot be determined yet (European Travel Commission, 2020). National travel organizations are expecting to face some challenges in the coming months, including maintaining liquidity and viability of tourism businesses (and preventing closures), limiting the loss of jobs, and reacting to the effects of successive waves of COVID-19 (European Travel Commission, 2020).

COVID-19 is considered a health and economic crisis with long-term effects (UNCTAD, 2020) (Brimmer et al., 2020). Governments have focused on slowing down the spread of the virus and the virus's health aspect. Through measurements such as lockdowns and the closure of borders, many industries are impacted as well as personal services, resulting in inside shocks on the demand and supply side. The pandemic mostly impacts international tourism, with 850 million to 1.1 billion fewer tourists estimated this summer (UNWTO, 2020). Countries with small domestic markets, a low degree of export diversification, and remoteness are highly vulnerable to the impacts of COVID-19 (UNCTAD, 2020) (IATA, 2020). These economies are likely to have recorded losses without alternative sources of foreign exchange revenues necessary to service external debts and pay for imports. Remote destinations that tourists can only access through air and sea transportation are not feasible for many international tourists (UNCTAD, 2020). As this impact of the virus on the future is uncertain, significant setbacks in key industries such as cruise and airlines are expected. The availability and accessibility of transportation to such destinations will profoundly impact different tourism industry destinations in the short term and probably also in the long term as tourism is likely to recover more slowly than other industries (WTTC, 2020).

As a result of the numerous interactions the tourism industry has at a destination, such as socio-cultural, political, and technological interactions, changes in these dimensions will also impact the tourism industry (Haedrich et al., 2010). Destinations' development will not be linear as restrictions will continue to be eased and tightened, and this development will be depending on the total economic recovery (TrekkSoft & Arival, 2020).

It is expected that countries and regions with practical tests, track, and isolation systems, will perform relatively well, though the overall weakness of global demand will hold them back (OECD, 2020). Developing and emerging tourism economies might gain a more significant share of the market when acting on the changing demand. Health and safety precautions are now a more significant factor in where tourists choose their destination. According to (PATA 2020), 72% of travelers take a destination's culture of social responsibility towards preventing the spread of the virus into account before choosing a destination. 73% try to avoid crowded places when traveling. Tourists seem to be more confident about traveling to places where other people can be minimized or controlled in a way that lowers the risk of spreading the virus. As tourists are increasingly adopting responsible practices, the tourism industry must adapt, and destinations will be more resilient (Soni, 2020). The question is whether this is only a temporary issue or a trend in the long term. If this trend continues, this might be beneficial for both remote destinations and destinations experiencing overtourism.

4.2 The urgency for governance during the COVID-19 era

Tourism is an essential income and employment source for both developed and developing countries (UNCTAD, 2020). The industry is not well prepared to manage crises and disasters (Wang & Ritchie, 2012). However, the decrease in arrivals has more devastating consequences for developing countries, as tourism accounts for more than half of some regions' GDP. All governments must develop a resilient and adaptive strategy, as the recovery is likely to be volatile and uneven, and new information emerges continuously (Brimmer et al., 2020). According to TrekkSoft & Arival (2020), this strategy should contain four phases. The first phase is the lockdown, in which the demand is zero as non-essential travel is halted. In the second phase, easing, travel restrictions start easing, and travel demands return slowly. In the third phase, the economy recovers, and therefore the travel demand is growing as well, and in the final phase, recovery, the travel demand approaches pre-COVID levels.

As mentioned before, there are three areas considered in transition management, the market arena, the policy arena, and the transition arena. In the short term, protecting people and maintaining a healthy tourism industry is essential (UNCTAD, 2020). Considering the tourism industry, the market arena often has an ineffective response, or recovery strategies lack planning and an overreliance on government funding and support (Jiang et al. 2019). Governments should try to move quickly from subsidizing liquidity to incentivizing sustainable recovery and innovation (Asaf & Scuderi, 2020). Governments could, for instance, provide funding for promoting tourism destinations if these destinations are ready for the long-term effects of COVID-19. As a result of COVID-19, there is now an ever-greater need to develop a holistic approach for the tourism industry (Spalding et al., 2020), and for tourism to be ready for the long term, innovations are needed.

Governments must find a balance between public health and the economy (Brimmer et al., 2020) (UNCTAD, 2020). Restarting the economy too fast will lead to risking public health and potentially new lockdowns, as COVID-19 is considered highly infectious and can mutate quickly (Uğur & Akbıyık, 2020). Restarting the economy too late will even further damage the economy, resulting in more unemployment and bankruptcies. Developing and emerging-market economies often rely on tourism, and those markets are expecting to deteriorate due to COVID-19 (OECD, 2020). These economies require international help to sustain economic activity as the health crisis's end is in sight. Changes in travel and tourism after COVID-19 will probably be driven by a combination of destination availability, regulatory change, and consumer choice (Spalding et al., 2020). In the next section, the focus will be on the latter.

4.3 tourists' travel behavior during the COVID-19 era

The travel intentions of tourists will play an essential role in the economic recovery. According to Polat et al. (2020), trust and perceived risks are essential in uncertain situations and play a critical role in the willingness to travel. Also, the perceived value of a holiday determines the willingness to travel. The perceived value is defined as the profit or loss in the process of exchange between perceived benefits and perceived costs (Lovelock, 2008). Due to COVID-19, the perceived benefits of visiting a destination might be lower due to restrictions, and perceived costs might be higher because of the limited transfer modes. On top of that, society's social norms put pressure on a person to travel or not to travel (Ajzen, 1991). With governments strongly advising travelers not to go, this social pressure will only increase.

According to Dumicic et al. (2016), communicating affordable price images to tourists during a financial crisis can enhance a destination's competitive market position in times of recession. The level of income becomes more important as a determinant of total tourism expenditures. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the total tourism expenditures might partly be influenced by the economic crisis which came along with the virus. However, the perceived risk of traveling could also be considered as an important factor in travel behavior. Governments have taken measures to protect their citizens (Mihai & Toma, 2020), but also citizens themselves are paying attention to the virus's risks. Because of the large number of travel destinations, tourists often choose based primarily on the perception of feeling safe and secure at a destination (Kuschel & Schröder, 2002). COVID-19 has given this perception a whole new perspective, with tourists choosing more remote and in-nature destinations (Mihai & Toma, 2020).

International transfer bans and the restrictions on public gatherings and population mobility have paralyzed tourism (Mihai & Toma, 2020). As traveling during the COVID-19 period is limited, tourists are dependent on markets geographically close to them, making the generally overtouristic destinations suddenly more remote. Therefore, the early stages of recovery in the tourism industry have been locally driven. Domestic visitors will remain key to the industry for at least several months due to travel restrictions and traveler preferences (TrekkSoft & Arival, 2020).

The past has shown that tourism can recover rapidly from global crises (Mihai & Toma, 2020). The speed of tourism's recovery is affected by the tourists' perception of risk when traveling (Asaf & Scuderi, 2020). Old habits of travelers will positively affect travel intentions in the COVID-19 era (Polat et al., 2020), meaning that people's travel intentions will increase if conditions remain relatively constant. The question remains whether tourists' behavior will also return to the pre-pandemic situation. Sustainable forms of tourism will be preferred in the short term. People feel more need to go out in nature after a long period of restrictions and prefer outdoor activities, as social distance can be guaranteed (Mihai & Toma, 2020) (TrekkSoft & Arival, 2020). It is necessary to show tourists the benefits of spreading tourism and market diversification in the short term and the long term. This market diversification can reduce dependence on a limited number of source markets, such as Barcelona and Venice (Asaf & Scuderi, 2020).

Since COVID-19 appeared recently, there are no studies that can thoroughly analyze the pandemic's effects. However, we can compare the current situation with previous epidemics and pandemics (Mihai & Toma, 2020). If past crises guide the current pandemic, the economic effect will boost online channels, and international air travel will resume (TrekkSoft & Arival, 2020). After the financial crisis, global online hotel bookings grew twice as fast as the hotel industry overall. Online travel agencies grew as tourists were searching and comparing deals. Similar trends are expected after the COVID-19 lockdown (TrekkSoft & Arival, 2020). This time, the opportunities seem to be in the undiscovered alternative tourism destinations. However, to realize the preferred scenario out of the framework, tourist behavior should be adjusted. A quick Anticipation of new trends and consumption patterns towards sustainable tourism might make it possible for the tourism industry to get something good out of a bad situation. New media can play an essential role in spreading information during public health crises, especially in digitized societies (Lin & Bautista, 2016).

4.4 Opportunities during the COVID-19 era

We have all felt the impact of COVID-19 on our everyday lives. The pandemic has resulted in many restrictions we have to deal with, including our travel behavior. However, these restrictions have also led to a range of benefits, for instance, for the natural environment. Venice's canals have begun to run clear and coastal fish stocks are recovering because of the decrease in transportation over the water (Bennet et al., 2020) (Braga et al., 2020). Also, the CO_2 emissions of the world have reduced to the level it was ten years ago (Spalding et al., 2020). According to Becken & Carmignani (2020), COVID-19 can help transition from long-distance mass-transit holidays to short-distance transit holidays, which is needed to mitigate climate change. Just as with natural sustainability, COVID-19 can also play an essential role in tourist destinations' social sustainability. Destinations should consider the opportunities COVID-19 brings to reshape the tourism industry, with lower numbers of visitors and nature and cultural heritage playing a central role in the recovery process (Spalding et al., 2020).

Recessions often result in restructuring and, therefore, a more resilient economy (OECD, 2020). Periods of crisis are a challenge for society and provide new entrepreneurship opportunities (OECD, 2020). Innovative start-ups and businesses that emerge in periods of crisis tend to rely heavily on digital technologies. For example, WhatsApp, Airbnb, and Uber were founded just after the Global crisis. New initiatives can help address the constraints created by economic conditions and respond to changing preferences and needs. In the case of overtourism, new initiatives are needed to make traveling during the pandemic possible. This might be beneficial for the economic conditions of the tourism industry and lead to more balanced tourism. In the short term, flexible prices, terms, and conditions can reduce financial risks (Asaf & Scuderi, 2020), but also non-price strategies can change customers' perception of products.

New safety norms and technologies are often mentioned, as well as reducing personal interactions. With fixed numbers of guests and other strategies, hotels and other enterprises in the tourism industry could reduce the risks of spreading COVID-19. However, as mentioned before, this is not a good solution in the long term.

As broad and representative surveys that take COVID-19 into account will not deliver data until 2021, it is hard to make statements about the virus's influence on the acceleration of technology by businesses (OECD, 2020). Though, businesses are taking up digital tools and making greater use of technologies to operate during the pandemic. Businesses are using digital technologies to help employees stay in touch with each other, but these technologies can also be used to communicate with their customers (OECD, 2020). The trend towards online shopping is with COVID-19 likely to continue at an even faster rate as offline bookings have become less practical (TrekkSoft & Arival, 2020) (OECD, 2020).

Factors outside the tourism industry's control, such as government restrictions and infection rates, will have a massive effect on destinations' recovery (Soni, 2002). However, the promotion of health and safety practices will be essential for growing tourism numbers. Health and safety practices are easier to facilitate for nature and rural destinations compared to urbanized destinations. Therefore it is expected that nature and rural destinations will gain a more significant share of the market when acting on the changing demand.

COVID-19 has suddenly and strongly impacted many business environments, and digital innovations show their potential (OECD, 2020). For instance, many attractions use required timed ticketing as a safety regulation, which is only available online (TrekkSoft & Arival, 2020). Those attractions have limited capacity due to COVID-19 restrictions, which is disadvantageous, but this innovation also results in limited time spent waiting in lines and less face-to-face contact with operators (TrekkSoft & Arival, 2020). The same measures can be taken at destinations that experience overtourism. COVID-19 could be a measure to change the mindset of tourism enterprises and tourists and spread tourism over more destinations and time, but therefore trust in governmental policies is necessary.

4.5 The COVID-19 effect: Sustainable tourism or rally round the flag?

High levels of trust are needed to implement restrictive policies and public compliance (Van Bavel et al., 2020). The consequences of COVID-19 and the government measures related to them are likely to influence governments' levels of trust (Devine et al., 2020). Higher levels of public trust make it easier to implement restrictive policies in democratic systems. Also, public compliance with health policies is positively related to governmental trust (Van Bavel et al., 2020). The perceived risk of COVID-19 is lower when inhabitants trust their governments but are higher when science and medical professionals' trust is lower (Toshkov et al., 2020).

According to Devine et al. (2020), trust is a double-edged quality, whereby some trust might promote good governance. However, too much trust may lead to (naively) thinking that a government effectively manages the pandemic when it is not. The latter can be reinforced when a social group's dominant opinion favors the government and its restrictions (Goldstein & Wiedeman, 2020). Also, cities and countries' developments in a comparable situation will influence these social groups (De Vries et al.,2020). When thinking of vote choice, policy preferences, and political behavior, COVID-19 is likely to impact. The question is whether these impacts are permanent or will dissipate. According to Schraff (2020), the Netherlands' lockdown did not increase trust. Instead, it was a rally round the flag effect caused by the rising number of infected people. Rally round the flag means a temporary rise of trust in political institutions and actors, mostly in times of war and crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Trust and higher compliance are related to mortality rates (Han et al., 2020) (Olsen & Hjorth, 2020). Implementation of lockdown measures will positively affect public trust, but if people personally experience COVID-19, either by themselves or people close to them, the public trust will decrease (Devine et al., 2020).

An important distinction to be made is whether the trust for policies is based on the rationality of affectivity (Devine et al., 2020). In times of crisis, the trust might be rational as it responds to real-world factors such as rising infection rates. However, as fundamental determinants of trust are undermined, it is the question of whether this is because of the affective nature of the trustor because common determinants of trust such as the economy are considered less critical. If the latter is true, it will be harder for governments to maintain restrictive policies when the perceived risk of COVID-19 will decline. The fundamental determinants of trust are becoming more important again. This development is also likely to influence tourists' travel behavior as the perceived risk of traveling is related to travelers' intention to travel (Wolf et al., 2019).

It is for governments easier to maintain their policies if the compliance has an affective nature. There will still be public compliance for restrictions once the perceived risk of COVID-19 is lower in this scenario. Previous research has shown that disaster generally harms destination images (Huanga et al., 2020) (Wang, 2017). Tourists naturally try to avoid destinations that are perceived as risky. Instead, they try to postpone their holiday, choose other destinations, minimalize their risk on location or cancel the whole trip (Osland et al., 2017). According to (Matiza, 2020) we can expect that because of COVID-19, the perceived risk of traveling will be higher post the pandemic. Therefore, the recovery of global tourism might be disturbed in short- to mid-term. The recovery of a destination will be dependent on its ability to manage perceived risk factors (Cui et al., 2016). It might be easier to reach an acceptable threshold for alternative and remote destinations than touristic hotspots.

4.6 Online platforms + COVID-19 = A kickstart to solve overtourism?

Marketing may have a huge, positive effect on sustainable tourism by influencing tourists' behavior after the COVID-19 era. As the risk perception is higher because of COVID-19, there is an increase in information searches on social media (Huynh, 2020). Tourists try to seek more information to support their consumptive tourism decisions (Fuchs & Reichel, 2011). According to Aliperti & Cruz (2019), post-crisis risk communication greatly influences travel behavior by promoting awareness, motivating tourists' conative behavior, and creating trust. Tourists tend to have a home-is-saver-than-abroad bias (Wolf et al., 2019). By promoting domestic destinations as a short-term solution, domestic destinations get a kickstart for the global tourism industry in the medium term. The same scenario can occur for alternative destinations compared to overtouristic destinations. By promoting alternative and remote destinations in the short-term, they might get a kickstart for the medium-term. This development will be beneficial for the spreading of tourism and the decrease of overtourism in the long term.

5. Research design

5.1 Hypothesis empirical part

In Chapter Two, the first research question (To what extent is a balance possible between the needs of locals/tourists and the tourism industry?) is discussed and formed a base for the more concrete study of trends in chapter three. Based on the literature, trends, and other information sources in chapters three and four, the hypothesis of research questions two and three are s formulated in this chapter.

5.1.1 The influence of Online Platforms

Chapter three shows that since the tourism industry is mainly acting online nowadays and traveling is more accessible, the geographical distance between actors is getting less important compared to online accessibility and attraction forces. The switch from a destination-centric model towards a more experience-centric model caused by younger generations might benefit the accessibility of alternative destinations on online platforms. Decreasing the online platforms' difference might generate more competition between the markets and, therefore, a shift from organized mass tourism towards individual mass tourism and alternative tourism. Younger generations can make more use of travel-specific strategies using social media and are therefore less dependent on travel agencies. By employing temporary principles and practices that meet the new generation's digital practices, less technically enabled tourism destinations might benefit and reduce the difference with the established destinations (Skinner et al., 2018). Based on chapter three, the following hypothesizes are formulated:

H1: Online accessibility has an influence on the number of tourists at one destination

H2: Online platforms are becoming increasingly influential on tourists' travel behavior

H3: Due to online platforms, the process of finding a holiday destination is changing in favor of alternative destinations

5.1.2 The influence of COVID-19

During COVID-19, differences in socio-cultural, political, and technological natures of destinations will lead to different impacts per location. Destinations are likely to have a non-linear economic recovery as restrictions will continue to be eased and tightened. Health and safety practices are expected to be a more significant attraction force to potential tourists. Destinations are expected to find a new balance between public health and the economy. Changes in destination availability, regulatory change, and consumer choice are expected. As it is expected that finding a balance between public health and economy is easier for smaller, more resilient, or more innovative destinations, these destinations are likely to become more attractive in the near future for tourists, and tourists' organizations could adapt to this by making these destinations more accessible using their websites and apps. Based on chapter four, the following hypothesizes are formulated:

H1: Due to COVID-19, the travel intentions to crowded, touristic destinations are decreasing, and alternative destinations are becoming relatively more popular.

H2: Due to COVID-19, the travel behavior of tourists is adjusted in favor of sustainable destinations

H3: Due to COVID-19, the attractive force of touristic destinations will decline, and the attractive force of alternative destinations will increase.

5.2 Epistemological & methodological underpinning

This chapter presents the methods used in this research and discusses the reasons for and implications of the chosen research design. This research aims to explore and describe different perspectives on how to solve overtourism. This research uses economic geography theories to understand better the relationship between online platforms, COVID-19, and overtourism. The literature is used as starting point for the online survey. Through systematic observation of hypothesized connections between variables, theory can be created, expanded, and refined (Allen et al., 2009). Through qualitative research, reality can be understood based on raw data analysis (Durieux Zucco et al., 2020).

5.3 Description of the data collection

This research is developed in four stages: a literature review, data collection, and analysis of the collected data, and finally, the discussion and conclusion. The literature review is used to support the research, select appropriate variables, identify relevant hypotheses, and support the data collection instrument's construction. (Allen et al., 2009). This study conducted a comprehensive search of literature retrieved from online sources and databases such as Springer and Google Scholar. Literature related to COVID-19 has to be scrutinized because much of the topic's data are incomplete or subject to considerable uncertainty (Devine et al., 2020).

The data collection for this research on overtourism consists of qualitative data. The target audience is tourists, people who have traveled in the past and planning to travel in the future. The data was collected using a questionnaire, which consisted of 34 questions, divided into two parts. The first part focuses on the influence of online platforms, the second part of the questionnaire on the influence of COVID-19. Participants were approached between December 2020 and January 2012. Because of the pandemic, an online questionnaire was used to avoid any unnecessary physical contact. The questionnaire was designed in Typeform and spread using different online platforms and emails. By spreading the questionnaire online, many potential participants can be reached, however fewer people are willing to participate, and people tend to quit the questionnaire easier. Based on the data collected by Typeform, From the 468 approached participants, 293 have started the survey, and only 157 have completed the survey with an average completion time of 8:30. The 153 respondents are considered enough to analyze the data and come up with valuable insights. However, it might be beneficial to collect data in future research not (only) using online tools. By doing so, potential biases can be avoided.

5.4 Analysis of the data

Before the results could be analyzed, data was processed in STATA. Extra operational variables were created using data from travel agencies and the online survey. Multiple statistical analysis types were chosen based on the research objectives and a number of dependent and independent variables. The selected dependent variable in the section of the online platform is the crowdedness of a destination. The independent variables are a destination’s online accessibility through websites, the perceived usefulness of information sources, tourists’ time for a holiday, and social media use. The selected dependent variable in the COVID-19 section is tourists’ perceived risk of traveling during COVID-19. The selected independent variables are travel distance, the time and place tourists prefer to travel, and transport mode. The used statistical tests are Linear regression, logistic regression, Chi-square tests, T-tests, and crosstabs.

5.5 Ethics

The surveys were conducted using an online questionnaire, whereby the respondents remain anonymous to ensure the respondents' privacy. At the beginning of the survey, it was stated that participation in this research is entirely voluntary and that any respondent may stop taking the survey at any time. The respondent had the opportunity to ask questions when questions might have been unclear. The collected data is treated as confidential and is only used for this Master Thesis.

6. Empirical analysis & results

6.1 Descriptive statistics.

Since comparison is made between different generation groups, participants of all ages have been approached. Of the153 respondents, 42.8% belonged to Generation Z. The mean age of the respondents was 33, and 60% were female. Most of the respondents live in the Netherlands, but also respondents from countries like Canada, the USA, Peru, and several European countries are included.

Forty-six percent of the respondents have been the most on a nature trip in the past three years, 29% on an individual city trip, 21% went most often to the beach, and only 3% chose most often for an organized city trip. All kinds of accommodation were almost equally popular with campsites' 36% as the highest percentage. Most respondents will probably stay for a long weekend when visiting a city (58%), 20% will stay for a weekend, 13% for a day, 6% for a week or longer, and just 2% for a few hours. Based on these results, we can conclude that almost no respondents can categorize as organized mass tourists. The dataset contains a mix of individual mass tourists and alternative tourists.

From the respondents, 73% agreed that authenticity is important when choosing a destination. To avoid overcrowded destinations, all generations are more willing to change the time to visit the destination (75%) than the destination itself (25%). From Generation Z, 41% are visiting cities in the spring and 46% in the summer. Older generations are more focused on visiting in the spring (58%) than in the summer (26%). Sixty-one percent would choose a more remote destination over an overcrowded destination. Only 13% found measures taken on crowded destinations to avoid overcrowded places sufficient. These percentages clarify a shift in tourists' interests, and people are willing to contribute to a more sustainable tourism industry.

6.2 The relationship between overtourism and websites

The first hypothesis on online platforms is that online accessibility influences the number of tourists at one destination. Tourists gather as much possible information about several destinations in their problem-solving process of selecting their next holiday destination. More information reduces the risk and enhances the destination's quality (Swarbroke & Horner, 1999). Turcov & Nabolsi (2018) see that many remote destinations witness a lack of skill and human resources to expand and refine information services such as online platforms. More established tourism destinations would have more means to spread information about their destinations. Therefore, they would have more influence on tourists' travel behavior, as tourists tend to travel to the most famous destinations on earth of the reduced risk of a bad holiday (Williams & Balaz, 2014). Following these thoughts, destinations with better online accessibility will be more crowded and are more likely to experience overtourism. Therefore, the first step in the empirical analysis is to analyze whether there is a relationship between crowded destinations and the accessibility of destinations on websites. The accessibility of destinations on websites is the dependent variable, and crowded destinations are the independent variable.

From the 147 respondents, 131 have filled in a destination that is, according to them, the most crowded place they have visited in the last few years. Sixty-four different destinations were mentioned, some only once, others multiple times. The most mentioned cities are Rome (14 times) and Barcelona (11 times). The destinations are compared with the online accessibility of destinations measured by ten websites of online travel agencies: tui.nl; zoover.nl; hostelworld.com; vakantiediscounter.nl; skyscanner.nl; tjingo.nl; prijsvrij.nl; d-reizen.nl; suntip.nl & hotel.com. Destinations found on these websites without using a search bar getting one point per website. The total scores of each destination are compared with the destination's perceived overcrowdedness mentioned by the online survey respondents to determine whether there is a relationship. Because of the assumed linear relation of the two ratio variables, a linear regression was conducted. The F-ratio measures whether the model as a whole has a statistically significant predictive capability and is a useful measure to assess the model’s explanatory power. The F-test's significance is 0.000. We can state with 99% confidence that the model has explanatory power. The R square of the model is 0.4436, which means that the independent variable explains 44,36% of the variance in experienced overtourism, the online accessibility of destinations, respectable result (Pallant, 2005).

Table 1: Linear regression overtourism - websites

Source	SS	df	MS			
					Number of obs =	64
Model	163.74853	1	163.74853		F(1, 149) =	51.23
Residual	198.18897	62	3.19659628		Prob > F =	0.0000
Total	361.9375	63	5.74503968		R-squared =	0.4524
					Adj R-squared =	0.4436
					Root MSE =	1.7879
overtourism freq.	**Coef.**	**Std. Err.**	**t**	**P>t**	**[95% Conf.**	**Interval]**
websites	.6152346	.0859599	7.16	0.000	0.4434032	.787066
_cons	.848846	.2779195	.3.05	0.003	0.2932929	1.404399

There is a linear relationship between the frequency of a destination found on an online travel agency website's homepage and crowded destinations. Every extra time a destination is found on one of the websites, the number of perceived overcrowded experiences on that destination will increase by 0.62. Therefore, the difference in numbers of tourists is expected to increase between alternative destinations and popular destinations that are more often on these websites. Because of the disadvantageous position of alternative destinations on online platforms and the lack of skills and human resources (Turcov & Nabolsi, 2018), there needs to be a transition at online travel agencies. To decrease overtourism, it has to be easier to find alternative destinations.

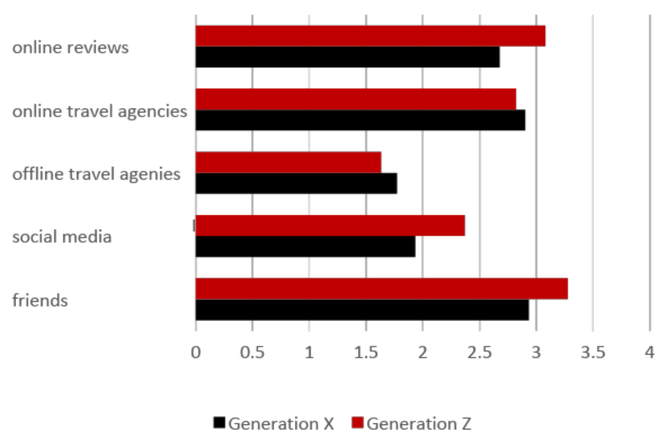
Online accessibility indeed seems to influence the number of tourists at one destination. This is in line with Kaplanidou & Vogt (2006) and Tang et al. (2012, who stated that a high attendance of tourists on websites leads to a more positive attitude towards the destinations shown on it, and therefore the tourists are more likely to visit those destinations. On top of that, the perceived usefulness of a website and satisfaction of an information source determines the future use of the same information source for potential tourists (Chung et al., 2015). Therefore, if tourists continue to use travel agencies' websites, tourists' travel behavior is not likely to change in favor of alternative tourism destinations.

Less technically enabled tourism destinations should employ principles and practices that meet the new generations' practices To reduce the difference in online accessibility with established destinations (Skinner et al., 2018). One of the fundamental aspects in attracting different target groups is responding to the group's perceived usefulness of different information sources. Therefore, the perceived usefulness of different information sources between different generations will be studied in the next section.

6.3 The perceived usefulness of different information sources

The perceived usefulness of different information sources has changed over time. In the past, offline travel agencies were one of the most appreciated information sources. However, they have been overtaken by online information sources (T-test: p-value = 0.000). Although both Generation X and Z are making more use of digital information sources, there is a difference in those digital information sources' perceived usefulness. Social media is perceived as less trustworthy than more traditional information sources, as Cox (2013) and Fotis et al. (2012) stated. This is true for online travel agencies and more informal information sources such as online reviews on TripAdvisor and social media websites. This is in line with Kim & Matilla (2011), who stated that consumers prefer these sources because of quality and risk reduction. On top of that, more informal information sources create social reassurance.

Figure 7: the perceived usefulness of different information sources



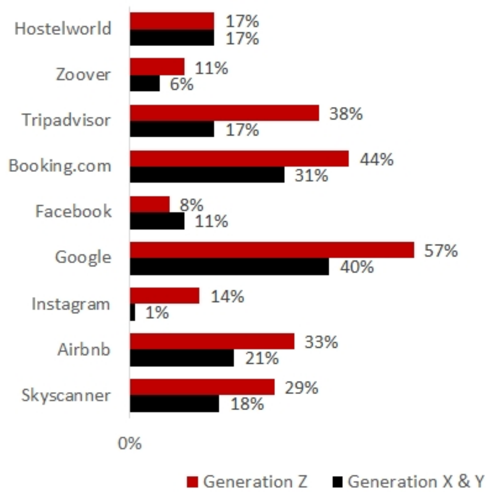
Difference in perceived usefulness:	Pr (T < t)
Online reviews	0.0278*
Online travel agencies	0.0089*
Offline travel agencies	0.7041
Social media	0.0365*
Friends	0.0280*

Friends' recommendations are most important to Generation Z. This generation values friends' opinions significantly higher than older generations. This development aligns with Generation Z's desire to feel safe (Sirakaya & Woodside, 2005) (Wood,2013). Generation Z also values online reviews, social media, and online travel agencies significantly higher, as shown in figure 7.

When zooming in on the difference in online platform use, some platforms are more used by Generation Z than other generations (figure 8). The most significant difference in platform use between Generation Z and other generations is the use of Instagram, with 14% of Generation Z actively using this platform to find a holiday destination and only 1% of other generations. Though 14% is still a low percentage, Instagram and other social media platforms' influence is considered important and will be further analyzed in section 6.5.

Generation Z favors platforms containing reviews and independent opinions such as Tripadvisor more than other generations when searching for a holiday destination, as shown in figure 8. This kind of platform fits better with Generation Z's principles and practices as they are more focused on the total experience of a destination than traditional online travel agencies that are more focused on the accommodation (O'dell, 2007) (Kearney, 2017). Although Airbnb and Skyscanner are not significant at a 95% confidence interval, these platforms fall in the same category, are more often used by Generation Z, and are expected to be more influential in future holiday decision-making.

Figure 8: The difference in online platform use, by generation



Difference in online platform use:	Pr (T < t)
Hostelworld	0.4500
Zoover	0.1307
Tripadvisor	0.0016*
Booking.com	0.0472*
Facebook	0.7134
Google	0.0228*
Instagram	0.0008*
Airbnb	0.0536
Skyscanner	0.0625

*** sig. at the 0,05 level*

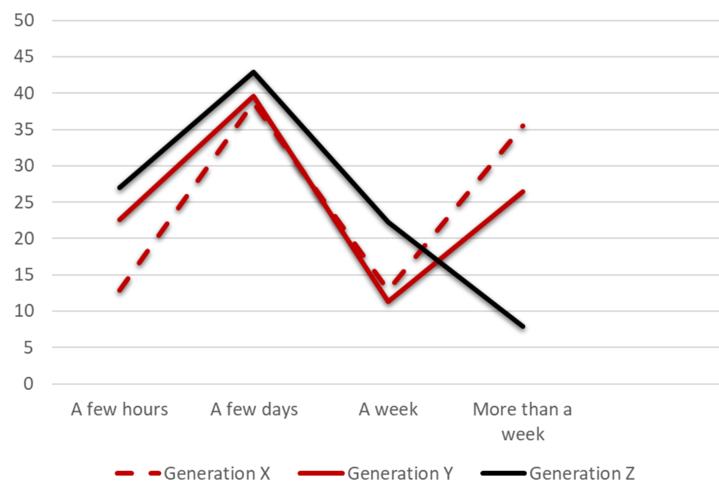
** sig. at the 0,10 level*

Search engines such as Google and Booking.com are also significantly more used by Generation Z than other generations. According to Cantillon (2019) internet has made it easier to find new destinations and compare travel agencies. Generation Z's interest in new technologies combined with the ease of using these search engines makes them an appreciated tool. However, Generation Z's market search is also from a higher level and becomes more and more multidimensional and cross-disciplinary (Robinson & Schänzel, 2019)(Hollingshead, 2004). The influence of this development is analyzed in the next part.

6.4 The search time for a holiday

As mentioned before, there is a relationship between the online accessibility of destinations and overtourism. However, finding a destination is not only depending on the accessibility of that destination. The connectedness to online platforms combined with the number of potential tourists capable and willing to find a destination determines the number of tourists booking a destination. The latter can be translated into search time for a holiday. The more one is willing to find an alternative destination, the longer his search time will be. Looking at figure 10, the relationship between total online search time and generations can be seen. Most tourists (40,8%) have a total online search time of a few days. However, Generation Z has a shorter average search time compared to the other generations. 27% of this Generation Z is only taking a few hours before booking a holiday compared to 22,6% for Generation Y and 13,9% for Generation X. Only 7,9% of Generation Z is taking more than a week to search online for a holiday destination compared to 26,4% and 35,5% from Generation Y and X.

Figure 9: Total online search time for a holiday



The differences in total online search time between generations do not seem to match the differences in online platform use (figure 8), wherein Generation Z seems to use online platforms compared to older generations. How is it possible that generation Z, the generation that is on their phone 24/7, has the shortest search time? Generation Z's online research effectiveness could be why the shorter search time, as Generation Z is considered digital natives (Corbisiero & Ruspini, 2018). However, the argument does not explain the difference in percentages in the category "more than a week." Other characteristical differences might explain this difference. As social media is increasingly about consuming and connecting for younger generations, this might be interesting for alternative destinations to employ on (Google, 2016).

6.5 The influence of social media

From Generation Z, 82% is using Instagram, 72% is using Snapchat (Statista, 2020). Generation Y's percentages are already significantly lower, with 57% Instagram users and 35% Snapchat users. Younger tourists are significantly more on social media, with the exception of Facebook, where generation Y is more active. Looking at these percentages, there might be a relationship between age and precisely knowing one's next holiday destination, even when there is no trip ahead. Hereby is age the dependent variable and precisely knowing your next holiday destination the independent variable.

To check the relationship between precisely knowing your next holiday destination and age, all respondents were asked to fill in the first destination they want to visit or which destination is first on their bucket list. Answers were divided into two groups, precise answers and vague answers. Precise answers contain specific cities, regions, or activities within a country (e.g., skiing in Austria). Vague answers contain continents and country names.

Table 2: Logistic regression bucket list - generations

Bucket list	Coef.	Std. Err.	z	P>z	[95% Conf.	Interval]			
Generations							Log likelihood	=	-93443745
(compared to	*GenZ)*						Number of obs	=	147
GenX	-101.302	.4614578	-2.20	0.028	-1.917461	-.1085797	LR chi2(2)	=	6.43
GenY	-.8118557	.4007346	-2.03	0.043	-1.597281	-.0264303	Prob > chi2	=	0.0402
_cons	1.077.559	.2894419	3.72	0.000	.5102632	1644854	Pseudo R2	=	0.0332

As can be interpreted from the P values of the logistic regression, there is a relationship between precisely knowing one's next holiday destination and age. However, looking at the pseudo R^2, the coefficient of determination between precisely knowing your next holiday destination and age seems to be very low. Therefore, the questions arise whether age alone is a sufficient variable to explain precisely knowing your next holiday. This is because Generation Z interacts daily with innovations on the internet, but also Generation Y and other generations are increasingly interacting (Da Fonseca, 2019). In Fact, travel planning through the internet already increased from 23% in 2007 towards 35% in 2012, and this percentage has only been growing the past few years (Xiang, 2015). Though GenZ is the only generation that exclusively uses online resources, social media is increasingly important as an online information source in tourism (Da Fonseca, 2019)(Qian et al., 2015).

Ideally, collected data about the social media use of respondents was used to answer whether the process of finding a holiday destination is changing in favor of alternative destinations due to online platforms. However, only a small number of the respondents indicated that they used Instagram (10) or Facebook (14) as an information source when finding a holiday. This amount of cases is too small to draw any conclusions on. However, the relationship between knowing your next holiday destination and using it appears to be present. From the respondents that did not use Instagram as an information source, 61% precisely know their next holiday destination. From the respondents who do use Instagram, 90% precisely know their next holiday destination, which is a significant difference at the 90% confidence interval.

Although the data collected from the survey is not sufficient to draw significant conclusions on, it seems to confirm the theory of Fotis et al. (2012) that social media influences users' holiday choice, even when there is no trip ahead. As mentioned in figure 8, 14% of Generation Z actively uses Instagram to search for a holiday. However, users of social media are also passive using these platforms as an information source. This is in line with Beham (2015), who stated that Instagram users are influenced in their holiday choice by content shared by influencers.

According to McCormick (2016), Generation Z places more trust in the opinion of people around them, such as the friends and influencers they follow on Instagram than in marketing. Instagram users influence each other in terms of brand recognition, brand trust, and purchase intention (Da Fonseca, 2019). When social media users increasingly share a destination, it becomes more popular as it is shared by people around them, the trust and, therefore, attraction force of the destination increases. When sustainable destinations become a more known brand on social media platforms such as Instagram, the information gap with overtouristic destinations will decrease, and the perceived risk of a bad holiday when choosing an alternative destination will be reduced (Williams & Balaz, 2014).

Table 3: Crosstab precisely knowing your next holiday destination - Instagram use

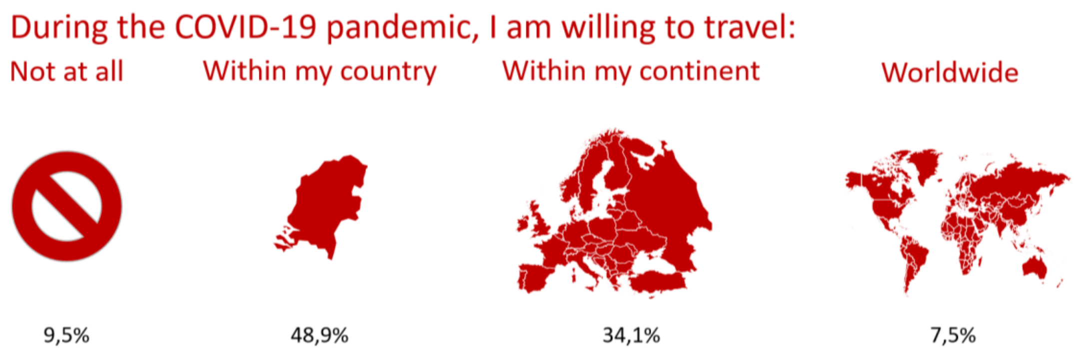
	vague answer	Presice answer	Total		
Not using Instagram	53	84	137	**Pearson chi2(1)**	= 3,2999
	38,69%	*61,31%*	*100%*	**Pr**	= 0,069
Using Instagram	1	9	10	Cramer's V	= 0,1498
	10%	*90%*	*100%*		
Total	54	93	147		
	36,73%	*63,27%*	*100%*		

6.6 The influence of COVID-19

COVID-19 has had a massive influence on the whole world in many different sectors. Also, the tourism industry is heavily damaged, and recovery will be a big project. Restarting the tourism industry too fast will risk public health and potentially new lockdowns, as already mentioned by Uğur & Akbıyık (2020). However, the speed of the recovery is not the only factor that should be taken into account. Not every type of tourism comes with the same risk levels. Tourists play a significant role in the transfer of epidemics or pandemics between locations by traveling. By adapting the travel volume and the distances they travel, the destinations they travel to, and the way they travel to their destinations, the tourism industry might recover faster. Governments will have a great role in transforming the tourism industry to make it possible to travel again. However, the tourists' behavior and destination availability will also be drivers in this process (Spalding et al., 2020).

Tourists are more careful considering traveling during the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on the online survey, 29,5% are willing to travel during the pandemic. Some of the respondents are willing to travel once there is a vaccine available (21%). However, most respondents depend on their willingness to travel on the government's negative travel advice (35%). Once people are traveling again, their choice seems to be rather based on affective trust than rational trust. This is important because, in this scenario, it is easier to maintain public compliance once the perceived risk of traveling during the COVID-19 pandemic is lower. During the pandemic, most tourists are likely to stay within their own country. This is in line with the negative travel advice which only allows people to travel within their own country. About one-third is willing to travel within their continent, and only 7,5% is willing to travel worldwide.

Figure 10: Travel distance during COVID-19



6.7 Tourists' travel behavior after the COVID-19 Pandemic

Touristic destinations should consider the opportunities COVID-19 brings to reshape the tourism industry (Spandling et al., 2020). Once tourists are allowed to travel again, almost all of them are willing to avoid crowded places. 80,6% is willing to avoid crowded places, and only 5,1% is unwilling to avoid crowded places. 59,59% of the respondents are willing to travel at different times of the year, and 66,66% are willing to travel at different times of the day to avoid crowded places. Innovative solutions to spread tourists such as regulated time ticketing are also perceived well. Only 12,42% are not willing to use such solutions.

Looking at different transport modes, the popularity of the car has increased compared to other transport modes. Almost all respondents are still willing to use the car (96%), unlike public transport modes. Before the pandemic, 49% of the Dutch flew to their holiday destination (CBS, 2019). According to the online survey, only 27% are willing to travel using an airplane. This development is in line with data from CBS (2021) that showed a 56% decline in passengers compared to the same period in 2019. The train is doing better compared to the airplane with 41% willing to use this transport mode. However, public transport is perceived as a higher risk and therefore less popular. This trend can also be observed in the Netherlands' daily life, with 75% fewer public transport check-ins in the morning rush hour and even 88% fewer public transport check-ins in the evening rush hour (CBS, 2019).

According to Thrane (2015), if tourists switch from airplane to car, they will choose a more remote destination. Traveling by car allows the tourists to be more independent on where to travel to. No transfers are needed, and more remote destinations are more accessible compared to public transport modes. This aligns with the argument of Soni (2020) that health and safety practices are becoming a more significant attraction force for tourists. The popularity of the car shows a shift in the attractive force of remote destinations, as expected in equation 3. Also, as tourists are increasingly choosing the car, the average travel distance in km is declining (Thrane, 2015). As a result, the scope for international tourists is decreasing as well as the number of arrivals on destinations experiencing overtourism, and an increase of arrivals for more remote destinations, which was also expected in equation 3. The results confirm the argument of PATA (2020) that health and safety practices should be considered a value proposition that should be a marketing weapon for destinations.

7. Conclusions & discussions

7.1 The balance between locals and tourists

Tourists try to apply both intellect and intuition to decision-making when choosing a holiday, but their knowledge is limited (Styhre,2004). The limited knowledge gives organizations in the tourism industry much power over where tourists are going on holiday. Unbalance in the tourism industry is caused by short-term economic thinking, the complexity of managing the commons, the focus on the number of tourists instead of quality, and non-integrated multi-level governance. There must be a transition to create a sustainable tourism industry. Transitions cannot be managed in terms of command and controls, which is common in the policy arena, but rather in influencing and adjusting (Loorbach & Rotmans, 2006). Generation Z seems to be more interested in new, unique and authentic experiences compared to older generations (Kearney, 2017). By addressing youngsters' desires to travel, sustainable travel organizations could have a considerable advantage as they compete for the younger generations' hearts and minds. Technology adoption, especially mobile platforms, can engage in the needed dynamic dialogue between suppliers and consumers to support this transition (Law et al., 2014).

Spreading tourism can be a solution to overtourism if tourists are attracted by new sustainable tourism activities (Lordkipanidze et al., 2005). However, bigger cities and cities where tourist organizations have greater interests are easier to find, and therefore tourists tend to go to these places. Distance to the market determines the fall of the firm's market area. The easier a destination can be reached. By giving the smaller destinations a bigger platform, their competitive position will be better, which will lead to a better spreading of tourists, less overcrowded spaces in overtouristic places, and a better-balanced tourism industry. Therefore, to decrease overtourism, it has to be easier to find alternative destinations.

7.2 Online platforms

Online accessibility can influence the extent to which a destination is known and the potential tourists intending to travel to this destination. Younger generations are able to make more use of travel-specific strategies using social media and are therefore less dependent on travel agencies. Online platforms are becoming increasingly influential on travel behavior. Because Generation Z is getting more interested in authentic experiences and less in visiting known destinations, the number of potential tourists for alternative destinations is expected to increase. By employing temporary principles and practices that meet the new generation's digital practices, alternative destinations can decrease the information gap with established destinations and become more accessible.

The way Social media & apps bring content to tourists is expected to play an essential role in decreasing the perceived risk of less touristic places. Using social media, relatively less information will be shared about touristic places, and the search time for alternative destinations will decrease. As online platforms and especially social media will make alternative destinations more accessible, the number of alternative tourists is expected to increase. The number of potential tourists will not decrease for overtouristic cities. However, these potential tourists are expected to spread more evenly over the different types of destinations. As a result, the perceived negative impacts from tourism are expected to decline at overtouristic destinations, and a more balanced and more sustainable destination will be created.

7.3 COVID-19

COVID-19 is considered a health and economic crisis with long-term effects (UNCTAD, 2020) (Brimmer et al., 2020). Because of the pandemic, tourists are restricted in their destination choices. Many overtouristic destinations are currently unavailable for large flows of tourists, and tourists themselves are also avoiding crowded destinations. Changes in travel and tourism after COVID-19 will probably be driven by a combination of destination availability, regulatory change, and consumer choice (Spalding et al., 2020). Because of COVID-19, the perceived risk of traveling will be higher, even post-pandemic (Matiza, 2020). Like previous recessions and crises, COVID-19 can be an amplifier for restructuring and generating a more resilient tourism industry. Health and safety practices promote a more significant attraction force to potential tourists (Soni, 2020). Tourists seem to be more confident about traveling to more remote places, often in their home country. The car as a transport mode is becoming more popular and fewer tourists are willing to travel by airplane. As tourists are increasingly adopting responsible practices, the tourism industry must adapt, and destinations will be more resilient (Soni, 2020). these changes in travel behavior because of COVID-19 favor sustainable tourism, as the balance between health and economy, is easier to find more remote and spacious destinations. Also, destinations that will come up with innovative ideas to deal with the restrictions are likely to attract more tourists, though it is the question of whether these changes are temporary or will also continue to exist in the long-term.

7.4 Reflections

Due to COVID-19, collecting data using a survey is more complicated. Initially, it was meant to collect data out of different cities which had experienced overtourism. Because of the pandemic, it was not an option to travel to the cities or use help from local institutions. Universities and other schools could not participate because of the many organizational tasks COVID-19 brought them. Alternative data collection methods were needed to select an appropriate number of selected participants. Data was collected using an online questionnaire spread using different digital platforms and the researcher's private network. Although it was attempted to select participants as much as possible randomly, participants' total randomness cannot be guaranteed as some people might not be able to access the online questionnaire. Another limitation of online questionnaires is the fact that the researcher cannot observe people while filling in the survey to ensure they do it correctly (Allen et al., 2009). The context of a phenomenon might be more difficult to understand, and data might not have been robust enough to explain complex issues. However, based on the literature and research design, findings are considered reliable, could be analyzed and generalized.

The questions in the online survey about different information sources could have been formulated differently to be more valuable for the social media section in the empirical part. On top of that, more questions regarding social media use could have been added to research the relationship between social media use and travel behavior by age groups. At the moment of designing the online survey, the importance of social media was underestimated. Therefore, in future research, this relationship should also be studied further. The effect of COVID-19 on travel behaviour and travel intentions is very interesting, and the collected data is perceived as valuable. However, suppose data were collected over different periods of time, for instance, in all three waves of the pandemic. In that case, better estimations could have been made about future travel behavior in the short term, both during and after the rest of the pandemic.

7.4 Future research

Throughout this thesis, several topics arose that could be interesting for further research. This thesis has analyzed to what extent online platforms and COVID-19 can influence overtourism. As tourism would be more evenly spread over several destinations, the former overtouristic destinations will perceive fewer negative impacts from tourists. However, these destinations will also generate less income, and many non-seasonal workers will have to find a new job. Future research should focus on letting the transition to a sustainable tourism industry be economically sustainable for locals tourism workers. Traditional regimes such as the policy arena and market arena have limitations, and therefore the transition arena should manage the transition to a more sustainable tourism industry. Future research should focus on innovative ways to promote alternative holiday destinations to create a sustainable tourism industry in the long term. To better understand online consumer behavior in tourism, perceived trust in travel agencies, brand trust, and brand reputation could be studied. The influence of pictures, videos, and other kinds of content on holiday choice would also be a interesting research topic.

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9. Appendix

Online survey

1

What kind of holiday have you been on the most in the past 3 years?

49.0%	**nature**
28.4%	**individual city trip**
18.6%	**beach**
3.9%	**organized city trip**

2

At which holiday destination did you experience the most over-crowded spaces?

3

What kind of accomodation do you prefer?

41.2%	**camping**
32.4%	**Airbnb/hostel**
26.5%	**hotel**

4

When searching for a holiday destination, I find authenticity important:

Strongly disagree
0%

Disagree
0%

Somewhat disagree
4%

Somewhat agree
26.7%

Agree
48.5%

Strongly agree
20.8%

5

When I visit a city, I will probably stay there for:

61.2%
A Long weekend

19.4%
A Weekend

12.6%
A day

4.9%
A week or longer

1.9%
A few hours

6

When I visit a city, I will probably visit during:

50.5%
Spring

35.9%
Summer

11.7%
Autumn

1.9%
Winter

7

Statement: Crowded places have a negative impact on my experience of holiday destinations

Strongly disagree
0%

Disagree
2%

Neutral
8.8%

Agree
25.5%

Strongly agree
30.4%

8

Statement: I found the measures taken on crowded destinations to avoid overcrowded places sufficient

Strongly disagree
3.9%

Disagree
14.7%

Neutral
36.3%

Agree
32.4%

Strongly agree
2.9%

9

Statement: If I knew beforehand a holiday destination would be that crowded, I would have chosen an alternative.

Strongly disagree
3.9%

Disagree
9.8%

Somewhat disagree
20.6%

Somewhat agree
26.7%

Agree
26.5%

Strongly agree
16.7%

10

If I knew beforehand a holiday destination would be that crowded, I would have chosen an alternative...

74.8%
Time to visit the destination

25.2%
Destination

11

When I plan for a holiday/trip, my order of searching is:

60.2%

Type of holiday, destination, accommodation

26.2%

Destination, type of holiday, accommodation

9.7%

Destination, accommodation, type of holiday

1.9%

Accommodation, type of holiday, destination

1.0%

Accommodation, destination, type of holiday

1.0%

Type of holiday, accommodation, destination

12

When I am searching for a holiday destination, I am using:

Google

73.0%

Booking.com

49.0%

Tripadvisor

37.0%

AirBnB

36.0%

Skyscanner

31.0%

Zoover

12.0%

Instagram

8.0%

Hostelworld

6.0%

Facebook

1.0%

13

Statement: Friends are a useful information source when choosing a holiday destination.

Strongly disagree
1%

Disagree
2.9%

Neutral
12.7%

Agree
32.4%

Strongly agree
51%

14

Statement: Social media are a useful information source when choosing a holiday destination.

Strongly disagree
7.8%

Disagree
21.4%

Neutral
35%

Agree
23.3%

Strongly agree
12.6%

15

Statement: Offline Travel Agencies are a useful information source when choosing a holiday destination.

Strongly disagree
19.6%

Disagree
21.6%

Neutral
35.3%

Agree

19.6%

Strongly agree
3.9%

16

Statement: Online travel agents are a useful information source when choosing a holiday destination.

Strongly disagree
4.9%

Disagree
6.9%

Neutral
23.5%

Agree

43.1%

Strongly agree
21.6%

17

Statement: Online Reviews are a useful information source when choosing a holiday destination.

Strongly disagree
1%

Disagree
2.9%

Neutral
14.7%

Agree

48%

Strongly agree
33.3%

18

When searching for a holiday destination, my total search time is:

45.6%
A few days
27.2%
A few hours
17.5%
More than a week
9.7%
A week
0.0%
A few minutes

19

When searching for a holiday destination, my search time using online travel agencies is:

50.5%
A few hours

21.4%
A few days

15.5%
A few minutes

6.8%
A week

5.8%
More than a week

20

When searching for a holiday destination, my search time on social media is:

52.9%
A few minutes

31.4%
A few hours

9.8%
A few days

2.9%
A week

2.9%
More than a week

21

Statement: When on holiday, I try to avoid overcrowded cities.

Strongly disagree
10.7%

Disagree
20.4%

Neutral
29.1%

Agree
26.2%

Strongly agree
12.6%

22

Statement: When on holiday, I try to avoid overcrowded places within cities.

Strongly disagree
11.7%

Disagree
15.5%

Neutral
28.2%

Agree
28.2%

Strongly agree
15.5%

23

Statement: When on holiday, I try to avoid busy hours in overcrowded cities.

Strongly disagree
8.8%

Disagree
14.7%

Neutral
28.4%

Agree
34.3%

Strongly agree
11.8%

COVID-19 related questions

24a

How many times per week are you looking at information about COVID-19?

43.7%
A few times per week

27.2%
A few times per day

20.4%
A few times per month

8.7%
almost never

24b

Are you willing to travel during the COVID-19 pandemic?

35.9%

Yes, when the negative travel adivce is lifted

27.2%

No

22.3%

Yes, when the COVID-19 vaccin is available

14.6%

Yes

25

Statement: During the COVID-19 pandemic, I am less willing to travel to crowded destinations.

Strongly disagree
1.9%

Disagree

1.9%

Somewhat disagree
1.9%

Somewhat agree
4.9%

Agree
18.4%

Strongly agree
70.9%

26

Statement: During the COVID-19 pandemic, I am more willing to travel at different times of the year to avoid crowded places.

Strongly disagree
9.8%
Disagree
2.9%

Somewhat disagree
6.9%

Somewhat agree
20.6%

Agree
19.6%
Strongly agree
40.2%

27

Statement: During the COVID-19 pandemic, I am more willing to visit other times of the day to avoid crowded places.

Strongly disagree
6.8%

Disagree
4.9%

Somewhat disagree
5.8%

Somewhat agree
18.4%

Agree
30.1%

Strongly agree
34%

28

Statement: During the COVID-19 pandemic, I am more willing to use regulated time ticketing to avoid crowded places.

Strongly disagree
5.9%

Disagree
1%

Somewhat disagree
8.8%

Somewhat agree
19.6%

Agree
20.6%

Strongly agree
44.1%

29

During te COVID-19 pandemic, I am willing to travel within:

52.4% **Not at all**

35.9% **My country**

5.8% **My continent**

5.8% **worldwide**

30

During the COVID-19 pandemic, I am willing to use the following travel modes:

97.1% **Car**

40.2% **Train**

26.5% **Train**

2.0% **Not at all**

31

I am a:

52.4% **Woman**

47.6% **Man**

0.0% **Other**

32

My age is:

33

My four-digit postal code is:

34

the last question: Which holiday destination is first on your bucket list?